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Religious Affections

By: Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards attempts to find the balance of emotional and intellectual connections to true religion in people. Though he does not find that many people show this, he states that emotions are an important part. Edwards distinguishes between true and false emotions as well as positive and negative signs towards true religion in his novel Religious Affections. In the first part of Religious Affections, Edwards finds how true affections are important to religion. In part two, Edwards finds the all the signs that has no importance to religious affections. Part three is the opposite of part two in that Edwards finds the signs that are gracious to these affections. Edwards uses the three parts in his novel to find the balance of emotional and intellectual connections to true religion.

Part one: concerning the nature of the affections and their importance to the nature in religion is all about how Edwards how the true affections are very important to religion. Edwards finds that there isn’t a lot of true affections towards religion and so he compares the lack of affection to being more valuable than gold. Edwards obviously doesn’t see any affection or maybe doesn’t see the correct form of affections towards religion and so he makes this comparison to gold because gold was so valuable. It is also compared to gold for its beauty. For the beauty and preciousness of finding true affections towards religion is better. He compares the true affections as precious, as if gold is not anywhere close to these affections. This dramatic comparison is Edward’s way of getting a point across of how rare the feeling is when he finds the true affections. From this Edward’s is conveying another message to the reader that people aren’t doing enough sincere feelings, love, or emotions towards religion and the people need to step up their efforts in order to get the full rewards back. Edwards states that there are two ways in showing true affections. The first is to show love towards Christ by loving Jesus Christ in a way that the world may not and to love and trust Him even though eyes have never been put on him. The other way is to show joy in Christ for he suffered for he suffered for everyone else to enjoy everything. These affections don’t come from only the heart; they come from the soul and show the true response to the joy and love that consist in true religion.

In part two of Edward’s novel, Edwards distinguishes which signs are not towards true affections of religion. He tells the reader of twelve signs that show false indications of true affections towards religion. Though all twelve are important to Edward’s point, there are a few that stuck out to me. The very first point is when someone shows that religious affections all the time are a false sign. That is a way to indicate that someone is appearing to show strong religious affections. Edwards says that it needs to come from the heart and soul, not just any time someone can show it. For then someone appears even less affectionate towards religion. Another false sign is when someone says that true affections towards religion have an impact on the body. Edwards states that no great effects on the body are a certain sign that someone’s affections towards religion are natural. Religion is in no way shape or form related to the body according to Edward’s because lots of things can impact the body. Another non sign is when somebody can speak fluently and abundantly of things about religion. Just because someone can speak a lot about religion and they know what they are talking about isn’t a shoe in for showing true affections towards religion. Even though someone may be able to talk about it, behind the scenes, that person may not do all he/she can do to show affection towards religion which is what Edwards is getting at.

In part three, Jonathan Edwards distinguishes the true signs of affection towards religion. He again gives the reader twelve signs which all help make his point, but there are a few that are more intriguing than others. His first point is that all real affections will come from the heart. They are divine and spiritual which makes them true feelings. This quality gives someone spiritual mind, wisdom, and blessings as Edwards says. Another point that Edwards makes is that someone who has true affections do not focus on only themselves. The person doesn’t only show love to themselves but to others as well. The foundation of this love starts with them and then it spreads to others. A person’s true affections come from their Christian practice is another statement that Edwards makes. In other words, a person needs to continuously practice in the Christian faith and be able to apply that practice in order to have true, holy affections towards religion. Though these signs may be subtle they are the essential things that Edwards looks at when determining true affection towards a religion.

Jonathan Edwards finds the intellectual and emotional balance in people to determine whether or not someone has true affections towards religion or not. Though he does not find it very much, comparing the rare sight to being better than finding gold, he keeps looking and determines the true and false signs between affection towards religion. Some of the signs that prove someone do not show true affection is showing affection all the time, true affection impacts the body, and when someone speaks fluently about religion. Edwards also points out the true indications of affection which are it comes from the heart, not only focusing on themselves, and someone who practices faith. All these signs help prove Edwards’ point which is to find people who have religious affections.

Works Cited

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