God's Excellencies

A sermon predicating "the whole of Christianity" in its doctrine is certainly comprehensive, and one by Jonathan Edwards devoted to the "gloriousness and excellency" of God is certainly quintessential; one that encompasses both dimensions must thus represent a remarkable effort of synthesis. In fact, the very stretching necessary to unite such disparate dimensions and planes of Edwards' conceptual cosmos is an organizing principle of "God's Excellencies," a sermon in which the subject matter is frequently beyond "the outmost verge of our most outstretched thoughts."

Pastorally, Edwards explains the entire undertaking rather simply: we must have some idea of what we are worshipping in order to worship in a meaningful way. On a higher plane, we must be able to contemplate God in some sense, as this exercise is nothing less than the ultimate and chief end of man. Because God has graciously accommodated his divine attributes to the mind of man through the medium of the Word, there is hope for practical success in the enterprise. Like the inspired penmen of the Scriptures, Edwards conducts his survey of seven divine attributes through the medium of analogy so that men may comprehend within their limits.

The resulting sermon is simple and practical in plan and vocabulary, but Edwards' capacity for pursuit of the implications of biblical commonplaces on a plane of subtlety and wonder causes the reader to experience some "outstretched thoughts" as the seven attributes are explored in the Doctrine and weighed in the Application. The uncompromising testing of spiritual truths by human psychology, and the essential realism within the theological orthodoxy, are perhaps attributable to the optimism and confidence of youth in this case, though Edwards was to retain these traits far beyond his youth. Moreover, Edwards not only insists upon the "downward" validity of spiritual truth, but tests the "upward" capacity of human imagination by insisting upon the ultimate transformation of being into pure essence of experience upon union with God.

Although this sermon was certainly repreached only once and the manuscript shows little material evidence of having been widely employed, the range of its speculation and the variety of its literary resources have made it anticipatory of works as diverse in purpose and format as Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God and God's End in the Creation, to name just two. A poignant practical discourse and an
untrammeled meditative excursion, this long sermon is finally evidence of Edwards' great ambition, personally and professionally, during this early phase of his career as he unabashedly tackled in its totality what was to become a favorite theme, the grandeur of God.

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The sermon, written in two octavo quire booklets standard in form for the period and in good condition, was designed to be preached in two units correlating with the two booklets, the break coming just at the juncture of the Doctrine and Application. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the manuscript is the presence of blank spaces, ranging from a few lines to a page, in both booklets. These spaces were apparently left when the development of the outline of heads either failed to fill the allotted pages, or when the outline itself was modified. Here, as in several sermons of this period, one can see the inefficiency of the infolded quire booklet when the preacher attempted composition in it (as opposed to copying in a text at least roughed out in scrap paper). In the second booklet, particularly, there is evidence of the juggling of heads and renumbering when an intermediate head in a numbered series was dropped.

The resulting sermon is rather well balanced in bulk and formal structure, each booklet containing nearly the same amount of exposition and each being formally dominated by a series of seven numbered heads. This formal symmetry was apparently on Edwards' mind, for he deleted a possible eighth head in each booklet in an apparent effort to keep the sermon within the time limitations of the pulpit, though the doctrinal heads correlate only generally with the applicatory heads and he could as easily have deleted two in one booklet and none in the other. Of course, in the latter case the divisions between preaching units and the Doctrine and Application would not have coincided, either.

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God's Excellencies

For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord, and who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? Psalms 89:6

This book of Psalms has such an exalted devotion, and such a spirit of evangelical grace everywhere breathed forth in it! Here are such exalted expressions of the gloriousness of God, and even of the excellency of Christ and his kingdom; there is so much of the gospel doctrine, grace, and spirit, breaking out and shining in it, that it seems to be carried clear above and beyond the strain and pitch of the Old Testament, and almost brought up to the New. Almost the whole book of Psalms has either a direct or indirect respect to Christ and the gospel which he was to publish, particularly this Psalm wherein is our text.

Of the ten penmen of these Psalms, Ethan the Ezrahite was the penman of this. He was a man peculiarly noted for wisdom, as appears because the greatness of Solomon's wisdom is set forth by its being greater than his; see 1 Kings 4:30–31, "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite." This Ethan, in this Psalm, or rather the Spirit of God by Ethan, gives us a most glorious prophecy of Christ. He begins it, as it is very proper to begin a prophecy of this nature, by setting forth the glorious excellencies, perfections, and works of God, for never were God's perfections manifested so gloriously as they have been manifested in the work of redemption; never did his infinite glories so brightly shine forth as in the face of Jesus Christ.

Our text is part of this exordium, wherein the glory of Jehovah is set forth by comparing of [it] with the highest of created beings. 'Tis a usual thing in Scripture, to set forth the infinite perfections of God by comparing of them with, and setting of them above, all finite beings. Thus, the infinite greatness of God is set forth by his being greater than the whole universe, so that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. His being from eternity is frequently set forth by his "being before the foundation of the world"; this expression is frequently used to express the eternity of the generation of the Son of God, and the eternity of the divine decrees. So the infinite excellency of Christ is described by
his being the Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley, the most delightful, beautiful, and pleasing objects among created beings. So here in our text is another instance, wherein the infinite gloriousness and excellency of God is held forth to us, by its being so transcendent above the greatest and highest creature.

[1.] The comparison is first with the highest and most excellent creature in heaven, for who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord? There is none, of the angels or of those spotless, pure, wise, bright, and active spirits there, are worthy to be compared with him.

