Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography

by Iain Hamish Murray

Discerning Reader: Review of Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography

Jonathan Edwards, the 18th century Puritan theologian, has been the subject of many biographies. Iain Hamish Murray's "Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography" is one of the most recent and comprehensive works on the man and his legacy. Murray, a schoolmaster and pastor, wrote the book with the intention of portraying Edwards as a Christian first and foremost. Murray's biography is an authoritative and well-researched work that provides a fresh perspective on Edwards and his influence on the Christian world.

Edwards was born on October 5, 1703, in East Windsor, Connecticut. He was the son of Jonathan Edwards, Sr., a minister, and Sarah (Wheaton) Edwards. Edwards was the first of six children and was raised in a strict Calvinist household. From a young age, Edwards showed a strong religious inclination and a passion for the Bible. In 1720, he entered Yale College, where he studied under the guidance of Aaron Burr, the future president of the college.

Edwards's early theological training was grounded in the teachings of John Calvin and the Puritans. He was heavily influenced by John Cotton and the English Puritan tradition. Edwards became a minister in 1727 and served in several churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts. He was known for his powerful sermons and his ability to connect with his congregation.

In 1734, Edwards was appointed as a professor at King's College (now Columbia University). He remained at King's College until 1741, when he was appointed as the first president of Princeton College. Edwards's tenure at Princeton was marked by his commitment to theological education and his influence on the early years of Princeton.

Edwards is best known for his role in the Great Awakening, a religious revival that occurred in the late 18th century. Edwards's sermons and his calls for spiritual renewal were a key part of the movement. He was a leader in the movement and was considered one of the most influential ministers of the era.

In 1758, Edwards died of a smallpox inoculation, but his influence and legacy continued to grow. Murray's biography is a comprehensive work that covers Edwards's life, his theology, and his impact on the Christian world. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Edwards and his role in the Great Awakening.

Overall, "Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography" is a well-researched and balanced work that provides a fresh perspective on Edwards and his legacy. Murray's biography is sure to be a valuable resource for students and scholars of Edwards and the Great Awakening.