

**Adult Sunday School Class: Religious Affections**  
**Part II: Showing What Are No Certain Signs that**  
**Religious Affections are Truly Gracious, or that They are Not**  
**(continued)**  
**1 April 2001**  
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*(Note: These notes are a lightly edited version of the notes that I used in teaching the class. The form is based on the style used by [Winston Churchill](#) for his speech notes. The HTML version doesn't show indentation but the PDF does.)*

This is our fifth meeting.

Before we review the last four weeks,  
I have a challenge for you.

I'm going to read an excerpt  
about predestination & free will.

Your challenge is to  
tell me who wrote it,  
and in what book he wrote it —  
not today,  
but during the week,  
or sometime before the course is over.

Here's the excerpt:

"I have always loved butterflies. In Uganda I saw glorious butterflies the colour of whose wings changed from the deepest russet brown to the most brilliant blue, according to the angle from which you saw them. In Brazil as everyone knows there are butterflies of this kind even larger and more vivid. The contrast is extreme. You could not conceive colour effects more violently opposed; but it is the same butterfly. The butterfly is the Fact—gleaming, fluttering, settling for an instant with wings fully spread to the sun, then vanishing in the shades of the forest. Whether you believe in Free Will or Predestination, all depends on the slanting glimpse you had of the colour of his wings—which are in fact at least two colors at the same time."

The idea here  
is very similar  
to Sam Derr's  
two sides of the same coin,  
but Sam didn't write this.

Let's review now what we've done in the past 4 weeks.

In the first week we talked about Jonathan Edwards life.

Someone tell me something about his life (repeat for a while).

He was born on October 5, 1703 in East Windsor, Connecticut.

He attended Yale.

He pastored churches in Northampton and Stockbridge in MA.

He wrote many books, including Religious Affections, Freedom of the Will, Original Sin.

Collections of his personal writings include The Mind, and the Miscellanies.

In the mind, he gave a wonderful definition of truth:  
"Truth is the consistency and agreement of our ideas with the ideas of God."

He died March 22, 1758.

In the second week we talked about why Edwards wrote Religious Affections.

Why did Edwards write The Religious Affections?

To address the question:  
"How do we discern between that which is good,  
and that which is evil?"

One thing that makes this hard  
is a particular strategy Satan often uses to attack the church —  
What is that?

Mixing error with truth within the church.

We discussed 3 examples of error within the modern church.  
What were they?

Anti-intellectualism — denying the importance of truth.  
Antinomianism — denying the importance of God's law.  
Egalitarianism — denying differences among people.

In the third week we talked about  
what the affections are,  
and why they are important.

To what does the term 'the affections' refer?

The affections refers to the mind yearning,  
just as the will refers to the mind choosing,  
and the understanding refers to the mind learning.

Are the affections, the will, the soul, the heart, and the mind separate parts of a person?

No, they are all the same thing.  
Different words may be used to emphasis different aspects.

Why are the affections important?

They are important because they are essential to true belief. The Scripture talks of true believe involving the fervent devotion of the entire soul, that is, the mind yearning.

Last week we looked at 6 of the 12 things that  
Edwards says are no certain signs that religious affections  
are truly gracious, or that they are not.

What were these?

intensity (It is no sign one way or the other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high.)

body affects (It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.)

verbosity (It is no sign that affections are truly gracious affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them to be fluent, fervent, and abundant, in talking of the things of religion.)

origin outside self (It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance and by their own strength.)

scripture quotations (It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come with texts of Scripture, remarkably brought to the mind. )

appearance of love (It is no evidence that religious affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them.)

Today, we'll look at the remaining 6.

Edwards gives the seventh non-sign like this:

Persons having religious affections of many kinds,  
accompanying one another,  
is not sufficient to determine  
whether they have any gracious affections or no.

We'll call this

**Many kinds.**

Edwards doesn't spend any time showing  
that true believers can show many kinds of affections —  
That is,  
That many kinds is not a sure sign of non-regeneration.

Let's go ahead and do this, 'though

Will someone cite something from Scripture  
showing that truly regenerate people  
may show many different religious affections together?

One example is given by Jesus in the Beatitudes:

Matthew 5:3-10

Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle,  
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they shall be called sons of God.