2. With the highest on earth: "Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" The great kings, princes, emperors, and monarchs of the world, that look like gods to the wondering and amazed eyes of men, are nothing to him, are not fit to be likened to him. See Job 34:19–20, "How much less to him who accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they all are the work of his hands. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight and pass away, and the mighty shall be taken away without hand."

Doctrine.
God is infinitely exalted in gloriousness and excellency above all created beings.

My design at this time [is] to endeavor, by God's help, to exhibit and set forth the greatness, gloriousness, and transcendent excellency of that God who made us, and whom we worship and adore.

It is of exceeding great importance that we should have right notions and conceptions of the nature, attributes, and perfections of God. It is the very foundation of all religion, both doctrinal and practical; it is to no purpose to worship God, except we know what we worship. It is to be feared, that there are many persons in these days that pretend to worship the true God, to whom it may be said, as Christ said to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye know not what" [John 4:22]. For the Samaritans pretended to worship the same God that the Jews did; they have some obscure, outside notions of God, that he is a great God, a God of great power, that he made the world and made them, and knows all things, etc., but [they] have not right apprehensions of the divine perfections.

Now it is impossible we should love, fear, and obey God as we ought, except we know what he is, and have right ideas of his perfections, that render him lovely and worthy to be feared and obeyed. Yea, it is impossible we should worship him, for it is not he that we worship, except we know what a being he is: it is something else; it is something we know not what; it is not Jehovah. Except we have some tolerable notion of him, we shall not worship any more than the Athenians did, who inscribed their altar to the Unknown
God’s Excellencies

God, and indeed the perfections of God are such a theme as the strongest, best instructed, and most knowing Christians know but infinitely little of; no, nor the bright intelligences of the higher world.

The most understanding there may spend all their lives’ time, yea, an eternity, in learning and discovering more and more, and yet never arrive to a perfect knowledge; it is a bottomless ocean of wonders that we can never comprehend, but yet may with great pleasure and profit dive further into it. It would be greatly to the advantage of our souls, if we understood more of the excellency and gloriousness of God; wherefore, if what shall be said at this time shall be any help or assistance to any of us, the end of this sermon will be obtained.

This is the highest theme that ever man, that ever archangels, yea, that ever the man Christ Jesus, entered upon yet; yea, it is that theme which is, to speak after the manner of men, the highest contemplation, and the infinite happiness, of Jehovah himself.

What poor, miserable creatures, then, are we, to talk of the infinite and transcendent gloriousness of the great, eternal, and almighty Jehovah; what miserable work do worms of the dust make, when they get upon such a theme as this, which the very angels do stammer at? But yet, although we are but worms and insects, less than insects, nothing at all, yea, less than nothing, yet so has God dignified us, that he has made [us] for this very end: to think and be astonished [at] his glorious perfections. And this is what we hope will be our business to all eternity; to think on, to delight [in], to speak of, and sing forth, the infinite excellencies of the Deity. He has made us capable of understanding so much of him here as is necessary in order to our acceptable worshipping and praising him, and he has instructed us, and taught us, as little ignorant babes and infants, and has helped our weak understanding by his instructions; he has told us what he is, has condescended to our poor capacities and described himself to us after the manner of men: as men, when they teach children, must teach them after their manner of thinking of things, and come down to their childish capacities, so has God taught us concerning himself.

Wherefore, I shall not presume to speak of the excellencies of God any further than he has taught and instructed us in his Word. I acknowledge, such a glorious, amazing, and astonishing and awful theme ought to be entered upon by mortals, by dust and ashes, with the greatest awe and reverence; with the deepest humility and fear, especially by such dust and ashes, and so likewise it also ought to be attended to at this time, by us all.

Wherefore, we shall proceed to show how vastly God is exalted above all the highest and most perfect of created beings: first, in duration; second, in greatness; third, in excellency and loveliness; fourth, in power; fifth, in wisdom; sixth, in holiness; seventh, in goodness and mercy. I choose rather to speak of these things comparatively,
comparing of them with what is found in the creatures, because comparisons are a great help to our weakened, dull minds to conceive of things that are far out of the ken of our imaginations, and the outmost verge of our most outstretched thoughts; we are not so apt to conceive of the gloriousness of God, when considering objectively, as when compared with other things that we can easier conceive of, and because the Scripture generally takes the method of setting forth the divine perfections. But,

I. God is infinitely exalted above all creatures in duration, [even] the most ancient of all creatures. Neither the earth we stand upon, nor the heavens over our heads; the sun, moon, nor stars; nor the angels of God, can claim a duration of six thousand years, but what is this to the duration of the great [God] who is from everlasting? It is but a moment, no more than the twinkling of an eye.

God never had a beginning. If we run back in our thoughts forever; if we spend an eternity in going back, we shall never come to the beginning of God's duration, nor make any approach towards it, but at last all that we have thought of, is but as a moment to that which yet remains behind unthought of; if the whole universe, from one side of the creation to the other, was stuffed full [of] rolls of figures of [years], it would make no approach to the beginning of the Ancient of Days. How are we lost and confounded, amazed and astonished,

when we think of God's being from eternity; yea, how are angels lost, here; how are they yet lost, although they have spent their short past duration in sweet, but amazed thoughts upon it: Psalms 90:2, Psalms 90:4, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. For a thousand years in thy sight, are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch of the night."

