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—Thomas A. Noble, PhD  
Research Professor of Theology  
Nazarene Theological Seminary  
Kansas City

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—David L. Wheeler, DTh  
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon  
Formerly Professor of Theology and Ethics  
Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City

THE BOOK OF SAINTS  
**THE EARLY MODERN ERA**

AL TRUESDALE, Editor



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# JONATHAN EDWARDS



A marked irony of American history is that Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), America's most brilliant and creative theologian, is popularly reduced to a caricature of a famous 1741 sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

Edwards was a highly creative thinker in theology, philosophy, and psychology and the chief New England spokesman for America's First Great Awakening (ca. 1730-40). He is unsurpassed in clearly stating the distinguishing characteristics of true Christian faith and experience and the features of a Christian holiness authored by God. After reading Edwards's 1737 *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, John Wesley declared, "Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 302). Edwards would have been remembered had the Great Awakening never happened. Many of his thoughts about freedom, sin, virtue, and God's providence were put to paper on the Massachusetts frontier. His "chief contribution is an enduring intellectual and spiritual reality, a monumental reconstruction of strict Reformed [Calvinist] orthodoxy which is remembered for its exegetical insight, its literary power, and its philosophical grandeur" (288). A brilliantly complex figure, Edwards was "caught between two eras"—the medieval and the modern. He spent his life "in an agonizing struggle to fully affirm the new without giving up anything of the old." He worked to "pour new wine into old wine skins" (Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 213).

Edwards was the son of intellectually gifted Timothy Edwards, a Puritan minister in East Windsor, Connecticut. His mother, Esther Stoddard, was the equally gifted daughter of prominent Puritan minister Solomon Stoddard of Northampton, Massachusetts. Possessing a fertile mind, in 1716 Edwards entered Yale College when New

England higher education was in transition. He began the process of reconciling his inherited Puritanism with modern forms of thought expressed in textbooks on science, logic, and ethics that reflected the ideas of French philosopher René Descartes and English philosopher John Locke.

In 1721 Edwards had a conversion experience that included a vision of God's visible glory in all aspects of the natural order. After graduating and being licensed to preach in 1722, Edwards served a New York Presbyterian congregation where he reflected on the nature of religious experience and wrote about the mind and natural science. In 1727 he was ordained in Northampton, where he became an associate of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, who died two years later. Accepting his grandfather's mantle, Edwards became the most influential clergyman in western Massachusetts. In a 1731 Harvard lecture to Boston clergymen, the twenty-eight-year-old minister gave notice that orthodox Puritan doctrine must not only be fortified against doctrinal erosion but also be infused with new learning. In 1738 he published sermons on justification that precipitated a revival in Northampton marked by "surprising conversions." The revival expanded to become the Great Awakening. Edwards's influence as a leader and defender grew.

*A Treatise concerning Religious Affections* (1746) is unsurpassed as a statement of authentic Christian experience. It was a defense against the abusers of Christian experience as well as the scornful detractors. Edwards wrote *Religious Affections* in response to *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (1743), written by influential Bostonian Congregationalist (Puritan) minister Charles Chauncey (1705-87). Chauncey was a declared opponent of revivalist preaching. The Great Awakening, he charged, was nothing more than doctrinal disorder revived and heretical enthusiasm unleashed. Edwards was but a "visionary enthusiast." Careful readers of *Religious Affections* will profitably disagree.

On July 1, 1750, Edwards preached his last official sermon as pastor at Northampton. However, until November, at the request of the congregation, he preached on a week-to-week basis when a guest preacher could not be found. The family "remained awkward-

ly in Northampton for a year” (Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 363-64). He had run afoul of powerful families who objected to his efforts to restrict admission to the Lord’s Table to persons explicitly professing redeeming grace, and because he sought to discipline some young people for their “bad books.” Having been expelled, Edwards and his family were without income. He was invited to minister in a frontier mission in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Providentially, what seemed a defeat became the most productive period in Edwards’s life.

