Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

I. From Sermon to Treatise: The Sermon Series *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins* and *Religious Affections*.

II. Sources

- Broad background: The Scholastics.
- Thomas Shepard (1605-1649) *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*

III. Structure

IV. Editions
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

I. The Sermons *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins* and *Religious Affections*

- Lay-clerical relationship Northampton
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I. The Sermons Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

- Preached in the winter 1737-38
- Nineteen-unit sermon series on Matt. 25:1-12
- First of three extended sermon series between Connecticut revival (1735) and Great Awakening (ca. 1740)
- Purpose: theological-pastoral inquiry
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• I. The Sermons Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

  • Thomas Shepard *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* (1659)
  • Thomas Manton, sermons series on Matt. 25:1-13 in collected works (London, 1678-1701)
  • Benjamin Colman *Practical Discourses upon the Parable of the Ten Virgins* (London, 1707)
  • John Tillotson, *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* (London, 1694)
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I. The Sermons *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.*

- sermon 1 (units 1-3, Nov. 1737) introduction
- sermon 2 (unit 4, Dec. 1737)
- sermon 3 (unit 5, Jan. 1738)
- sermons 4-7 (units 6-9, 1737/38) true & false Chr. agree
- sermon 8 (units 10-11, Feb. 1738)
- sermons 9-12 (units 12-19, undated) saints & hypocr. differ
I. The Sermons series on the *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins* is much concerned with “religious affections”

“[F]alse Christians as well as true may make profession of experience of a work of conversion, and may indeed have many religious affections. They may have great religious affection of sorrow, and may have great affections of gratitude, and may be much affected in reading and hearing of the great things that Christ did and suffered, and may be affected in hearing the gospel preached, and may love to hear the word preached.” [Sermon no. 6]
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I. The Sermons series on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins of 1737-38 is foundational for the Treatise on Religious Affection of 1746.

- Theological issue: Arminianism & Antinomianism

- Pastoral concern: The visible church of Christ is made up of true and false Christians
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II. Sources

- Broad background: The Scholastics.
- Thomas Shepard (1605–1649) *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*
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II. Broad background: The Scholastics.

- Edwards source material originates from 17th century “scholastic” trained theologians such as,
  - William Ames (1576-1633), Christ’s College, Cambridge, Franeker
  - John Flavel (1630-91), Oxford
  - Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706), Duisburg, Utrecht, Heidelberg, Oxford
  - John Owen (1616-83), Oxford
  - John Preston (1587-1628), King’s College, Cambridge
  - Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), Harvard College
  - Francois Turretin (1623-87), Leyden, Paris. Geneva
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II. Broad background: The Scholastics.

Speculative and Practical theology: Text and Trajectories

“And the impressing divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end for which God has ordained, that his Word delivered in the holy Scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon men, in preaching. And therefore it don’t answer the aim which God had in this institution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expositions on the Scripture, and other good books of divinity; because, although these may tend, as well as preaching, to give men a good doctrinal or speculative understanding of the things of the Word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impress them on men’s hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular and lively application of his Word, to men, in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect sinners, with the importance of the things of religion, and their own misery, and necessity of a remedy, and the glory and sufficiency of a remedy provided,” *WJE* 2:115.
II. Sources


Wherein, the Difference between the Sincere Christian and the most Refined Hypocrite, the Nature and Conditions of Swearing and of Common Grace, the Dangers and Dangers incident to most flourishing Churches or Christians, and other Spiritual TRUTHS of great importance, are clearly discovered, and vividly improved.

BY THOMAS SHEPARD late Worthy and Faithful Pastor of the Church of Christ at Cambridge in New-England.

Now Published from the Authors own Notes, at the desires of many, for the common benefit of the British people.


