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Teaching Notes

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## **Treatise on Religious Affections, Part 3**

**Jonathan Edwards**

### Historical Context

A. The Great Awakening (1742)

B. Edwards Battling on Two Fronts, Against Two Extremes... Submitted the *Treatise on Religious Affections* in Three Parts in 1746

Part I. Concerning the Nature of The Affections, and Their Importance in Religion

Part II. Showing What Are No Certain Signs That Religious Affections Are Gracious (i.e Saving Grace from God), Or That They Are Not

**Part III. Showing What Are the Distinguishing Signs of Truly Gracious and Holy Affections**

I. Concerning the Nature of The Affections, and Their Importance in Religion

A. Section I: Introductory Remarks Concerning the Affections

1. Edwards Central Treatise:

**True Religion, in Great Part, Consists in Holy Affections**

2. Definition of Affections of the Mind

soul's two principal faculties (endowed by God)

a. perception (understanding) by which it discerns and judges all things

b. inclination (will, heart) by which it is *inclined* or *disinclined* to every single thing

B. Section II: Proofs That True Religion, in Great Part, Consists in the Affections

Proof #1: Obvious Nature of Religion

Proof #2: Affections are the spring of actions

Proof #3: True religion takes hold in the soul no further than they *affect* them

Proof #4: Scripture places religion very much in the affections

Proof #5: Scripture presents LOVE as the summation of all true religion

Proof #6: The religion of eminent saints in the Bible consisted of affections

Proof #7: The Lord Jesus Christ displayed constant affections, of the deepest sort

Proof #9: Religious duties commanded by God focus much on affections

Proof #10: Sin of the heart = “hardness of heart”... proof that affection is the core of true religion

C. Section III: Some Inferences Deduced from this Doctrine

Part II. Showing What Are No Certain Signs That Religious Affections Are Gracious (i.e Saving Grace from God), Or That They Are Not

**Simplified List**

- 1) Strong, high religious affections is no proof...
- 2) Effects on your body is no proof...
- 3) Fluent, fervent, and abundant talk about Christ is no proof...
- 4) That you believe these affections came from outside you is no proof...
- 5) Having many texts of Scripture is no proof...
- 6) Having an appearance of love is no proof...
- 7) Having many different kinds of religious affections is no proof...
- 8) That torment of soul gave way to joy is no proof...
- 9) Lots of religious service and external worship is no proof...
- 10) Praising and glorifying God with your mouth is no proof...
- 11) Strong confidence and assurance based on these affections is no proof...
- 12) Having a compelling testimony that godly people love is no proof...

Part III. Showing What Are Distinguishing Signs Of Truly Gracious And Holy Affections.

Introductory Comments:

- 1) It is impossible to put together a list of qualities that will enable us to determine with absolute certainty the spiritual state of others

However... we can know in a practical way well enough to have fellowship or to judge false teachers

We can also know the spiritual state of others well enough to minister appropriate Scriptural medicines to their souls... whether warnings, comforts, rebukes, corrections, praise, etc.

BUT it is God’s prerogative alone to make the final distinction between sheep and goats

- 2) It is not possible to put together a list of qualities that will enable saints in a low state of grace to discern their own spiritual state with absolute certainty. [The problem is not with the list but with the person who applies the list in a faulty way]

- 3) Assurance comes in one main way alone:

**Edwards: “It is not God’s design that men should obtain assurance in any other way than by mortifying corruption, and increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it.”**

“Assurance is not to be obtained so much by *self-examination* as by *action*.... Paul obtained assurance of winning the prize more by running than by considering.”

***Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.***

- 4) No list of virtues is of any use apart from the activity of grace in your life... assurance is a living, dynamic thing
- 5) Some hypocrites are so hardened in self-deceit, no matter how you make the list they will survive unconvicted of their danger

#### Distinguishing Signs Of Truly Gracious And Holy Affections:

- A. Truly gracious affections arise from divine influences and operations on the heart
- B. Their ground is the excellent nature of divine things, not self-interest
- C. They are founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things.
- D. They arise from the mind's being enlightened to understand or apprehend divine things.
- E. They are attended with a conviction of the reality and certainty of divine things.
- F. They are attended with evangelical humiliation.
- G. They are attended with a change of nature.
- H. They are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ
- I. They are attended with a Christian tenderness of spirit.
- J. They have beautiful symmetry and proportion.
- K. The higher they are raised, the more is a longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased.
- L. They have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice

**A. Truly gracious affections arise from divine spiritual influences and operations on the heart**

1. Christians are essentially “spiritual” people

***Romans 8:5-9 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. 9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.***

- a. born of the Spirit

***John 3:6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.***

- b. mind controlled by the Spirit
- c. feeding on spiritual truths
- d. yearning for spiritual blessings

***Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.***

2. Non-Christians are essentially “carnal” or “fleshly” people

- a. not born of the Spirit
- b. mind controlled by the flesh
- c. feeding on fleshly things
- d. fleshly desires and ambitions

3. Indwelling Spirit influences Christians directly in terms of their affections

***Romans 8: 9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.***

***1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.***

***1 John 4:15-16 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.***

4. Christians are made partakers of the divine nature by the Spirit... therefore they “participate in God” by the Spirit
5. Spirit gives Christians a “spiritual sense”... a new ability to “sense” spiritual things and partake of them
  - a. five senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell
  - b. used as analogies of spiritual perception and experience
    - i) sight

***John 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"***

***Ephesians 1:18-19 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power at work in you who believe...***

- ii) hearing

***John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me..."***

***Matthew 13:9 "He who has ears, let him hear."***

***Hebrews 3:7-8 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..."***

- iii) taste

***Psalms 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.***

***1 Peter 2:3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

***Psalms 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!***

- iv) touch

***Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.***

- v) smell

***2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.***

6. This is a large measure of what the “sealing” of the Spirit is... a partial payment of joyful fellowship with God Himself

***NASB 2 Corinthians 1:22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.***

***Ephesians 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-- to the praise of his glory.***

I consider the “deposit” of the Spirit to represent actual spiritual fellowship on earth with God, but far short of the full amount awaiting our inheritance in heaven:

***Philippians 1:21 For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***

7. Summary: Truly gracious affections come from the direct influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the believer

### **B. Their ground is the excellent nature of divine things, not self-interest**

1. Christian has his breath taken away by the thing itself... by spiritual things themselves

Edwards: “The glory of God and the beholding and enjoying His perfections are considered things agreeable to him, tending to make him happy.”

2. Contrasted with affections from self-love
  - a. self-love asks “what’s in it for me?”
  - b. self-love has a sense of benefit separate from the divine things... perhaps a carnal apprehension of what heaven will be like (like the Muslims: sensual indulgence)
  - c. serving God from self-love a topic in Scripture

***Job 1:9-11 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."***

***Luke 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them."***

***Deuteronomy 16:19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.***

Edwards: "Thus Saul was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with gratitude towards David, for sparing his life, and yet remained a habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men; so they may towards God."

3. Truly gracious affection arise from a sense of what these divine things are in themselves... not from a mercenary spirit, expecting a payday

Question: What about rewards?

Answer: Rewards do not violate this truth if they are understood as being more and better partaking of God Himself... of God's pleasure and nature and presence

***Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.***

Note: God rewards those who **seek Him**... in other words, those whose hearts show that it is God they want, and God alone. They will be rewarded by getting what they have sought:

***Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

Example: Pliable in *Pilgrim's Progress*:

Come, neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going.

Chr. I can better conceive of them with my mind, than speak of them with my tongue: but yet, since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my book.

Pli. And do you think that the words of your book are certainly true?

Chr. Yes, verily; for it was made by Him that cannot lie.

Pli. Well said; what things are they?

Chr. There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us, that we may inhabit that kingdom for ever.

Pli. Well said; and what else?

Chr. There are crowns and glory to be given us, and garments that will make us shine like the sun in the firmament of heaven.

Pli. This is very pleasant; and what else?

Chr. There shall be no more crying, nor Sorrow: for He that is owner of the place will wipe all tears from our eyes.

Pli. And what company shall we have there?

Chr. There we shall be with seraphims and cherubims, creatures that will dazzle your eyes to look on them. There also you shall meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving and holy; every one walking in the sight of God, and standing in his presence with acceptance for ever. In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns, there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden harps, there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burnt in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love that they bear to the Lord of the place, all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment.

Pli. The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart. But are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get to be sharers thereof?

Chr. The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this book; the substance of which is, If we be truly willing to have it, he will bestow it upon us freely.

Pli. Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things: come on, let us mend our pace.

Chr. I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is on my back.

A false Christian may be very much affected by thoughts of the enticing nature of heaven, and may think much about the “benefits” of serving Christ... without a true spiritual apprehension of the value of God and of spiritual things. Christians also enjoy meditation on the secondary aspects of benefits in heaven... but this is “superstructure” or “window dressing”... not the substance itself.



Edwards: "...that which is the true saint's superstructure is the hypocrite's foundation."

**C. They are founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things.**

1. Edwards focuses on holiness as the perfection of God's nature

Edwards: "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, and bowels of mercies, his gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other true Christian virtues that he has, belong to his holiness. So the holiness of God in the more extensive sense of the word, and 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, or his purity and beauty as a moral agent, comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness faithfulness, and goodness."

