

BOOK REVIEW

of

John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards, with the complete text of The End for Which God Created the World*, Crossway Books, 1998.

This book is a recent addition to the Evangel Library, and this review is presented by Larry D. Paarmann.

John Piper is pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. You may know of him through his books, through his speaking engagements, or through *Desiring God Ministries*.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1759) was a Congregational pastor, serving congregations in Northampton and Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He is today known mostly for his profound theological writings, such as *Freedom of the Will*, and *Original Sin*. But did you know that he also edited and published David Brainerd's (missionary to American Indians) journals under the title of *The Life of David Brainerd*, and that this book has had a deep and lasting impact on evangelism? Edwards and Brainerd, both Calvinists, were active evangelists, and Edwards played a significant role in the "Great Awakening" of the 1700s. William Carey, David Livingstone, Andrew Murray, and Jim Elliot, among other missionaries, have testified to the influence of *The Life of David Brainerd* upon them. Piper says "For 250 years Edwards has been fueling the missionary movement with his biography of David Brainerd."

And yet this same man was president, for a short time before his death, of what is now Princeton University, and of whom D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says "No man is more relevant to the present condition of Christianity than Jonathan Edwards." And Perry Miller, general editor of the Yale University Press (Edwards is a graduate of Yale) edition of the Works of Jonathan Edwards, says that Edwards is "the greatest philosopher-theologian yet to grace the American scene." In Piper's judgment, "Jonathan Edwards is in a class by himself in American history, perhaps in the history of Christendom."

This book by John Piper, which includes the complete text of Jonathan Edwards' *The End for Which God Created the World*, is noteworthy for at least two reasons. (By the way, since the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, what do you think is the end for which God created the world?) The first reason is that this book by Piper contains a new printing of *The End for Which God Created the World* that has been critically updated, and not just a reprinting of an old version. Piper has compared versions, modified punctuation for clarity, added headings, and most importantly, has added numerous explanatory footnotes. All of this makes *The End* easier to read and understand. The second reason this is a noteworthy book is that it is an excellent introduction to the life and work of Jonathan Edwards.

The book has two parts, each being about 100 pages in length. Part 1, consisting of four chapters, is Piper's introduction to Jonathan Edwards: the man, his impact upon the Church, and his impact upon John Piper.

Part 2 is a new printing of Jonathan Edwards' *The End for Which God Created the World*. Edwards' writings are philosophical and theological in content, and while not difficult reading in terms of vocabulary, etc., they are challenging in their content. In *The End*, Edwards "is saying nothing more than he taught the Indian children on 'man's chief end' from the first question of the Shorter Catechism" (from Iain Murray's biography of Edwards). Nevertheless, much more than this was also going on. His mind "soars like an eagle towards the sun," and with a radically God-centered vision of creation and virtue.

This unique Christian intellectual saw no conflict between teaching children the Catechism, peaching revival sermons such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," or writing some of the profoundest theological and philosophical books ever written. If he is new to you or not, but you would like to know more, this book is for you. Happy reading!