Printed by J. Neeve for John Nathaniel, at the Sign of the Fountain in Goldsmith Row in Cheapside. 1660.
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- Thomas Shepard (1605-1649)
  - England (b. 1605) - New England (1635-1649)
  - 2nd generation New England preacher ("pastor evangelicus")
  - Antinomian Controversy (ca. 1636-1640)
    - The Sincere Convert (London, 1641)
    - The Sound Believer (London, 1645)
    - The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened & Applied (London, 1660)
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- Context of *The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened & Applied* is the Antinomian Controversy
  - ἀντί, ”against, instead” + νόμος, ”law”
  - Anne Hutchinson (ca. 1591-1643) and others
    - Obedience to the law (for obtaining assurance of faith) is abandoned
      - justification and assurance is only based on Christ and not dependent on the obedience of God’s commandments
    - Immediate revelations of the Holy Spirit
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- The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened & Applied
  - Posthumous Publication (1660) of sermon series 1636-40
  - Part I Preparation of the visible church for the coming of Christ (22 chap.)
  - Part II Coming of Christ to his church, as Bridegroom (19 chap.)
  - Structure of each sermon (chapter): (Text) Doctrine, Reason, and Use
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- The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened & Applied
  - Part I: Concerns difference between saints and “evangelical hypocrites”
  - Part II: Concerns the coming of Christ and the characters of saving and common grace.
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- The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened & Applied and Religious Affections
  - Thomas Shepard (1605-1649)  Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)
  - Cambridge University  Yale College
  - Founding member Harvard Coll. Tutor, Commencement speaker
  - Antinomian Controversy  The Awakenings
  - Saints and Hypocrites  True and False religion

69 of the 132 citations in Religious Affections originate from The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened & Applied
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- Citations of Shepard’s Parable sermon in Religious Affections.
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Citations of Shepard’s Parable sermon in Religious Affections, Part III.
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

• Citations of Shepard’s Parable sermon Part I & II in Religious Affections.
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

• Citations of Shepard’s Parable sermon Part I in Religious Affections.
A Treatise
Concerning
Religious Affections,
In Three Parts;

Part I. Concerning the Nature of the Affections, and their Importance in Religion.
Part II. Shewing what are no certain Signs that religious Affections are gracious, or that they are not.
Part III. Shewing what are distinguishing Signs of truly gracious and holy Affections.

By Jonathan Edwards, A.M.

And Editor of the First Church in Northampton.

Levit. ix. ult. and x. 1, 2. And there came a Fire out from before the Lord, upon the Altar, which when all the People saw, they feared and fell on their Faces. And Nadab and Abihu offered strange Fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: And there was a Fire from the Lord, and destroyed them, and they died before the Lord.

Cant. ii. 12, 13. The Flowers appear on the Earth, the Foes of the Foes are come, and the Peace of the People is heard in our Land; the Fig-tree puttest forth her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grapes, give a good Smell. Ver. 17. Take us the Flowers, the little Flowers, which poll the Vines, for our Vines have tender Grapes.

Boston:
Printed for S. Kneeland and T. Green in Queen-street, over against the Prison. 1746.
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

III. Structure

- **Part I**: Nature and Importance of the Affections (based on a sermon of I Peter 1:8) [Definition]
- **Part II**: Showing No certain Signs of Truly Gracious Affections
- **Part III**: The Distinguishing Signs
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

Part I: Nature and Importance of the Affections

- Based on a sermon of I Peter 1:8-Text, Doctrine, Application, “whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory”
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

III. Structure
Part II: Showing No certain Signs of Truly Gracious Affections

1. Intensity of experience is of itself no sign.

2. Intense bodily reactions are not signs that the affections are truly of God.

3. Much fluent and fervent talk of itself is no sign.

4. Emotions that are aroused inexplicably are not necessarily true.

5. The experience of Scripture being brought to mind is no evidence of true religious affections.

6. The exhibition/show of love is no sign.
Part II: Showing No certain Signs of Truly Gracious Affection

7. A variety of religious affections at the same time is no evidence of true affection (e.g., zeal, joy, godly sorrow); they may be produced as counterfeits within the "natural man."

8. The feelings of comfort and joy that follow conversion or a spiritual awakening are not necessarily authentic signs of true religious affections; test only by the fruits of the Spirit.