While God never was made, it is necessary that that which hath a beginning must have some cause, some author that gave it a beginning, but God never had a beginning; there was none before him, and therefore none that gave him his being. He thanks no one for his being; doth not, nor ever did depend upon any for it, but receives his being from himself, and depends alone on himself. Neither doth he thank anyone for anything he enjoys: his power, his wisdom, his excellency, his glory, his honor, and [his] authority are his own, and received from none other; he possesses them and he will possess them: he is powerful and he will be powerful; he is glorious and he will be glorious; he is infinitely honorable, but he receives his honor from himself; he is infinitely happy and he will be infinitely happy; he reigns and rules over the whole universe, and he will rule and do what he pleases, in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. Poor nothing creature can do nothing towards controlling of [Him]; they, with all their power conjoined, which is but weakness, can't deprive Jehovah of any of these things. He was just the same, in all respects, from all eternity as he is now; as he was, infinite ages before the foundations of the world were laid, so he is now and so he will
be, with exactly the same glory and happiness uninterrupted, immovable and unchangeable, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

II. God is infinitely exalted above all created beings in greatness. This earth appears to us as a very great thing. When we think of the large countries and continents, the vast oceans, and the great distance between one country and another, the whole, together, appears very great and vast; but especially doth the great universe surprise us with its greatness, to which, without doubt, this vast earth, as we call it, is less than any mote or dust, that ever we saw, is to the whole earth; but how shall we be surprised when we think that all this vast creation, making the most of it we can, is infinitely less, when compared with the greatness of God, than the least discernible atom is to the whole creation! This is the most certain truth.

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O how great doth God seem, when we look upon the universal creation as no more than one of those motes that swims in the air! How great is God; how little is the universe in comparison of him, how inconsiderable and good for nothing. Alas, if God is so great and the universe so little, what are our little, swelling kings, princes, and emperors; what is become of our great and mighty men, that scare all the world with their greatness and pride; where will our bold and impudent blasphemers, and common swearers that take God's name in vain so merrily, appear? I can't but mention these things before I come to the application: how may the angels well spend their eviternity in meditating upon this infinitely great and glorious Being! What miserable creatures are we all, what nothings, what worms; how may we well turn ourselves into nothing, when we come into the presence of so great a God!

III. God is infinitely exalted above all created beings in excellency and loveliness. It all runs upon infinites in God: so great as is his duration, so great as is his being and essence, so great is his excellency and loveliness. His excellency excels all other excellencies that ever were seen or heard of, as much as his being exceeds created beings in greatness. It must needs be so: for all other excellencies proceed from him as the fountain, for he has made them all; he has made all things that are excellent, and therefore must have given them their excellency, and so must have all that excellency in himself, or else could not have given it. He must have all the glories, perfections, and beauties of the whole creation in himself in an infinite degree, for they all proceed from him, as beams do from the sun, and [he] is as much more excellent than they all, as the whole sun is than one single ray.

We admire at the beauty of creation, at the beautiful order of it, at the glory of the sun, moon, and stars. The sun appears very bright and glorious; so beautiful doth it appear that many nations take it to be the supreme God, and worship it accordingly, but we have much more reason from the beauty of the sun to admire at the invisible glory of that God whose fingers have formed it, and to say, as one that was imprisoned by virtue of the Spanish Inquisition and was kept in a dark dungeon three years from the sight of
the sun, when he was brought forth into the light to his martyrdom, he, greatly admiring
at the beauty of the sun which he had not seen so long, being astonished at it, cries out
that he wondered any man could

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worship anything but the maker of that glorious creature, having respect to the idolatry
of the papists.1

The beauty of trees, plants, and flowers, with which God has bespangled the face of the
earth, is delightful; the beautiful frame of the body of man, especially in its perfection, is
astonishing; the beauty of the moon and stars is wonderful; the beauty of [the] highest
heavens is transcendent; the excellency of angels and the saints in light is very glorious:
but it is all deformity and darkness in comparison of the brighter glories and beauties of
the Creator of all, for "behold even to the moon, and it shineth not" (Job 25:5); that is,
think of the excellency of God and the moon will not seem to shine to you, God's
excellency so much outshines [it]. And the stars are not pure in his sight, and so we
know that at the great day when God appears, the sun shall be turned into darkness,
shall hide his face as if he were ashamed to see himself so much outshined; and the very
angels, they hide their faces before him; the highest heavens are not clean in his sight,
and he charges his angels with folly.

In fine, God's is an infinite excellency, infinite glory, and beauty itself; he is an infinite,
 eternal, and immutable excellency; he is not only an infinitely excellent being, but a
being that is infinite excellency, beauty, and loveliness.

IV. God infinitely exceeds all created beings in power. If we look at might and strength,
where can we find another being that can cause a great world to be or not to be, at a
word, when he will; that can do everything that he pleases with infinite ease; that can
manage a world, and keep all the various parts of it in such orderly and harmonious
motion, who can manage such great bodies as the sun, moon, and stars, and can give
what laws to them he pleases?

There are many of the princes of the earth that have great power, and that rule over
great part of the earth, and have the lives and fortunes of their subjects in their hands;
but what are these to him who is king of the whole earth, who is King of Kings and Lord
of Lords; who rules over kings and emperors, and has them as much in his power as he
has the ants and flies, pulls down one and sets up another at his pleasure; who oversees
all the kingdoms and governments in the world, and manages the affairs of them just as
he pleases.

