When D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones gave his paper on ‘Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival’ at the Westminster Conference in 1976, he confessed that the paper was ‘one of the most difficult tasks I have ever attempted’. Part of the reason for this, Lloyd-Jones admitted, was the immense influence Edwards had had upon him personally. But there was also the fact that Edwards was a spiritual and theological giant. ‘I am tempted,’ Lloyd-Jones said, ‘perhaps foolishly, to compare the Puritans to the Alps, Luther and Calvin to the Himalayas, and Jonathan Edwards to Mount Everest!’ And as he faced ‘this great peak pointing up to heaven,’ Lloyd-Jones continued, he could but feel like a weak ‘little climber’. If Lloyd-Jones felt so daunted by Edwards, how much more does this writer! My only hope is similar to that of Lloyd-Jones: ‘to give some glimpses of this man and his life, and what he did,’ with the goal of persuading you to read Edwards for yourself.

Edwards was born on October 5, 1703 in a town far from the centres of influence and power, East Windsor, Connecticut. His parents both came from well established New England Puritan families: his father, Timothy Edwards (1669-1758), the pastor of the Congregationalist church in East Windsor, was first cousin to the well-known Puritan theologian and historian Cotton Mather (1663-1728), while his mother, Esther (1672-1770), was the daughter of Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), one of the most eminent Congregationalist pastors in New England. Stoddard was especially renowned for his fervent preaching and for the recurrent revivals which his congregation in Northampton, Connecticut had experienced.

Jonathan, the only son of eleven children, received his early education from his father and older sisters. At the age of 13 he entered the Collegiate School of Connecticut in New Haven, Connecticut, which would be later renamed Yale College. Although he had been raised in an extremely godly home, and was characterized by great and violent inward struggles.5 Edwards stayed on at the College for a further two years after graduation in 1720, studying towards an M.A.6 This was on reading those words, I Tim. 1:17. "Now unto the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused ther’ it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a being that was; and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up to God in Heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him. I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself; and went to prayer, to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was anything spiritual, or of a saving nature in this.

From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption and the glorious way of salvation by Him. I had an inward, sweet sense of these things, that at times came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged, to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ; and the beauty and excellency of His person, and the lovely way of salvation, by free grace in Him.... The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart; and ardour of soul, that I know not how to express.

How excellent a being that was; and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up to God in Heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him

After a relatively brief stint of pastoring a small Presbyterian work in New York, Edwards moved back to his hometown of East Windsor in April of 1723. That summer he was invited by the Congregationalist Church of Northampton, Massachusetts, to become assistant to its pastor, his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. In the words of Iain H. Murray: "For the next twenty-three years he was to be 'Mr Edwards of Northampton'."9 Within a year of his arrival at Northampton Edwards had married. He had known his bride Sarah Pierrepont (1710-1758), since his student days at Yale. Samuel Miller, who wrote a biography of Edwards in the last century, comments thus on their marriage:10 Perhaps no event of Mr. Edwards’ life had a more close connexion with his subsequent comfort and usefulness than this marriage.
Throughout their married lives Sarah and Jonathan were deeply devoted to one another; moreover, her godliness fully matched his. Their first daughter, Sarah (1728-1805), was born the following year. She was the first of eleven children, all of whom survived infancy. In a day when infant mortality was extremely high (Cotton Mather, for instance, had fifteen children, of whom only two survived infancy), this is indeed an amazing fact. Moreover, it should be noted that the frequent portrayal of Edwards as a stern theologian is belied by his tenderness as both a husband and a father, "whose children seemed genuinely fond of him."12

Solomon Stoddard died in 1729, leaving to his grandson the ministerial charge of one of the richest congregations in Connecticut. Spiritually, though, things were far from good at the time of Stoddard's death. Edwards wrote of the congregation at that time:

The greater part seemed to be at that time very insensible of the things of religion, and engaged in other cares and pursuits. Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dullness in religion. Licentiousness for some years prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night-walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein some, by their example, exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together, in conventions of both sexes for mirth and jollity, which they called frolics; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without regard to any order in the families they belonged to: and indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It became very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed in such a degree, had it not been that my grandfather, through his great age (though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last), was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided; by which they maintained a jealousy one of the other, and were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

Many of the adults of the congregation were taken up with the pursuit of wealth and property, not with that of God and his people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed in such a degree, had it not been that my grandfather, through his great age (though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last), was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided; by which they maintained a jealousy one of the other, and were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

While there were other factors, Edwards' preaching of Scriptural truth, especially that relating to justification by faith alone, was central to the onset of revival in December of 1734.