This clearly talks about multiple affections,  
and those who have these multiple affections  
are pronounced 'blessed' by Christ.

So many kinds of affections  
cannot be a sure sign of someone being unregenerate.

Edwards shows that  
it cannot be a sure sign  
of someone being regenerate, either.

Someone cite something from Scripture  
showing that unregenerate people  
can show many kinds of religious affections.

Edwards cites the multitude that welcomed  
Christ into Jerusalem at the beginning  
of the week of the crucifixion.

The multitude that attended Christ into Jerusalem,  
after that great miracle of raising Lazarus,  
seem to have been moved  
with many religious affections at once,  
and all in a high degree.  
They seem to have been filled with admiration,  
and there was a show of a high affection of love,  
and also of a great degree of reverence,  
in their laying their garments  
on the ground for Christ to tread upon;  
and also of great gratitude to him,  
for the great and good works he had wrought,  
praising him with loud voices for his salvation;  
and earnest desires of the coming of God's kingdom,  
which they supposed Jesus  
was now about to set up,  
and showed great hopes  
and raised expectations of it,  
expecting it would immediately appear;  
and hence were filled with joy,  
by which they were  
so animated in their acclamations,  
as to make the whole city ring  
with the noise of them;  
and appeared great in their zeal  
and forwardness to attend Jesus,  
and assist him without further delay,  
now in the time of the great feast of the Passover,  
to set up his kingdom.

The eighth non-sign given by Edwards is this:

Nothing can certainly be determined

concerning the nature of the affections, by this,  
that comforts and joys  
seem to follow  
awakenings  
and convictions of conscience,  
in a certain order.

We'll call this

**Order of appearance.**

It may seem a bit odd to you  
that Edwards would see fit  
to address this as something  
that some people mistakenly  
thought might be a sign one way or the other.

In Edwards day,  
there were people  
who attacked the genuineness  
of some claimed conversions  
during the Great Awakening  
on the grounds that these conversions  
all followed the same pattern.

This pattern went like this:

First, a person would become convinced of their sinfulness.

Second, he would despair at his sin and helplessness.

Third, he would become convinced that Jesus was his savior.

Fourth, he would be filled with peace and assurance of his salvation.

Edwards writes this  
about those who think  
that such an order  
argues against a claimed conversion being real:

But such prejudices and objections  
are without reason or Scripture.  
Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose,  
that before God delivers persons  
from a state of sin and exposedness to eternal destruction,  
he should give them  
some considerable sense of the evil he delivers from;  
that they may be delivered sensibly,  
and understand their own salvation,  
and know something of what God does for them.

As men that are saved  
are in two exceeding different states,  
first a state of condemnation,  
and then in a state of justification and blessedness:  
and as God,  
in the work of the salvation of mankind,

deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational nature;  
so it seems reasonable,  
and agreeable to God's wisdom,  
that men who are saved  
should be in these two states sensibly;  
first, that they should,  
sensibly to themselves,  
be in a state of condemnation,  
and so in a state of woeful calamity and dreadful misery,  
and so afterwards in a state of deliverance and happiness;  
and that they should be first sensible  
of their absolute extreme necessity,  
and afterwards of Christ's sufficiency and God's mercy through him.

Edwards doesn't really address the converse  
— that is, why order of appearance of affections  
isn't a sure sign of true conversion, either —  
probably because it wasn't an issue in his day.

That is,  
no one was claiming that it was such a sign.

In our day,  
however,  
I suspect that erring on this side  
is more prevalent than erring on the side  
Edwards did address.

I'm afraid that quite a few people  
seem to think that as long as certain  
things happen in a certain order,  
then salvation is assured.

Can anyone think of an example of this?

What I had in mind is  
the notion that someone is truly converted  
if he shows remorse for his sin,  
prays a "Sinner's Prayer",  
and can always tell you on what date he did this.

There are some who are converted in this way.

There are others,  
probably the majority,  
who go through these steps,  
and are not converted.

Edwards describes the next non-sign this way:  
It is no certain sign that the religious affections  
which persons have  
are such as have in them  
the nature of true religion,  
or that they have not,

that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion,  
and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship.