In 1758, in declining health, he replaced Aaron Burr Sr. (d. 1757) as president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton). Edwards died March 22, 1758, after having been inoculated for smallpox.

## 1

*(Edwards's experience of God's glory following a conversation  
with his clergy father, sometime after January 1739)*

I walked in a solitary place in my father's pasture for contemplation. Looking upon the sky and clouds, there came such a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God that I know not how to express it. I seemed to see them in union—majesty and meekness joined. After this my sense of divine things gradually increased and became more lively and had more of inward joy. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be a calm cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellence, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear everywhere—in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, and trees; in the water and all nature, which absorbed my attention. I often looked at the moon. During the day I examined clouds and sky to behold the glory of God in them, all the time singing in a low voice my consideration of the Creator and Redeemer.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *MEMOIRS OF THE LATE REV. JONATHAN EDWARDS*, PP. 16-17

*THE HEAV'NS ARE DECLARING the Lord's endless glory;  
Thro' all the earth his praise is found.  
The seas reecho the marvelous story;  
O man, repeat that glorious sound. Amen.*

CHRISTIAN FÜRCHTEGOTT GELLERT (1715-69), HYMNARY



**FOR REFLECTION:** Neh. 9:6; Pss. 18:1; 69:34; 96:10-13; 97:6-9; 98:4-9; 104:1-24; 145:10-13; 148:1-14; 150:1-6; Isa. 45:18-19; Rom. 1:19-20; 8:19-22

## 2

It is evident from the New Testament that Jesus Christ planned for his people to have sufficient and abundant assurance of their salvation and future glory. The apostle Paul speaks with assurance of knowing Christ and of his expectation of future reward. The nature of the covenant of grace, along with God's declared goal in the arrangement of all things, plainly shows that God has made ample provision for the saints to have assured hope of eternal life here below. God's promises and oaths about our future glory cannot be trusted any further than we can be assured that his promises are confirmed in us now. In vain would provision be made in Jesus Christ for a good conscience before God apart from assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin here and now. The New Testament directs Christians to be diligent in making their calling and election sure.

On the other hand, no Christian is to cease from regularly examining his standing before God. Christian assurance is not to be confused with an overbearing, high-handed, and violent boast before God and man. Humble trust in Christ places no confidence in itself.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 2, SEC. XI

*O GOD, OUR TRUE LIFE, in whom and by whom all things live, I humbly beseech you to abide with me, to reign in me, to make my heart a holy temple, a fit habitation for your divine majesty. O Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible, keep, I beseech you, this work of your hands. Guard me with the power of your grace, here and in all places, now and at all times. Amen.*

AUGUSTINE (AD 354–430), BISHOP OF HIPPO, *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, P. 256



**FOR REFLECTION:** Job 19:25; John 15:11; 16:33; 1 Cor. 9:26; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:7-8; Heb. 6:17-18; 9:9; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; 1 John 3:14-24

## 3

The Spirit of God is given to Christians to dwell in them as his proper abode, as his temple. He influences them as a principle of a new nature or as a divine spring of life and action. He is so united with Christians as to cause Christ to live in them as their principle or fountain of life. Not only do they drink living water, but this living water also becomes a fountain springing up to everlasting life. Jesus told us the living water is the Spirit himself, the principle of eternal life in them (John 4:14). Not only does the Sun of Righteousness shine upon them, but it is so communicated to them that they shine, becoming little replicas of that Sun. The sap of the True Vine is conveyed to them just as the sap of a tree is conveyed to living branches. Because the Spirit of God is given to and unified with the saints, they are properly referred to as “spiritual.”