9. True religious affections are not to be measured by the amount of religious activities or practices engaged in.

10. Verbal worship - verbal praying, talking about God, etc. - is no sure sign.

11. Self-confidence/assurance of salvation is of itself not a sufficient sign (it may be the hypocrisy of self-confidence).

12. Outward evidences are not enough (many who have demonstrated outwardly their faith eventually fell away).
Religious Affections: Trajectories and Text

Part III: The Distinguishing Signs

1. The Holy Spirit is the only source of true affections toward God.
2. The basis of true religious affections is the divine excellency and glory of God in Jesus Christ, and not our own need of him.
3. Therefore, true religious affections are developed only through delighting in God’s holiness or ”beauty and moral excellence.”
4. True religious affections are formed only through spiritual understanding or enlightening of the mind by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.
5. True religious affections are grounded in the conviction of the historical truth of the gospel, not subjective reasonings or imaginings.
6. A deep awareness of personal insufficiency as a result of sin, often called ”evangelical humiliation,” stimulates and sustains true religious affections.
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Part III: The Distinguishing Signs

7. True religious affections produce conversions that change one’s character.

8. A Christlike gentleness signifies true religious affections.

9. True religious affections are marked by tenderness instead of hardheartedness.

10. True religious affections produce a balance in the life of the convert, balance in consistency and constancy, in temperament and development of Christian virtues.

11. As true religious affections increase, so will a longing for spiritual matters.

12. True religious affections are intensely practical in everyday life; they change lives practically and they produce practical results: "Christian practice is much more to be preferred as evidence of salvation than sudden conversion, mystical enlightenment, or the mere experience of emotional comfort that begins and ends with contemplation."

III. Structure
Edwards last and greatest work on revival, it is a masterpiece of what scholars now call “religious psychology.” The fundamental question of the work is “How can one determine what is a true work of the Spirit of God in one’s own heart?”

I. Theology of Affections
What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies.
“Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7 et al.

II. Inconclusive Signs
Things that do not necessarily demonstrate a work of God.
Intensity of outward demonstrations, much vocal praise of God, helpful scriptures popping into the mind, confidence of salvation, conforming to a particular pattern of conversion, etc.
III. Distinguishing Signs
These include such things as affections that originate from spiritual, supernatural, and divine operations in the heart (having little to do with the flesh), affections with no relation to self-interest, affections that promote humility, affections that are not of a censuring or judgmental spirit, and affections that desire communion with God.

The Twelfth Sign is most important:

True religious affections manifest themselves in Christian practice “by their fruits you shall know them.” (Matt. 7:16)
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IV. Editions

- Boston, 1746
- London, 1762
- (Boston) New York, 1768
- Edinburgh, 1772
- London, 1774
- Utrecht, 1779 (Dutch translation)
- New York, 1787
- London, 1789
- Boston, 1794
- Philadelphia, 1794
- London, 1796
- London, 1801
- Bala, 1809 (Welsh translation)
- Dublin, 1810, 1812
- Leeds, 1817
- Philadelphia, 1821
- Boston, 1821, 1824
- Edinburgh, 1822
- Glasgow, 1825
- London, 1827
- London, 1801 (Abridge John Wesley, 1773)
- New York, 1828
- etc. etc.
Religious Affections

The Religious Affections provides a venue in cultivating and examining authentic faith. - Dr. Larry Hubbard, 2009.

His book called The Religious Affections lays bare the soul with such relentless care and Biblical honesty that, two hundred years later, it still breaks the heart of the sensitive reader. - John Piper, 1988.

The Affections represents a probing of the nature of piety with a finer instrument than Edwards had used in other revival writings. - John E. Smith, 1959.

In this world, so full of darkness and delusion, it is of great importance that all should be able to distinguish between true religion and that which is false. - Samuel Hopkins, 1799.

I hope it [Religious Affections] will tend to promote the interest of religion. - Jonathan Edwards, 1746.