We'll call this  
**Much worship.**

Edwards writes:

This has,  
very unreasonably of late,  
been looked upon as an argument  
against  
the religious affections  
which some have had,  
that they spend so much time in reading,  
praying,  
singing,  
hearing sermons,  
and the like.

It is plain from the Scripture,  
that it *is* the tendency  
of true grace  
to cause persons  
to delight in such religious exercises.

He cites many Scripture passages to show this is the case.

Can anyone think of some passages  
that show that God's children rejoice in worshiping Him?

Anna the prophetess: Luke 2:27, "She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."

the primitive Christians in Jerusalem: Acts 2:46, 47, "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God."

Grace made Daniel delight in the duty of prayer, and solemnly to attend it three times a day, as it also did David: Psal. 55:17, "Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray."

Grace makes the saints delight in singing praises to God: Psal. 135:3, "Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant." And 147:1, "Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely."

It also causes them to delight to hear the word of God preached: it makes the gospel a joyful sound to them, Psal. 89:15, and makes the feet of those who publish these good tidings to be beautiful: Isa. 52:7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!" &c.

It makes them love God's public worship: Psal. 26:8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." And 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Psal. 84:1, 2, &c. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.—Yea, the sparrow hath found a house and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man in

whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca—go from strength to strength, everyone of them in Zion appeareth before God." v. 10, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

However, as Edwards shows,  
desiring to worship is not in itself a sign of true grace,  
because such a disposition is found in many that have no grace.

He gives as Scriptural examples the Israelites and the Pharisees.

He also gives examples from history  
of various sects that set themselves apart  
from the world so as to,  
in their minds,  
worship God more fully.

Finally, he gives an example from his own life:

I once lived, for many months,  
next door to a Jew  
(the houses adjoining one to another),  
and had much opportunity daily to observe him;  
who appeared to me  
the devoutest person  
that I ever saw in my life;  
great part of his time  
being spent in acts of devotion,  
at his eastern window,  
which opened next to mine,  
seeming to be most earnestly engaged,  
not only in the daytime,  
but sometimes whole nights.

Another non-sign is related to this one.

Edwards introduces it this way:  
Nothing can be certainly known  
of the nature of religious affections by this,  
that they much dispose persons  
with their mouths to praise and glorify God.

I'll call it  
**Verbal Praise.**

You remember that last week  
one of the non-signs we discussed  
was verbosity —  
that is, talking much about the things of God.

This differs from that one  
in being speech directed towards God,  
not towards others.

Edwards discussion about this non-sign  
relates it to the previous one:

This [ that is that it is a non-sign]  
indeed is implied in what has been just now observed,  
of abounding and spending much time  
in the external exercises of religion,  
and was also hinted before;  
but because many seem to look upon it  
as a bright evidence of gracious affection,  
when persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God,  
to have their mouths full of his praises,  
and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him,  
I thought it deserved a more particular consideration.

Edwards notes,  
No Christian will make it an argument  
**against** a person,  
that he seems to have such a disposition,  
so the point is to show that  
this is not a sure sign of conversion either.

The things we've talked about already  
have pretty much shown this,  
but let's look at two  
additional Scripture passages anyway:  
Psalm 78:35-37 and Isa 48:1

Psa 78:35-37 And they remembered that God was their rock,  
And the Most High God their Redeemer.  
But they deceived Him with their mouth,  
And lied to Him with their tongue.  
For their heart was not steadfast toward Him,  
Nor were they faithful in His covenant.

Isa 48:1 "Hear this, O house of Jacob,  
who are named Israel  
And who came forth from the loins of Judah,  
Who swear by the name of the LORD  
And invoke the God of Israel,  
But not in truth nor in righteousness."

We have only two more to go.

The next non-sign is described by Edwards like this:

It is no sign that affections are right,  
or that they are wrong,  
that they make persons that have them  
exceeding confident that what they experience is divine,  
and that they are in a good estate.

We'll call this one  
**Confidence in salvation.**

In Edwards day, and in ours,  
there are those who say

that a person being assured of his own salvation  
is a sure sign that he **is** truly saved,  
and there are also those who say  
that it  
is a sure sign that he **is not** truly saved.

Showing that this latter view is false  
is quite simple,  
because the Scripture talks about the possibility of assurance.