The Spirit of God may in some ways influence “natural” persons. But he is not joined to them as their defining and indwelling principle; there is no union.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*,  
PT. 3, SEC. I, SUBS. 1

*O MY GOD, you are ever new. Though you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations, your mercies are renewed daily. You alone are the food for eternity, the food of my soul. Without your presence, eternity would be another name for eternal misery. You alone are inexhaustible; your mercies are ever new. For eternity I shall ever be a student beginning to explore the infinite reaches of your divine nature; I will sing of your great love forever; with my mouth I will make your great faithfulness known. Amen.*

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801-90), *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, p. 255



**FOR REFLECTION:** John 4:14; 7:38-39; 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9-17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:1-7; Col. 1:24-27; 1 Pet. 2:1-8; 1 John 1:5-10; 3:1-3; 4:13-21

## 4

Another reason the saints and their virtues are called “spiritual” is that as the Holy Spirit dwells in them as their life-giving principle, he produces effects that express his own proper nature. Holiness is the nature of the Spirit of God. Therefore, in Scripture he is called the Holy Spirit. Holiness is as much his nature as heat is the nature of fire or as sweetness was the nature of the holy anointing oil in the Old Testament—the principal type\* of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God so dwells in the hearts of the saints, so communicates himself, that he makes them partakers of God’s beauty and Christ’s joy. Having communion with the Holy Spirit, a Christian has true fellowship with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

The grace of God is of the same nature as divine holiness. There is no work so high and excellent, no transformation, affection, or experience accomplished by the Spirit of God so great, for there is no work wherein God so communicates himself and wherein a creature in such an exalted manner so partakes of God as to be made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*,  
PT. 3, SEC. I, SUBS. 2

*WE BESEECH YOU, LORD, let the power of the Holy Spirit be present with us, that he may both graciously sanctify our lives and protect us against all that might challenge his holy reign, to the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

“WHITSUNTIDE,” PRAYERS FOR SACRED SEASONS, IN *ANCIENT COLLECTS AND OTHER PRAYERS*, p. 62



**FOR REFLECTION:** Ps. 133:2; John 1:16; 3:6; 17:13, 21, 26; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17-19; Heb. 12:10; **2 Pet. 1:4**; 1 John 1:3; 3:21; 4:12-16

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\*“Type” refers to one event that is believed to prefigure another that completes the former.

## 5

The first objective criterion for deciding if religious affections are holy is observing whether divine things are loved for what they are in themselves or whether they are loved out of self-interest. If religious affections do not rise above self-interest, they may be properly judged false and deceitful. This doesn't mean that the importance of religious affections for the saint are excluded, but only that the self is of secondary importance.

Now love is the fountain of all truly holy affections, not a love for oneself, but for God, for his glory, for Jesus Christ who is the Word of God, for the ways and works of God. The primary reason the child of God loves these things is their transcendent excellence in themselves, not because of how they can serve his self-interests. Some argue that a love for God that is primary is impossible, that whoever seeks God's glory only seeks his own happiness. Beholding God's perfections is no more than personally enjoyable. If this were true, then religious affections could never be holy, but ever carnal.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. II

*MY GOD, I love you—not because  
I hope for heaven thereby,  
Nor yet because who love you not  
Are lost eternally.  
You, O Lord Jesus, you didst me  
Upon the cross embrace;  
For me didst bear the nails and spear  
And manifold disgrace. Amen.*

SPANISH HYMN (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY),  
TRANS. EDWARD CASWALL (1814-78), OREMUS



**FOR REFLECTION:** Deut. 6:1-9; Pss. 18:1-3; 29:1-2; 31:2-24; 95:1-11; 96:9; Mark 12:28-34; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Thess. 3:5; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 2 John v. 6

## 6

The first impulse of love toward God often results from recognizing God's favor. Being spiritually awakened, a person recognizes that God loves him, even when he did not love God, and that God will forgive his sins and make him his child. Upon this foundation many things about God appear lovely; it is easy to affirm that God is glorious, to rejoice that even though he is Lord of the universe, he loves us; Christ died for our sins, and one day we will reign with him.

