Sweeney’s Booknotes: A Theology of Joy
by Doug Sweeney | June 22nd, 2018


The current volume tells the story of his author’s quest for joy in everyday life and pastoral ministry, which was completed with a little bit of help from John Piper and the writings of Edwards and others (especially Augustine and Calvin). It also sets forth an Edwardsian theology of joy. The author of this book does not attempt to mine new territory or to discover new theological truths that have never been discussed more comprehensively in other places. As limiting as the topic of joy is, this short book does not attempt to be a theological novel or particularly original. On the contrary, this book will merely attempt to summarize a few of the major themes related to joy that can be found in the writings of the Puritan, Jonathan Edwards. (p. 55)

A Theology of Joy includes ten main chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. After doing some of his own Edwardsian-style exegesis, the author gets freed from some of Edwards’ best-known writings, most importantly... through perhaps one of the most famous and insightful passages (on the relationship of joy and Commerce) as an opportunity to explore a new topic—how the joy that is found in the Lord’s service can be extended to the family and friends outside of the family. Although there are many truths and counterpoints, there is truly no joy that can replace that which I have in God’s infinite work of redemption. Secondarily, as a pastor, I must prepare my people for death by introducing them to the temporality of this world (as beautiful as it is) and causing them to set their gaze forward, on the eternal joys that are to come in eternity in the ‘joy of the Lord’ (Matthew 25:21) (p. 203).

More power to Boss, Everhart and several other pastors reviewed here in the past few years making Edwards more available and accessible in the churches.

Tags: JE-Society, Matthew Everhart, Robert Boss

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