1. This carefully elaborated exemplum, with its gratuitous swipe at the Roman Catholic church, is
obviously from a collection of martyrs' lives such as John Foxe's Acts and Monuments, though I have been
unable to find the account in Foxe or in any similar book to which JE is known to have had access.
When he pleases, one king must die, and who he pleases must reign in his room; armies conquer or are conquered according as he will have it: "The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, and he turns them as the rivers of water" [Proverbs 21:1]. Thus he holds an absolute and uncontrollable government in the world; and thus he has done from the beginning, and thus he will do to the end of all things. Neither is his dominion confined to the children of men, but he rules the whole creation. He gives commands to the seas, and has appointed them bounds which they cannot pass; "which removeth the mountains, and they know it not who overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of its place, and the pillars thereof tremble; who commandeth the sun and it riseth not; who sealeth up the stars, which maketh Arcturus and Orion, and the chambers of the south; who doth great things past finding out; yea, wonders without number" [Job 9:5–7, Job 9:9–10].

What a vast and uncontrollable dominion hath the almighty God. The kings of the earth are not worthy of the name, for they are not able to execute their authority in their narrow bounds, except by the power and assistance of their subjects, but God rules most absolutely the whole universe by himself; kings rule, perhaps sometimes for forty years, but God’s kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of his dominion there is no end. Well, therefore, may he be said to be the blessed and only potente, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

V. God is infinitely exalted above all created beings in wisdom. The wisest of men, how little do they know, how frequently are they deceived and frustrated, and their wisdom turned to foolishness, their politic designs undermined; but when was the time that God’s wisdom failed, that he did not obtain his end, although all the bleak army of hell are continually endeavoring to counterwork him? When was it that God altered his mind and purpose, or took a wrong step in the government of the world?

Solomon was sensible that there was need of uncommon and extraordinary wisdom to rule such a kingdom as he had; but what wisdom, what vast knowledge and infinite penetration must he have, who has every being in the world to rule and govern; who rules every thought, and every purpose, every motion and action, not only of angels and men, but of every creature, great and small, even to every little atom in the whole creation, and that forever and ever? What infinite wisdom and knowledge is necessary and requisite in order to this! But this God doth; this he hath done and will do. All the changes

and alterations that happen in all the world, heaven and earth, whether great or never so small, he knows it altogether, even to the least insect that crawls upon the earth, or dust that flies in the air, and it is all from his disposal, and according to his eternal determination.
But God's wisdom and omnisciency shines clearest of all in his perfect knowledge of himself, who is the infinite object of his own knowledge. That eternity of his, whereby he was from everlasting to everlasting, which so confounds us miserable worms, is clearly understood by him with the greatest ease, at one simple view; he also comprehends his own infinite greatness and excellency, which can be done by none but an infinite understanding. Well might the Apostle cry out:

O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor; or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompened to him again? For of him and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen [Romans 11:33–36].

VI. God is infinitely exalted above all created beings in holiness. Holiness is the highest sort of excellency or perfection that ever the creature attains unto; 'tis the highest beauty that shines in the creation.

Now God is infinitely holy, and infinitely exalted therein, above the holy angels and all creatures; there is not the least tincture of defilement or pollution in the Deity, but he is infinitely far from it: he is all pure light, without mixture of darkness; he hates and abhors sin above all things, 'tis what is directly contrary to his nature. This, his great holiness, has he made known to us by his justice, truth, and faithfulness in all his dispensations towards us, and by the pure holiness of his laws and commands.

Holiness used to be for a distinguishing attribute between the God of Israel and other gods, Daniel 4:8, "But at last Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods"; and so in the next verse, "because I know the holy gods is in thee." Likewise, in the eighteenth verse,2 "the Holy One" is a name that God seems to delight [in]. 'Tis

2. That is, Psalms 89:18.

that attribute which continually ravishes the seraphims, and causes them continually to cry in their praises, without ceasing, "holy, holy, holy." This is the sound with which the highest heaven, the palace of God, perpetually rings, and [it] will ring on earth in the glorious times that are hastening.

VII. God is infinitely exalted above all created beings in goodness. Goodness and royal bounty, mercy, and clemency is the glory of earthly monarchs and princes, but in this is the Lord, our God, infinitely exalted above them. God delights in the welfare and prosperity of his creatures; he delights in making of them exceeding happy and blessed, if they will but accept of the happiness which he offers.
All creatures do continually live upon the bounty of God; he maintains the whole creation of his mere goodness: every good thing that is enjoyed is a part of his bounty. When kings are bountiful, and dispense good things to their subjects, they do but give that which the Almighty before gave to them. So merciful and so full of pity is God, that when miserable man, whom He had no need of, who did Him no good, nor could be of any advantage to Him, had made himself miserable by his rebellion against God, He took such pity on him that He sent His only Son to undergo his torment for him, that he might be delivered and set free. And now He offers freely, to bestow upon those rebels, complete and perfect happiness to all eternity upon this, His Son’s account. There never was such an instance of goodness, mercy, pity, and compassion since the world began; all the mercy and goodness amongst creatures fall infinitely short of it: this is goodness that never was, never will, never can be paralleled by any other beings.

Thus we have briefly insisted upon the glorious—infinitely glorious—perfections of that God which we profess. All that we can say is but clouds and darkness to the reality: the attributes of God, these infinite perfections, cannot be set forth by the eloquence of an angel, much less by mortal tongue. How much too little is the space of one sermon, to speak of that which angels spend an eternity in! This is that being which we worship, to whom we pray and sing praises; whom we are met together this day to worship as he has instituted, and whose word we have heard at this time.