However, under Edwards' powerful preaching during the course of the early 1730s there was aroused a growing sensitivity to sin and a willingness to listen to counsel from the Scriptures. While there were other factors, Edwards' preaching of Scriptural truth, especially that relating to justification by faith alone, was central to the onset of revival in December of 1734. For the next five months an intense concern to be at peace with God and to walk with him gripped the entire town. 'The town seemed to be full of the presence of God,' Edwards later wrote in his account of this revival. Of the town's roughly one thousand inhabitants, there was hardly one who was not concerned 'about the great things of the eternal world.' Those who knew Christ were 'wrapped up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God, the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ; and... in longing desires after God and Christ.' On those who did not know Christ the initial effect was twofold:

One was... immediately to quit their sinful practices.... When once the Spirit of God began to be so wonderfully poured out in a general way through the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels, backbitings, and intermeddling with other men's matters. The tavern was soon left empty, and persons kept very much at home; none went abroad unless on necessary business, or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a Sabbath-day. The other effect was, that it put them on earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, mediation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference; their cry was, What shall we do to be saved?

The ways were varied in which the Spirit of God then brought many of these people to peace with God. There is a very great variety, as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with, before they attain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God. Some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more encouragement and hope than others. Some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the issue seems to be the same. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights... Some few instances there have been, of persons who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborne; and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell.

All in all, Edwards reckoned that 'more than 300 souls were savingly brought home to Christ' in Northampton during the six months of revival. Nor was the revival confined to Northampton, as past revivals during Solomon Stoddard's ministry had been. From Northampton the revival spread swiftly to over thirty other towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Edwards' account of this revival, entitled A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God, in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls, in Northampton, was first published in London in 1737. Murray is of the opinion that it may well have been 'the most significant book to precede the great evangelical awakening on both sides of the Atlantic.' It was certainly well received by those who would be leaders in that awakening, John Wesley (1703-91), for instance, read it in 1738, only a few months after his conversion. His comments on the book were drawn from Psalm 118:23: 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' And when Howel Harris (1714-73), the future Welsh Calvinistic Methodist leader, read Edwards'
book, he felt his heart 'boiling with love to Christ,' and he prayed, 'O go on with Thy work there and here.'

Howel Harris' prayer received an answer in 1740-42, when God again visited New England with revival, but this time on a much more extensive scale. Known as the Great Awakening, the revival deeply impacted not only New England, but also the other American colonies to the south. Estimates of those converted simply in New England, where the population was around 250,000 at the time, range from 25,000 to 50,000. It should be noted that these figures do not include conversions of those who were already church members. In the midst of the revival William Cooper (1694-1743), a Congregationalist minister from Boston, declared that:

The dispensation of grace we are now under, is certainly such as neither we nor our fathers have seen; and in some circumstances so wonderful, that I believe there has not been the like since the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit immediately after our Lord's ascension. The apostolical times seem to have returned upon us: such a display has there been of the power and grace of the divine Spirit in the assemblies of his people, and such testimonies has he given to the word of the gospel....

The apostolical times seem to have returned upon us: such a display has there been of the power and grace of the divine Spirit in the assemblies of his people, and such testimonies has he given to the word of the gospel.

A number of preachers have appeared among us, to whom God has given such a large measure of his Spirit, that we are ready sometimes to apply to them the character given of Barnabas, that 'he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith' [Acts 11:24]. They preach the gospel of the grace of God from place to place, with uncommon zeal and assiduity. The doctrines they insist on are the doctrines of the reformation, under the influence whereof the power of godliness so flourished in the last century. The points on which their preaching mainly turns are those important ones of man's guilt, corruption, and impotence; supernatural regeneration by the Spirit of God, and free justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; and the marks of the new birth. The manner of their preaching is not with the enticing words of man's wisdom; howbeit, they speak wisdom among them that are perfect. An ardent love to Christ and souls warms their breasts and animates their labours. God has made those his ministers active spirits, a flame of fire in his service; and his word in their mouths has been, 'as a fire, and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.'....

This work is truly extraordinary, in respect of its extent.... It has entered and spread in some of the most populous towns, the chief places of concourse and business.... It is extraordinary also with respect to the numbers that have been the subjects of this operation. Stupid sinners have been awakened by hundreds; and the inquiry has been general in some places, 'What must I do to be saved?' I verily believe that in this our metropolis, there were the last winter some thousands under such religious impressions as they never felt before.

The work has been remarkable also for the various sorts of persons that have been under its influence. These have been of all ages. Some elderly persons have been snatched as brands out of the burning, made monuments of divine mercy, and born to God, though out of due time; as the apostle speaks in his own case [cf. 1 Cor. 15:8]; but here, with us, it has lain mostly among the young. Sprightly youth have been made to bow like willows to the Redeemer's sceptre, and willingly to subscribe with their own hands to the Lord....

Some of the greatest sinners have appeared to be turned into real saints; drunkards have become temperate; fornicators and adulterers of a chasté conversation; swearers and profane persons have learned to fear that glorious and fearful Name, THE LORD THEIR GOD; and carnal worldlings have been made to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness....