But as Christian love matures, holy affections arise from another motive. The mature in Christ do not first see that God loves them and then afterward see that God is lovely. Instead, for the mature, holy affections begin with God. They first see that God is lovely and that Christ is excellent and glorious. For them, love prompted by God's excellence becomes the foundation of their discipleship. Holy affections flow, and self-regard becomes but a handmaid to holy affections.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. II

*LET YOUR LOVE SO WARM US, O Lord, that we may joyfully surrender ourselves with all we are and have. Let your love fall as fire from heaven upon the altar of our hearts. Teach us to guard that flame carefully by constant devotion and attention. Inspire us to treasure every spark of the holy flame of love with which the Holy Spirit quickens us so neither height nor depth, things present nor things to come, would ever separate us from your love. Strengthen us for walking as diligent pilgrims. Prepare us in love to appear rejoicing with your saints before your throne when we complete the pilgrim journey. Amen.*

GERHARD TERSTEEGEN (1697–1769), *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, p. 192



**FOR REFLECTION:** Eph. 4:11-16; 5:13-15; 1 Thess. 5:5-11; 2 Thess. 2:13-17; Heb. 6:1-3; 12:1-2; 13:9-16; James 1:1-17; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 4:6-11; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 4:19

## 7

The joy of a hypocrite is in himself. In his rejoicing he keeps his eyes fixed upon himself. Having received what he calls spiritual discoveries or experience, his mind is glued to those things. He is preoccupied, not with the glory of God or the beauty of Christ, but with the glory and beauty of his experiences. He thinks to himself, “What a great discovery this is!” He puts his “experiences” in the place of Christ. Instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, instead of feasting on the gospel, a hypocrite feasts on his experiences. He looks at Christ sideways, for his own spiritual notions and preoccupations offer more comfort and attraction than does Christ himself. With or without Scripture, the hypocrite trusts in his experiences and “high privileges” as proof of his good standing before God. Out of the abundance of his heart, he speaks. While living in an imaginary castle he is eventually consumed by self-conceit, self-love, and pride.

The true saint, on the other hand, speaks much of God, of his glorious perfections and works, of the beauty of Christ and the glories of the gospel.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*,  
PT. 3, SEC. II, SUBS. 2

*O LORD, ever turn me toward your love, my love toward obedience, and my obedience toward constancy. Then I trust that you will accept such a fruit of grace and faith as my life might yield. Make me to be one in whom the heavenly Father can delight; you will have all that I am and all that you shall cause to become beneficial for your glory and service. Amen.*

JEREMY TAYLOR (1613-67), *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, p. 178



**FOR REFLECTION:** Rom. 14:13–15:6; 1 Cor. 12:1-30; 14:20; Gal. 1:6-9; 2:20; Phil. 4:8-9; Col. 2:6-15; 3:1-17; Heb. 4:14-16; 12:12-24

8

Religious affections that are truly holy are primarily founded upon the loveliness of God’s holiness as manifest in his moral excellence. Holy persons, in the expression of holy affections, love God primarily because of the beauty of his holiness or moral perfection, which is supremely glorious in itself. Now, not only do the saints, in the expression of gracious affections, love the beauty of God’s holiness, but they also love God for all his attributes; they delight in all God’s perfections—his eternity, wisdom, power, holy majesty, and more. But love for God’s holiness is where true love for God begins. A delight in other divine things proceeds from a love for the beauty of God’s holiness—his kindness, mercy, steadfast love, righteousness, truth, and goodness.

Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that the moral image of God is established in them; this is their beauty, their holiness. No virtues can characterize an image that does not first reside in the original. God’s *underived* holiness is the fountain of *derived* Christian holiness; grace in the *image* answers to grace in the *original*. Herein lies the beauty of the Christian faith.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. III

*O GOD, who art the unsearchable abyss of peace, the ineffable sea of love, and the fountain of blessings, who sends peace to those who will receive it, open to us this day the sea of your love, and water us with plenteous streams from the riches of your grace. Make us children of quietness and heirs of peace. Enkindle in us the fire of your love; strengthen our weakness by your power. Bind us closely to you and to each other in one firm and indissoluble bond of unity. Amen.*

SYRIAN CLEMENTINE LITURGY, *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, p. 195



**FOR REFLECTION:** Num. 14:21; 1 Sam. 2:2; Pss. 18:30-33; 29:2; 30:1-12; 90:17; 96:1-13; 97:11-12; 98:1; 99:2-5; Isa. 6:3; John 17:1-5; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1; Rev. 4:8

## 9

Holy affections are not heat without light; they develop from spiritual instruction the mind receives. The attentive child of God understands more of divine things than he did before and more of the glorious things manifest in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are affections such as being impressed by outward appearances or excited by impressions that bear none of the nature of instruction in the gospel; persons thereby become none the wiser about God or about the Mediator between God and man. They gain no further understanding of God's Word; truly spiritual and gracious affections arise only when God enlightens the understanding.