So glorious and so excellent is our God; such a being is he that

3. Leaf eight recto has been left blank, apparently for the development of an eighth head concerning "his wonderful works" which was finally rejected.

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made us, that made these bodies and these souls, and continually upholds us, that keeps us alive, keeps our breath playing in our nostrils; that continually sees us, is present everywhere, is present here now, and sees all our thoughts and knows whether we have any fear of him or love to him, and how we are affected by the consideration of his glorious perfections and wondrous works, and whether or no we regard his holy commands, or are moved by his gracious promises, or terrified by his dreadful threatenings.

4

Application.

We are now come to make some improvement of this glorious truth; indeed, the whole of Christianity follows as an improvement from this doctrine. The infinite excellency, greatness, and glory of God is the foundation of all religion, for except we believe the perfections of God, we shall never worship him and love him as he ought to be worshipped and loved; except we believe his power and justice and holiness, we shall not fear him and stand in awe of him, and be afraid to violate his commands; except we believe his omniscience, we shall not act as under his all-seeing eye, and as those who
are to be judged by him. Except we believe his mercy and goodness, we shall not praise
him with a grateful sense thereof, but if once our eyes were but opened, and God makes
a discovery to our souls of his own gloriousness and excellency, how should we
reverence all his commands and be afraid to sin against him; how should we abhor
ourselves and repent in dust and ashes; how should we love the Word of God, religion,
and religious persons, and everything that hath [the] least shadow of the divine
perfections! But we shall improve this doctrine

4. Here ends the first preaching unit. The following recapitulation heads the second preaching unit:
Psalms 89:6, "For who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord, and who among the sons of the mighty
can be likened unto the Lord?"
Doctrine. That God is infinitely exalted in gloriousness and excellency above all created beings.
We have already handled the explicatory part of this doctrine, and have briefly insisted upon this glorious,
transcendent, infinite, perfection of the deity, and shown how all creatures, even the highest, greatest, and
most excellent of them, are as nothing before him, and that there none in heaven are to be compared to
him, nor any among the sons of the mighty are worthy to be likened to him in duration, in greatness,
gloriousness, excellency, or loveliness; in great power, and wisdom, or transcendently bright holiness, and
amazing goodness, bounty, and mercy.

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at present only in a few uses, which do most immediately and directly offer themselves
from this doctrine: first, in a use of instruction; second, of exhortation; third, of
consolation.

I. Use of Instr.

[First.] If he be such an excellent being, how dreadful is sin against [him]. There are
very few that conceived what a dreadful thing it is to sin against the infinitely excellent,
great, and glorious Jehovah. The aggravations of sin are really infinite, infinite in
greatness and almost infinite in number, for it is committed against an infinitely great
and powerful God, one that has infinite authority: this alone is an infinite aggravation of
sin, but then it is committed also against an infinitely lovely and excellent God, and that
is another infinite aggravation, and also against an infinitely holy God, and one that
hates sin with infinite hatred, and besides that, against an infinitely good and merciful
God. Each of these are infinite aggravations of sin, and render it an infinite evil.

But consider: sin is committed against that God that made us and preserves us, feeds us
and clothes us, and which is more than all, has sent his Son into the world to redeem us,
his Son that he infinitely loved, and has been so gracious as to make him known to us,
and to invite us to accept of him and be happy after our rebellion; but time would fail to
enumerate all the aggravations of sin.

Second. How dreadful must his wrath be! If God [is] infinitely great and powerful, how
terrible must his wrath and anger be; what a miserable creature—how inexpressibly
miserable—must a poor, weak, sinner be in the hands of an angry and enraged God, who
can shake the whole earth in pieces in a moment, and can annihilate the whole universe
in the twinkling of an eye. It is dreadful to fall into the paws of a bear robbed of her whelps, but what is it to fall into the hands of an almighty God that is angry and irreconcilable, as he will be to sinners after this life?

You may be sure that sin, persisted in, makes him exceeding angry. Without doubt, it makes God angry to see that he is slighted, and his laws trampled upon, by poor dust and ashes that he has made, and that depend upon him for life and breath and all things. Without doubt, God is made very angry when he sends his only Son into the world, out of pity to poor creatures, to die for them: to have him rejected and despised, and the salvation offered by him slighted, and the glorious gospel mocked. You can't suppose that God sees these things without being very angry; you can't think but that, when God

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calls for [a] matter of ten, twenty, or thirty years together upon a perishing sinner to come to Him for deliverance, and promises him, if he will come He will give him eternal happiness, and the sinner all the while contumeliously turns his back and stops his ears: you can't think but that it must needs incense the wrath of God enough to make him exceeding miserable, nor you can't doubt but that God, being of infinite power, can make him just as miserable as He pleases. O what is a worm, to bear the weight of the anger of so great a being?

*Third.* How hath he honored us, in that he hath made us to glorify and enjoy him to all eternity; how are we dignified by our Maker, who hath made us for so high and excellent an end! He has made other creatures for his own glory, but they are passive in it: the sun glorifies God by shining, and the trees by growing, and all things by performing the laws of nature which God has given them. But God has made us actually to glorify, to behold his excellencies and to admire them, and to be made forever happy in the enjoyment of them.5

*Fourth.* If he be so great and glorious, what an amazing thing it is that he should take upon him the human nature and die for men! He, who was born of the Virgin Mary, that was mocked amongst the Jews and soldiers, that was condemned by Pilate, and suffered between two thieves upon the cross without the gates of Jerusalem: he was this glorious God, that is infinitely exalted above all created beings, which we have been speaking of to you. This is enough to amaze us, and strike us with astonishment.