The virtuous and civil have been convinced that morality is not to be relied on for life; and so excited to seek after the new birth, and a vital union to Jesus Christ by faith.... At the same time, many of the children of God have been greatly quickened and refreshed; have been awakened out of the sleeping frames they were fallen into, and excited to give diligence to make their calling and election sure; and have had precious, reviving, and sealing times. Thus extensive and general the divine influence has been at this glorious season.

Among the preachers whom Cooper likens to Barnabas were Edwards and the English Methodist George Whitefield (1714-70). Whitefield had arrived in America in October of 1739, and did not return to England until early 1741. He and Edwards met for the first time on Friday, October 17, 1740. Whitefield's memorable visit at the Edwards' home lasted until the Sunday evening, October 19. In his journal entry for October 19, Whitefield wrote:

Felt great satisfaction in being at the house of Mr. Edwards. A sweeter couple I have not yet seen. Their children were not dressed in silks and satins, but plain, as become the children of God, though out of due time; as the apostle speaks in his own case [cf. 1 Cor. 15:8], but here, with us, it has lain mostly among the young. Sprightly youth have been made to bow like willows to the Redeemer's sceptre, and willingly to subscribe with their own hands to the Lord....

Felt great satisfaction in being at the house of Mr. Edwards. A sweeter couple I have not yet seen. Their children were not dressed in silks and satins, but plain, as become the children of those who, in all things, ought to be examples of Christian simplicity. Mrs. Edwards is adorned with a meek and quiet spirit; she talked solidly of the things of God, and seemed to be such a helpmeet for her husband, that she caused me to renew those prayers which, for some months, I have put up to God, that He would be pleased to send me a daughter of Abraham to be my wife.

There were, however, other leaders in the revival of quite a different stamp than either Edwards or Whitefield. James Davenport (1716-57), for instance, was a minister from Southold, Long Island, whose preaching in the early stages of the revival could not be faulted. But as the revival progressed, his words and deeds became increasingly tinged with fanaticism. He denounced ministers who refused to allow him the use of their pulpits as unconverted and urged their people to immediately separate from them. Those whom he considered regenerate he called 'brother' or 'sister', the rest 'neighbour'. Bodily tremors, outcries, and fainting experienced under his preaching he re-
garded as sure evidence of conversion. The most bizarre episode of his career took place in March, 1743 in the town of New London, Connecticut. There, at Davenport's instigation, his followers publicly dissociated themselves from heresy by burning in a bonfire a large quantity of books, including some by the well-known Puritans John Flavel (c.1630-91) and Increase Mather (1639-1723), the father of Cotton Mather! Davenport's followers then proceeded to dance around the bonfire praising God and shouting 'Hallelujah!'\(^{29}\)

Although Davenport eventually came to his senses, admitted his errors and sought to make restitution, he had helped to unleash a 'wild-fire' spirit which in many places made havoc of the revival. Moreover, Davenport's antics provided anti-revival forces, known as the 'Old Lights', with a highly visible target for their attacks. The captain of these forces was Charles Chauncy (1705-87), the co-pastor of Boston's prestigious First Church. In an open letter published in Scotland in 1742 Chauncy declared that in his opinion:\(^{30}\)

There never was such a Spirit of Superstition and Enthusiasm reigning in the land before; never such gross Disorders and barefaced Affronts to common Decency: never such scandalous Reproaches on the Blessed Spirit, making him the Author of the greatest Irregularities and Confusions.

Chauncy went on to express a hope that through the events of the revival 'a good Number... have settled into a truly Christian Temper'. Nevertheless, he was firmly persuaded that the revival:\(^{31}\)

In general, is any other than the Effect of enthusiastick Heat. The Goodness that has been so much talked of, 'tis plain to me, is nothing more, in general, than a Commotion in the Passions. I can't see that Men have been made better, if hereby be Meant, their being formed to a nearer Resemblance to the Divine Being in moral Holiness. 'Tis not evident to me, that Persons, generally, have a better Understanding of Religion, a better Government of their Passions, a more Christian Love to their Neighbour, or that they are more decent and regular in their Devotions towards God. I am clearly of the Mind, they are worse in all these Regards. They place their Religion so much in the Heat and Fervour of their Passions, that they too much neglect their Reason and Judgment.

For Chauncy, the excesses of the revival revealed its true nature: it was not at all a work of God's Spirit, but merely an instance of uncontrolled emotionalism. Chauncy believed that the main work of the Spirit is to enlighten man's reason and understanding. Thus he could write:\(^{32}\)

The plain Truth is, an enlightened Mind, and not raised Affections, ought always to be the Guide of those who call themselves Men; and this, in the Affairs of Religion, as well as other Things: And it will be so, where God really works on their Hearts, by his SPIRIT.