The Scriptures are a source for developing holy affections only if Christ opens Scripture to the understanding and sets the heart aflame with gracious affections. Searching the Scriptures in ways that do not promote spiritual instruction and understanding results in vanity. Only Christ can cause the Scriptures to become a means for setting the heart aflame with gracious affections; only he can open the Scriptures for understanding. Vain are instruction and affections that are supposedly taught by the Scriptures but that, in fact, are neither in a particular text nor any other part of Scripture.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. IV

*O GOD, keep our affections fitly disposed to receive your holy instructions, that being carried forward by the Holy Spirit we may happily arrive at last in the haven you have prepared for your people, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

GEORGE HICKES, *DEVOTIONS* (1700), *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, P. 284



**FOR REFLECTION:** Pss. 19:7-10; 43:3-4; Luke 11:52; 24:32; John 4:32-34; 6:45; Rom. 10:2; 1 Cor. 2:14; Phil. 1:9; Col. 3:10

## 10

Truly gracious and holy affections are marked by an effectual conviction regarding the reality and certainty of divine things, the truth of the great elements of the gospel. Holy affections do not halt between two opinions, and the great doctrines of the gospel are no longer doubtful or in dispute. Saints fear not to venture everything upon Jesus Christ. For them, the power of the mystery of the gospel has the influence of what is most real above everything else. They have the power and urgency of the eternal in their hearts. They rule all their affections in accordance with Christ being the Son of God, Savior of the world. They do not just have a strong opinion that the gospel is true and so give qualified assent as they do for other things where proof is elusive. They know the things of God are true. Their spiritual eyes are open to seeing Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. And as for what Christ has revealed regarding God's eternal purposes for fallen humanity and the glorious things prepared for the saints, they know them to be absolutely true. These things are of ultimate and determinative importance.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. V

*O LORD, who has mercy on all, graciously pardon my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart made to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and enjoy you, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

AMBROSE (AD 340-97), *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, P. 287



**FOR REFLECTION:** Matt. 13:44-46; 16:15-17, 24-28; Luke 14:25-35; John 6:68-69; 16:27; 17:6-8; 2 Cor. 4:3-6, 11-14; 5:1-8; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 3:6; 11:1; 1 John 4:13-16

## 11

True martyrs of Jesus Christ are possessed by the truth of the gospel. As the word “martyrs” (witnesses) implies, they hold to the truth of what they affirm. In holy practice, even under great trials, they demonstrate fidelity to the gospel, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Their minds have been enlightened to see Deity at work, to see the ineffable Divine Glory shining. For them, this is absolutely confirming. The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad begging for evidence as some erroneously think. It contains its own high and proper evidence. Nevertheless, use may be made of external arguments, and they are not to be neglected. They may awaken those who have not believed and may fortify the faith of the saints. But they are subservient to the conviction that comes from a saving faith. There can be no refutation of the spiritual conviction of those who have apprehended the beauty and glory of divine things.