2. Holiness is also the perfection of Christ's being

Edwards: "Herein does primarily consist 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, and he that is true, Rev. 3:7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, consisting in his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, and 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, does also primarily consist in his holiness."

3. Holiness is the perfection of the gospel: it is the holy gospel

4. Holiness is, therefore, the perfection of the saints

- a. they are the "holy ones"
- b. they are thus conformed to His image of holiness
- c. this is the essential nature, and what they long for the most

5. Thus truly gracious affections arise out of love for and yearning for holiness

Saints are given a "taste for holiness" which is alien to the true nature in Adam

6. Holiness becomes our "food" and "entertainment", because a "holy love has a holy object"

Edwards: [speaking of Psalm 119] "The Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, and he keeps his eye on this design all along, and pursues it to the end: but in this Psalm the excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste, relish, appetite, and delight of God's law; that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's natures and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the food and **entertainment**, and as the great object of the

love, the appetite, 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 honey comb; and that upon account of their holiness, as I observed before.

7. We are now attracted to holiness where we were once repelled from it

***John 3:20-21 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."***

**D. They arise from the mind's being enlightened to understand or apprehend divine things.**

1. Holy affections spring from the UNDERSTANDING... they are not merely emotions

Edwards: "Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from the information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel; he has some clearer and better view than he had before."

2. Hypocrites may have some passions about intellectual knowledge... but these affections arise from spiritual understanding
3. Thus the New Testament makes MUCH of the understanding as central to spiritual development

***1 Corinthians 2:14-16 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.***

***Colossians 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.***

4. The Christian understands spiritual things with his heart, and relishes them based on that heart understanding
5. The greater the understanding, the greater the affections

**E. They are attended with a conviction of the reality and certainty of divine things.**

1. The Christian can speak with absolute assurance that these divine things are TRUE

2. The Christian can scarcely imagine a universe in which there is no God, or in which Christ is not the Son of God, or in which the gospel promises are not true, etc.
3. A Christian is someone who no longer “halts between two opinions”... they know *with certainty* that Christ is God the Son

***John 17:6-8 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.***

4. Scripture is given to produce this kind of certainty

***Luke 1:3-4 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.***

5. Many such statements of absolute certainty

***2 Corinthians 4:13-14 It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.***

***2 Corinthians 5:6-8 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.***

6. Therefore, our joy is a reasonable joy, and our reasoning is a joyful reasoning
7. As a result, we go from “big picture” delight to detailed delight in every aspect of the Gospel and the Scriptures

Edwards: “And thus the Spirit of God discovers the way of salvation by Christ; thus the soul sees the fitness and suitableness of this way of salvation, the admirable wisdom of the contrivance, and the perfect answerableness of the provision that the gospel exhibits (as made for us) to our necessities. A sense of true divine beauty being given to the soul, **the soul discerns the beauty of every part of the gospel scheme.**”

#### **F. They are attended with evangelical humiliation.**

1. This is one of the most vital aspects of Edwards’s presentation
2. God is constantly at work slaying our pride and confidence in ourselves... this is precisely what the gospel does to us

Edwards: “This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the gospel, and everything appertaining to the new covenant, and all God's dispensations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts of men. They that are destitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profession they may make, and how high soever their religious affections may be.”

***Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.***

***Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says-- he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.***

***Isaiah 66:2 "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."***

***Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

***Matthew 18:3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.***

### 3. All truly gracious affections are broken-hearted affections

Edwards: “Now, it is out of such a heart as this, that all truly holy affections do flow. Christian affections are like Mary's precious ointment that she poured on Christ's head, that filled the whole house with a sweet odor. That was poured out of an alabaster box; so gracious affections flow out to Christ out of a pure heart. That was poured out of a broken box; until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its odor; so gracious affections flow out of a broken heart. Gracious affections are also like those of Mary Magdalene (Luke 7), who also pours precious ointment on Christ, out of an alabaster broken box, anointing therewith the feet of Jesus, when she had washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. All gracious affections that are a sweet odor to Christ, and that fill the soul of a Christian with a heavenly sweetness and fragrancy, are broken hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken hearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires. Their hope is a humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble broken hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit; and more like a little child, and more disposed to a universal lowliness of behavior.”

### 4. “Evangelical humiliation” goes to the core of our prideful hearts and slays us... “legal” humiliation does not do this...

Edwards spoke of the humblings of monks and others that abase the body, and say they may be very proud of their humblings

True evangelical humiliation breaks the heart and makes it forever a beggar at the throne of grace

It is not proud, lofty, arrogant, boastful... it lays low and delights to lay low

### **G. They are attended with a change of nature.**

1. The true Christian life begins with the radical (i.e. to the root) transformation of the person in his nature

***2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!***

Edwards: "All Gracious affections do arise from a spiritual understanding, in which the soul has the excellency and glory of divine things discovered to it, as was shown before. But all spiritual discoveries are transforming; and not only make an alteration of the present exercise, sensation, and frame of the soul, but such power and efficacy have they, that they make an alteration in the very nature of the soul."