Certainly, it is no small thing for God to become man and die; this is worthy to be wondered at. 'Tis certainly a very strange thing to see him that is from everlasting to everlasting, the same yesterday, today, and forever; immutable, unchangeable, infinite in his essence, so that the whole universe is as nothing to him; omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, and all-sufficient, who made heaven and earth by the word of his power, and reigns over the creation: I say, to [see] him dying like a malefactor, in the flesh!6
5. Leaves two verso and three recto of the second booklet are each half blank, composing a blank page at this point, primarily the result of JE's abandoning the development of a subhead which would have discussed "how much hath [God] condescended to be concerned for our welfare."

6. Following this sentence in the MS, inserted in a blank space left when the sermon was composed, is a passage prepared for a later preaching. The passage is abbreviated if not entirely an outline: When we think upon that being which is without beginning of days or end of years, whose goings forth are from everlasting, who had a being endless ages before the foundation of the world, who had no beginning: is it not enough to make us wonder, to see this God hanging upon the cross in the flesh? When we think of that being who fills heaven and earth, etc. When we behold the heavens... When we look upon the sun... When we think on the earth, how he holds it up by his power... When we think on the thunder, of his power, the voice of the Lord which is so full of majesty: "that voice of the Lord which is without beginning or end, who had a being endless ages before the foundation of the world, who had no beginning: is it not enough to make us wonder, to see this God hanging upon the cross in the flesh?"

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Fifth. How highly are we privileged, in that he hath made known himself to us! How many poor, miserable, blinded and deluded creatures are deifying molten gold and silver, or carved wood and stone, because they know of no God that is more excellent! Alas, how miserably doth a dumb, lifeless stock serve, in the room of a being that the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and whose perfections [and] glories are as infinite as his being! Others give themselves to worship him who is the most hateful, vile, cursed, cruel, malicious creature in the creation: even the devil, instead of a glorious, transcendently lovely, thrice holy, and exceeding good and merciful God.

Such Egyptian darkness are they under, but to us hath God shined, and although there is darkness all around us, yet with us there is light, as it was with the children of Israel in Egypt. The Sun of Righteousness stands still in our hemisphere, and sheds down his lovely beams upon our heads, revealing unto us the blessed and glorious God.

Many nations, they worship base and abominable gods, but if it is asked of us what god we worship, we may answer that we worship infinite excellency, infinite perfection and loveliness; for this is our God, and certainly that God that is infinite perfection, itself, is the most perfect of all. What a vast difference is there betwixt a God that is infinite excellency in the abstract, and bulls and serpents, wild beasts and devils, which go for gods amongst some of the poor deluded world. How highly has God favored us; how has God distinguished us; what cause have we of thankfulness, that we are born where the true God is known!

Sixth. How great must be the happiness of the enjoyment of him. The happiness of society, and the enjoyment of entire friends, is one
7. This subhead was originally written after the sixth subhead in the sermon booklet and has been placed in this position in accordance with JE's numbering.

of the highest sorts of pleasures, next to the pleasures of religion; if that be so sweet, how inexpressibly sweet and delightful must it be to enjoy this excellent being, who is infinitely more excellent, more lovely, than the most perfect, than any of our fellow creatures. There is inexpressibly more pleasure and delight in the enjoyment of God, than in the enjoyment of the most excellent, dear, and entire friends upon earth, and that upon these several accounts:

1. God is every way transcendentally more amiable, than the most perfect and lovely of all our fellow creatures. If men take great delight and pleasure in beholding and enjoying the perfections and beauties of their fellow mortals, with what ecstasies, with what sweet rapture, will the sweet glories and beauties of the blessed God be beheld and enjoyed!

2. God loves those that he admits to the enjoyment of him with far greater love than the highest love of fellow creatures.

3. Those that enjoy God shall love him with transcendently greater love than it is possible to love the most lovely creature, so that the love will be mutual; the glorified saint shall be all transformed to love to God, and shall be all transformed to joy at the thought of God's so dearly loving him.

4. The glorified saint shall be more nearly united to God than ever the best friends are united here in this world. They shall be received into the closest union with God: we represent it by "being embraced in God's arms," but that is too faint a shadow to represent the close union that there will be; the very soul of the saint shall be united to God, and God shall be in them, in their very souls, by his glorious presence.

5. They shall more fully enjoy God than the nearest friends. The enjoyment of friends is not full and satisfying; it is frequently interrupted; but it is not so with respect to God and the glorified saint, but the enjoyment will be entire, to the constant full satisfaction of the enlarged desires of the soul, and it shall be constant and without interruption, shall continue to the same height, and shall rise and increase to all eternity.

6. The sweet relish of these enjoyments shall never decrease or be diminished. In all temporal enjoyments, one has enough of it presently; we are quickly weary of them and want some new sort of delights, but in heaven the joys will be so full, and so great, and so sweet, that the relish of them shall hold; and there will be as high, as sweet, and [as] ravishing delight in the enjoyment of God at the end

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of millions of ages, as there was the first hour. All these things meeting together, there
must needs result an unutterable delight and unimaginable pleasure; the saint will be
transformed to be all pure holiness, all light, all understanding, all vision, all love, all joy
and delight; they shall not only, as it were, be full of love and full of joy, but their very
souls will be transformed to love and to joy, and exceeding excellent pleasure.