But a person can believe the Christian religion is true without being convinced as a martyr, a witness. His belief rests upon information, not upon transforming conviction born of the Holy Spirit.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. V

*OUR FAITH O'ERFLOWS each written scroll;  
our creeds arise and fall;  
The life of God within the soul  
will live and outlast them all. Amen.*

FREDERICK LUCIAN HOSMER (1840–1929), HYMNARY



**FOR REFLECTION:** John 1:34; 3:1-15; Acts 22:14-15; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Thess. 1:2-5; Heb. 7:17-20; 11:1; 12:1; 2 Pet. 1:16; 1 John 4:14; 5:13-21; 2 John vv. 3-11

## 12

The excellent beauty of Christian grace largely consists of evangelical (gospel) humility. Gracious affections are accompanied by the sense a Christian has of insufficiency. Evangelical humility involves being emptied of oneself, being poor in spirit and broken in heart before God. He whose heart is under the power of Christian humility thinks of attainments in the faith as comparatively meager; he esteems himself low among the saints. Evangelical humility is marked by a true lowliness of mind, for it disposes Christians to esteem others above themselves. They are apt to view the lowest seat as belonging to them. They do not rashly assume the role of teacher but think of themselves as needing to be taught and of others as more qualified than they. The saints are less apt to assume authority, to be the chief managers and masters; they are more apt to subject themselves to others, to assess themselves as but little children in grace, and to see their attainments as the achievement of babes in Christ. They are ashamed of their low degree of love and gratitude and regret their paltry knowledge of God.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. VI

*LIVING GOD, who fills the world yet is not removed from us, we would join ourselves to you through your Spirit, warm and freshen our spirit in the sunlight of your countenance, and leave strengthened and made whole. We thank you for the little children, whose coming foretells that kingdom of righteousness that is ever at our doors, waiting to be revealed. Almighty God, all-knowing Wisdom, we thank and bless you for yourself and for your loving arms that embrace this dusty world, even when we aren't aware. Amen.*

THEODORE PARKER (1810-60), HARVARD SQUARE LIBRARY



**FOR REFLECTION:** Exod. 3:11; Jer. 1:6; Ezek. 36:26-31; Hos. 13:1; Matt. 8:4; Luke 14:10; 18:9-14; Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; James 1:19; 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 5:5

## 13

Truly gracious and holy affections are distinguished by beautiful symmetry and proportion. This should not be taken to mean that in this life, virtues and gracious affections are perfect. Often they are defective because of immaturity in grace, a lack of instruction, errors in judgment, and deficiencies in education. Nevertheless, there is absent that monstrous disproportion commonly observed in false religion and among counterfeit graces where discipleship occurs only in fits and starts.

In truly holy affections, symmetry and proportion result from the Spirit's sanctification of the whole person. Such Christians have the whole image of Christ placed upon them. They have put off the old humanity and have put on the new humanity in all its parts. Now it has pleased the Father that in Christ all fullness should dwell; there is in him every grace. They who long for Christ's fullness will receive grace upon grace. There will be established in believers something of the beautiful proportion found in Christ himself. There is symmetry in God's workmanship.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. X

*MY GOD, let me know and love you so that I may find happiness in you. Since I cannot fully achieve this on earth, help me to improve daily until I may do so to the full. Enable me to know you ever more on earth so that I may know and love you perfectly in heaven. . . . let my mind dwell on that happiness, my tongue speak of it, my heart pine for it, my mouth pronounce it, my soul hunger for it, my flesh thirst for it, and my entire being desire it until I enter through death in the joy of my Lord forever. Amen.*

ATTRIBUTED TO AUGUSTINE (AD 354–430), BISHOP OF HIPPO,  
“PRAYER OF TRUST IN GOD’S HEAVENLY PROMISE,” PRAYERS OF AUGUSTINE



**FOR REFLECTION:** 1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 90:17; **John 1:14-16**; 1 Cor. 1:10; **Eph. 4:22-32**; Phil. 4:8-13; **Col. 1:9-23**; 3:12-17; James 2:8-13; 1 Pet. 5:6-11; 2 Pet. 1:3-11

## 14

Another great and very distinguishing characteristic of gracious affections is that the higher they are raised, the greater becomes the appetite and longing for an increase. The more a true saint loves God with a holy love, the more he desires to love him, and the more dissatisfied he is by his lack of love. The more he loves God, the more he hates sin, and desires to hate it. The more his heart is broken by the world's brokenness, the more he desires his heart should be broken, and the more he longs for and thirsts after God and holiness.