Someone give me verse that does this.

1 John 5:13 is probably the clearest of all:  
These things I have written to you  
who believe in the name of the Son of God,  
in order that you  
may know  
that you have eternal life.

So anyone who says that assurance of salvation  
is a sure sign of non-regeneration  
does not know the Scriptures.

What about the other case?  
Does the Scripture show that assurance is  
also not a sure sign of regeneration?  
Where?

Consider Mat 7:21-23,  
in which Jesus says:  
"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"

So,  
it is clear from Scripture  
that some who are confident of their salvation  
are deceived.

A truly regenerate person  
may be sure of his salvation,  
or he may erroneously doubt his salvation.

A truly unregenerate person  
may also be sure, erroneously, of his salvation,  
or he may correctly recognize his unregenerate state.

The final non-sign that Edwards discusses is that  
Nothing can be certainly concluded  
concerning the nature of religious affections,  
that the outward manifestations of them,  
and the relation persons give of them,  
are very affecting and pleasing to the truly godly,  
and such as greatly gain their charity,

and win their hearts

I'll call this non-sign  
**Beliefs of others.**

Certainly,  
no one claims that others believing someone is regenerate  
is a sure sign that the person  
Is not regenerate.

However, just because others think  
someone is truly regenerate  
doesn't mean that he is.

Can someone give me an example  
from Scripture in which it appears clear  
that some truly regenerate people  
were mistaken about the condition of another person?

Judas,  
it seems to me.  
There's no evidence  
to suggest that the other apostles  
suspected him to be unregenerate.

Edwards explains why we can be wrong  
about the true state of others  
like this:

The true saints have not  
such a spirit of discerning  
that they can certainly determine  
who are godly,  
and who are not.

For though they know experimentally  
what true religion is,  
in the internal exercises of it;  
yet these are what they  
can neither feel, nor see,  
in the heart of another.

There is nothing in others,  
that comes within their view,  
but outward manifestations and appearances;  
but the Scripture plainly intimates,  
that this way of judging  
what is in men by outward appearances,  
is at best uncertain,  
and liable to deceit:

1 Sam. 16:7, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth;  
for man looketh on the outward appearance,  
but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Isa. 11:3, "He shall not judge  
after the sight of his eyes,  
neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."

Our inability to know

for sure  
    whether others are truly saved  
        is probably the greatest contributor  
to the belief of many  
    that it is possible  
        for someone to lose his salvation.

Although we are  
    not able to know for certain  
        about anyone's salvation but our own,  
the Scripture tells us  
    that we are not  
        just to assume one thing or another,  
but to use the means  
    that God has given us to  
        reach the best judgement we can.

Next week we'll begin looking  
    at what those means are,  
        as we study the signs  
            that Edwards lists as signs of true conversion.

Next week,  
    I'll present an overview  
        of all 12 signs,  
            and then we'll begin  
                looking at them in more detail  
                in following weeks.

I'll close this meeting with "*Miscellanies*" #95. Happiness of Heaven:

When the body  
    enjoys the perfections of health and strength,  
        the motion of the animal spirits  
            are not only brisk and free  
                but also harmonious.

There is a regular proportion  
    in the motion from all parts of the body  
        that begets delight in the inner soul  
            and makes the body feel pleasantly all over.

God has so excellently contrived  
    the nerves and parts  
        of the human body.

But few men since the fall,  
    especially since the flood,  
        have health  
            to so great a perfection  
                as to have much  
                of this harmonious motion.

When it is enjoyed,  
    one whose nature is not  
        very much vitiated and depraved  
            is very much assisted thereby  
                in every exercise of body or mind.

And it fits one

for the contemplation  
of more exalted and spiritual  
excellencies and harmonies,  
as music does.  
But we need not doubt  
but that harmony will be in its perfection  
in the bodies of the saints  
after  
the resurrection,  
and that,  
as every part  
of the bodies of the wicked  
shall be excruciated with intolerable pain,  
so every part  
of the saints' refined bodies  
shall be as full of pleasure  
as they can hold,  
and that this will not  
take the mind off from  
but prompt,  
and help it  
in spiritual delights,  
to which  
even the delights of their spiritual bodies  
shall be but a shadow.