Seventh. How excellent are they who are sanctified, and have their souls conformed
unto him. 'Tis a wonder that a creature should ever be so highly honored, as to be made
conformed to the image of God, as much a wonder as that they should be allowed the
enjoyment of him. Sanctification is as great, yea, a greater favor done to the creature,
than glorification: the creature is more honored by being made like unto God in
holiness, than in happiness; the image and likeness of God upon the creature exalts it
and honors it more, than the fruition of him.

As God is infinitely exalted above all creatures in excellency and perfection, as you have
heard, so those creatures that are sanctified and made like him, and have the image of
God drawn upon them by the Holy Spirit, are very much exalted above all other
creatures that are not; they are made more excellent, more lovely, and more honorable,
than kings and princes, and emperors and potentates.

That man that is sanctified and made holy, has more excellency than all the wicked men
in the world, and is more honorable, and will be honored more, than all the rich and
powerful men upon earth, put together, that are destitute of holiness. And why? Because
those that are holy are made like unto God, have the image of that God before whom all
the kings of the earth are as nothing.

Holiness is the very beauty and loveliness of Jehovah himself. 'Tis the excellency of his
e Excellencies, the beauty of his beauties, the perfection of his infinite perfections, and the
glory of his attributes. What an honor, then, must it be to a creature who is infinitely
below God, and less than he, to be beautified and adorned with this beauty, with that
beauty which is the highest beauty of God himself, even holiness. The highest honor of
angels is their holiness. 'Tis astonishing that God should make even the angels, or any
creature, in his own likenes, but how much more admirable is it that God should
sanctify sinners—loathsome and abominable creatures—and make them like to himself.

II. Use of Exh. To all, immediately to seek after his love and favor.

It is a dreadful thing, as you have heard, to have such as God is, an enemy, to have him
our enemy, that can do what he pleases with us, can execute his vengeance upon us how
and when he pleases. Certainly, it is well worth our while to strive, if it be possible, to
make such an one our friend, to get him to be on our side; for if he is for us, who can be
against us?
Men generally seek very much for the friendship of those that have power in their hands, and can manage things for or against us as they list; they are generally careful how they fall out with them, that have either their goods or their lives in their hands, and love to make friends with those whose friendship they hope to be profited by. And yet, they are such fools as to neglect to make friends with him who holds the universe in his hands; who has them and all other men every moment in his power, can kill, ruin, destroy, and make miserable in a moment, only by bare willing of it; who can not only take away their estates and their lives, but make them so miserable to all eternity, body and soul, as you have heard. They are very much afraid how they offend a king, for then they know they endanger their outward prosperity, and it may be their heads, but don't care how much they offend, affront, contemn, and openly despise almighty God, who has kings as much as them in his hands, and in whose hands all the kings in the world are mere nothing and vanity, that he regards not nor cares for. [He] can kill them and make them miserable, as easy as the least infant; he regards not the persons of princes: princes or not princes, 'tis all one to God. But yet they are not at all concerned about offending God, as if his anger were not to be regarded any more than the anger of a child, as if he, were [he] never so angry, could do them no hurt. Or else, as if he were so unwise that he had not wisdom enough to take care of his own honor, but would let men dishonor him without making them to know how dreadful a thing it is to offend him; as if he gave out laws and commands, but never intended to take any care to see that they were performed; as if all his dreadful threatenings of hellfire, outer darkness, and the final doom at the Day of Judgment, were nothing but a mere bugbear to fright men with. They see that God don't punish them yet; they see he lets them alone, lets them live and breathe, and sin on as much as they please; and so they take encouragement to [be] fearless and regardless, are as if it would be so always, not considering that God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. Man, when he is affronted, must be revenged forthwith; thus Nebuchadnezzar,

when disobeyed by Shadrach, Mesheck, and Abednego, that his countenance changed and [he] was in haste to have them cast into the burning, fiery furnace. Many [are the] men that refuse as absolutely to obey God as they did to obey Nebuchadnezzar, but yet He bears with them and lets them go on.

But God is not subject to passion. He has sinners always in his power; he can punish them when he thinks best; there is none of their sin is missed; they are all taken notice of; they are all marked down, and shall every one have a full and complete reward when the time comes. However they may think that they can sin unobserved, the longer it is in coming, the more dreadful will it be when it comes. Men neglect to seek the favor of God, as if his favor was not to be regarded, as if one would never be much the better for having his love; as if he were not able to make us happy, or bestow that upon us that it would be worth the while to please him for. But how different will they find it in a few years' time, and perhaps in much less; they will then see that, although sentence against their evil works was not speedily executed, yet their damnation was not asleep, that God
did not forget to set down their sins in the book of his remembrance. They will see that he takes more care of his own honor, and the honor of his laws, than they thought; they will see that it is a more dreadful thing to slight and despise God's threatenings than they imagined, and that a friendship and reconciliation with God is truly to be valued and highly prized, vastly above everything else, and his anger more to be feared than they were sensible of.