Kindling gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it burns, the more it seeks to burn. Even so, a hunger after holiness and an increase of holy affections become greater and more lively in Christians most advanced in holiness. It is as much the nature of one who is born anew by the Holy Spirit to thirst after growth in holiness as it is the nature of an infant to thirst for a mother's milk. The most vivacious are the most hungry.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. XI

*ALMIGHTY GOD, who has caused eternal life to shine upon the world, we beseech you that our hearts may be so kindled with heavenly desires, and your love so shed abroad in us by the Holy Spirit, that we may continually seek the things that are above and, abiding in purity of heart and mind, may at length attain your everlasting kingdom, there to dwell in the glorious light of your presence, world without end. Amen.*

*BOOK OF PRAYERS (1851), PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN, P. 262*



**FOR REFLECTION:** Prov. 4:18; Isa. 32:6; Luke 1:53; 1 Cor. 13:10-11; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14; Phil. 1:6; 3:13-15; 1 Tim. 6:6; Heb. 6:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:18

## 15

Truly gracious religious affections bear fruit in Christian practice. They hold an influence and power over the conduct of one subject to them. They promote a practice that universally conforms to love for God. Such practice equals essential Christian discipleship; it is the unceasing business of a Christian life.

The Word of God clearly teaches that Christian practice must uniformly affect all of a person's life; he must be uniformly obedient to God's will. If one member of the body is corrupt and left unattended, it will carry the whole body to destruction. Christ cannot fully reveal his love to us until we part with our dearest failures to obey. Obedience must consist of more than just ceasing to breach God's command. Obedience is positive religion, actively practicing humility and forgiveness, being a peacemaker, showing respect for all persons, practicing benevolence, and being merciful and loving to all. Christ's peculiar people not only do good works but also are zealous of good works. They make their calling and election sure by laboring in God's vineyard. Without moral earnestness in all of life no one ascends the high hill of Zion to arrive at the heavenly city.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, *A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS*, PT. 3, SEC. XII

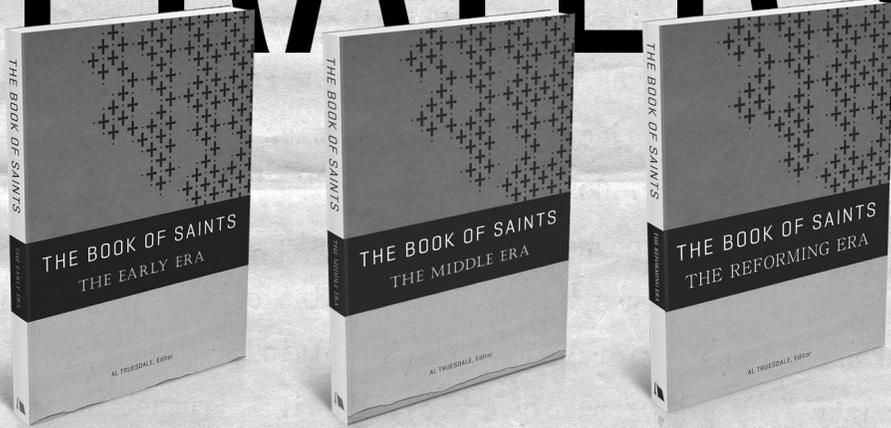
*O LORD, because you are love, and he that does not love you and his brethren does not know you, but abides in death, deliver us from injustice, envy, hatred, and malice; give us grace to pardon those who offend us and to bear one another's burdens, even as you, Lord, bear with us in your patience and great loving-kindness. Amen.*

EUGÈNE BERSIER (1831-89), *PRAYERS: ANCIENT AND MODERN*, p. 263



**FOR REFLECTION:** Ps. 1:1-6; Mal. 3:3; Matt. 5:29-30; 25:26, 30; John 15:1-27; Phil. 3:13; Col. 1:10; Titus 2:14; Heb. 6:11-12; 12:1; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; 1 John 2:1-29; 3:3; 5:18

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