"And no discoveries or illuminations but those that are divine and supernatural, will have this supernatural effect. But this effect all those discoveries have, that are truly divine. The soul is deeply affected by these discoveries, and so affected as to be transformed."

"The Scripture representations of conversion do strongly imply and signify a change of nature: such as "being born again; becoming new creatures; rising from the dead; being renewed in the spirit of the mind; dying to sin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man; a being ingrafted into a new stock; a having a divine seed implanted in the heart; a being made partakers of the divine nature," &c."

2. With every new, true, spiritual discovery comes a further transformation of the nature

***2 Corinthians 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.***

***Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.***

3. Only divine power can produce this supernatural transformation

Edwards: And no discoveries or illuminations but those that are divine and supernatural, will have this supernatural effect. But this effect all those discoveries have, that are truly divine. The soul is deeply affected by these discoveries, and so affected as to be transformed.

4. If this transformation has not taken place, the person is not a Christian and their affections are not from grace

#### **H. They are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ**

***Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***

Edwards: “Truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ; or in other words, they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appears in Christ.”

1. This follows from the earlier observation about evangelical humiliation
2. It also follows from God’s predestined goal that we should be made imitators of Christ’s nature

***Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.***

Edwards: “Christ, the great Shepherd, is himself a Lamb, and believers are also lambs; all the flock are lambs”

3. Therefore there are many commands that we should carry ourselves with this Christlike meekness and lowliness toward each other

***Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.***

***1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.***

4. This is very much the work the “dove”, the Holy Spirit works in us
5. It does not equally appear in all Christians, and some allowance must be made for natural temperament... but all Christians bear this distinguishing mark

### **I. They soften the heart, and are attended with a Christian tenderness of spirit.**

1. False affections actually have the tendency to harden the heart and to alienate the person from God
2. Gracious affections always tend to soften the heart and make us more yielded and open to the Kingly leadership of God

Edwards: “Gracious affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they turn a heart of stone more and more into a heart of flesh. A holy love and hope are principles that are vastly more efficacious upon the heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a dread of sin, or whatever might displease and offend God, and to engage it to watchfulness, and care, and strictness, than a slavish fear of hell.”

3. This tenderness of heart Christ compares to the heart of a child... easily and humbly yielded to leadership, and greatly affected by the sufferings of others

Edwards: “A little child has his heart easily moved, wrought upon and bowed: so is a Christian in spiritual things. A little child is apt to be affected with sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and cannot well bear to see others in distress: so it is with a Christian.”

4. Noisy, pushy, boisterous, self-advancing spirits are totally contrary to this tenderness

Edwards: “Hence gracious affections do not tend to make men bold, forward, noisy, and boisterous; but rather to speak trembling.”

5. This tenderness is characterized by “rejoicing with trembling”

*Psalm 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.*

**J. Gracious affections have beautiful symmetry and proportion.**

1. This is true because the whole image of Christ is being worked within the soul
2. They are not imbalanced and grotesque, but balanced and proportioned
3. Christians do not wholesale face one sin only and fight it, but hate all sin because it does not conform to the image of Christ
4. Christ’s balanced and perfect affections are the model for this balance and symmetry

**K. The higher they are raised, the more is a longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased.**

Edwards: “The more a true saint loves God with a gracious love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his want of love to him; the more he hates sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining love to it; the more he mourns for sin, the more he longs to mourn for sin; the more his heart is broke, the more he desires it should be broke the more he thirsts and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very soul in longings after God: the kindling and raising of gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn.”

1. A Christian is constantly satisfied and yet not satisfied
2. Thirsty, he is totally quenched by Christ; and soon as he tastes, he is instantly wanting more
3. This is true because be accelerate in our sense of our sinfulness and of God’s glorious worth

Edwards: “The reasons of it are, that the more persons have of holy affections, the more they have of that spiritual taste which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the excellency, and relish the divine sweetness of holiness. And the more grace they have, while in this state of imperfection, the more they see their imperfection and emptiness, and distance from what ought to be: and so the more do they see their need of grace.”

The Apostle Paul perhaps demonstrates this more than anyone else:

***Philippians 3:10-12 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.***

**L. They have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice**

1. Gracious affections move out into practical life
2. They produce a yearning for total conformity and total obedience in every area of life
3. They grieve over the discrepancies between affection and practice and yearn to remedy the situation
4. Therefore they devote themselves to all the duties of the Christian religion, not trusting in them as a form of righteousness, but rather as a path to ever-increasing joy in holiness