The reason why some men neglect to seek the favor of God is because they foolishly presume on his mercy and goodness. They hear that God is infinitely merciful and that he delights not in the death of a sinner, but had rather he should turn and live; and thence they take encouragement still to go on in disobedience to this same God, whose mercy they presume upon. To such, I say: Although God is infinitely merciful and gracious, yet he never bestowed his grace yet upon any of those that took encouragement from his mercy, finally to persist in wickedness; he has declared positively that, without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. Although mercy is freely offered to all, yet God never yet compelled any to be holy that they might be happy. 'Tis absolutely impossible that those who persist in wickedness until death should be made happy after death, for as the tree falleth, so it lieth; God never sanctifies a wicked soul after it is separated from the body, for that, in Revelation 22:11, is pronounced upon all separated souls: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

So that if they are wicked when they die, they must be wicked to eternity, and if they are wicked, it is impossible they should be happy; it is impossible that they should be admitted into heaven, where it is impossible that any unclean thing should enter. Nothing unsanctified can come there to defile the heavenly palace: no wicked monster will be found amongst those pure and spotless, bright and glorious, inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. See Revelation 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." You see that God saith, it shall in no wise; so that it is the greatest madness and folly, to presume upon the mercy of God and yet continue in wickedness, for you may know certainly that however merciful God is, if death finds you so doing, you will certainly be miserable.

There is nothing in God's mercy that is any matter of encouragement to any but returning sinners. He has said indeed that he delights not in the death of a sinner; but what follows, He had rather he should turn and live, for God is not willing he should live without turning, but had rather he should turn and live. There is no more encouragement given to any sinners, but returning sinners, than there is to the fallen angels. God has given no more encouragement that he will save those sinners that go on
in their sins without turning, than he has that he will save devils that are already
damned; and there is as much reason for the devils to hope to be delivered out of hell
because God is merciful, as there is for sinners to take encouragement from God's mercy
to go on in their sins.

God is infinitely merciful and gracious, it is true; so also he is infinitely just, and as he
honors his mercy upon repenting and returning sinners—those that forsake all their sins
—so he will honor his justice upon all those that go on in wickedness. God will vindicate
his own honor, and when men dishonor him by living all their lives' time in sin, so he
will be honored upon them in their everlasting misery. 'Tis a wonder that any can
imagine that they may be saved, though they don't intend to forsake their sins, when
Christ has expressly told us that few obtain heaven, in comparison of those who

8. Ed. italics.

are thrown into destruction and perdition. If many of those that seek shall not be able,
how shall they enter who don't seek; if of those that run, few obtain the prize, how shall
they obtain who stand still? 1 Peter 4:18, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where
[shall] the ungodly and [the] sinner appear?"

As there is no encouragement in the Scripture of God's saving such, so neither are there
any instances of mercy upon those that did not turn from their sin. A whole world at
once was destroyed because they would not turn at the preaching of Noah, and most of
their souls, if not all, were sent to hell, as appears by 1 Peter 3:19–20. God had no mercy
on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; God had no mercy on Judas; he had no mercy on
the five foolish virgins that slumbered and slept and suffered their lamps to go out, and
when they called and knocked at the door, there was no entrance nor admittance to be
had, although they sought with great importunity.

III. Use of Consola. To all true Christians: you have heard what a superlatively excellent
being your God is. His excellencies are all matter of joy and comfort to you; you may sit
and meditate upon them with pleasure and delight. The thoughts of the greatness,
power, holiness, and justice of God is matter of terror to the wicked, and will be matter
of horrible amazement to them forever; but it is all comfortable and rejoicing to you.
The most terrible and dreadful of all God's attributes need not to be terrible, but
comfortable to you. You may think of his great power, of his terrible majesty, of his
vindictive justice, with joy, as well as of his mercy and goodness; you may think of his
being a consuming fire joyfully, as well as of his being the Rose of Sharon and Lily of the
Valley, for all his attributes are on your side: his justice and holiness, as well as his pity,
love, and compassion. You may think of his descending from heaven to judgment in his
dreadful majesty, and all the world rent to pieces before him with earthquakes and
thunder and lightning, and devils and wicked men trembling in inexpressible horror and
amazement at the sight of him, with as much comfort as you may think of him hanging
upon the cross. You are delivered from the wrath of this dreadful Being, are got into
Christ, a safe refuge from all danger, and where you never need to fear the feeling of His
vengeance. His wrath is to be poured out on his enemies, but you are safe and need not
fear: you are out of the way of that stream of brimstone which kindles hellfire, and are
come to Mount Sion, the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an
innumerable company of angels, to the

General Assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God
the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of
the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than the blood
of Abel.

This God, to whom there is none in heaven to be compared, nor any among the sons of
the mighty to be likened; this God who is from everlasting to everlasting, an infinitely
powerful, wise, holy, and lovely being, who is the alpha and omega, the beginning and
the end, is your God: he is reconciled to you and is become your friend; there is a
friendship between you and the Almighty; you are become acquainted with him, and he
has made known himself to you, and communicates himself to you, converses with you
as a friend, dwells with you, and in you, by his Holy Spirit. Yea, he has taken you into a
nearer relation to him: he is become your father, and owns you for his child, and doth by
you, and will do by you, as a child; he cares for you, will see that you are provided [for],
will see that you never shall want anything that will be useful to you. He has made you
one of his heirs, and a co-heir with his Son, and will bestow an inheritance upon you, as
it is bestowed upon a child of the King of Kings.

You are now in some measure sanctified, and have the image of God upon your souls,
but hereafter, when God shall receive you, his dear child, into his arms, and shall admit
you to the perfect enjoyment of him as your portion, you will be entirely transformed
into his likeness, for you shall see him as he is. The consideration of having such a
glorious God for your God, your friend, your father, and your portion, and that you shall
eternally enjoy him as such, is enough to make you despise all worldly afflictions and
adversities, and even death itself, and to trample them under your feet.

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