When Chauncy viewed the revival through the lens of the antics of Davenport and others like him, it is not surprising that he came to the conclusion that the revival was mostly heat with little light, and therefore to be rejected as spurious. In reality, Chauncy was defending a Christianity which required mental assent to right doctrine and the maintenance of proper morals. As the religious situation in New England began to polarize between those who took Chauncy's position and those who defended the revival, excesses and all, a Presbyterian sympathetic to the revival named John Moorhead prayed: 'God direct us what to do, particularly with pious zealots and cold, diabolical opposers!'\(^{33}\)

The answer to Moorhead's prayer came by way of a book, Jonathan Edwards' A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections. Prior to the appearance of this book in 1746, Edwards had produced a couple of works which sought to find a middle ground between 'pious zealots', like Davenport and 'cold, diabolical opposers', like Chauncy: The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God (1741) and Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England (1742). But it is the Religious Affections which is his consummate work on revival. Murray has rightly described it as 'one of the most important books possessed by the Christian church on the nature of true religion'.\(^{34}\) The book had its origin as a series of sermons which Edwards had preached in 1742 and 1743 on 1 Peter 1:8 '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'. The book wrestles with the key questions which had been raised in the controversy regarding the revival: What is the nature of true Christian experience? How does one differentiate between genuine devotion and false piety? What distinguishes true religious affections from religious fanaticism? What are the marks of a genuine revival?

**True religion affects the heart as well as the mind. When the Spirit acts upon a man or a woman, he does not simply shed light in the mind, but he moves upon the will, causing it to exercise, for instance, such affections as love for Christ and joy in him.**

Religious Affections is divided into three main sections.\(^{35}\) In Part I Edwards makes a frontal attack upon the position of Chauncy, though he never refers to him explicitly. True religion, Edwards Asserts, affects the heart as well as the mind. When the Spirit acts upon a man or a woman, he does not simply shed light in the mind, but he moves upon the will, causing it to exercise, for instance, such affections as love for Christ and joy in him. Edwards writes:\(^{36}\)

Although to true religion there must indeed be something else besides affection, yet true religion consists so much in the affections that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection is in a state of spiritual death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, saving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart.... As, on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding as well as an affected fervent heart; where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart; so, on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light.... If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart.

But it is to those at the other extreme, who emphasized 'heat without light', that Edwards directs the bulk of his book. Part II
advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, explicit agreement and visible union of God's extraordinary prayer, for the revival of religion and the increase holiness'.

41 True religious affections 'begin with a delight in [God's] holiness', from which all of God's other attributes derive their beauty and attractiveness.

42 One final work of Edwards' related to the issue of revival that should be taken note of is his An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, which appeared in January, 1748. In this work Edwards made a stirring appeal for:

43 Many people, in different parts of the world, by express agreement to come into a visible union in extraordinary,... fervent and constant prayer, for those great effusions of the Holy Spirit, which shall bring on [the advancement of Christ's Church and kingdom.

Edwards was thoroughly convinced, and rightly so, on the basis of Scripture and the history of the church, that 'when God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will that there should precede it the extraordinary prayers of his people'.

Unlike some of his other works, this book did not have a great impact in Edwards' own lifetime. But, as we shall see, it certainly exercised a profound influence towards the end of the eighteenth century.

1748, the year that saw the publication of Edwards' Humble Attempt, is also significant in that it witnessed the beginnings of a controversy which engulfed Edwards' own congregation in Northampton.44 The heart of the controversy involved a practice which Edwards' grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, had instituted at the beginning of the century. Stoddard was of the opinion that the reception of the Lord's Supper was not to be restricted to believers, since he vigorously maintained that God could and did use it as a means of conversion. He thus encouraged all in his congregation who had not professed conversion, but who were seeking to live respectable lives, to come to it. The conviction that this practice was thoroughly unscriptural had been deepening in Edwards' mind for quite some time before he declared in December of 1747 that a person must profess to be a Christian before he or she would be allowed to come to the Lord's Table. In taking this position Edwards found himself opposed by most of his congregation, and a painful controversy ensued, which ultimately issued in his dismissal as pastor in 1750. The atmosphere which the controversy created in Northampton is well displayed in the following portion of a letter which Edwards wrote to his good friend Joseph Bellamy (1719-90) at the end of 1749:

'Tis a Time of great Trial with me, and ... I stand in Continual need of the divine Presence & merciful Conduct in such a state of things as this. I need Gods Counsel in every step I take & every word I speak; so all that I do & say is watched by the multitude around me with the utmost Strictness & with eyes of the greatest uncharitableness & severity and let me do or say what I will, my words & actions are represented in dark colours.

After his dismissal Edwards became pastor of the church in the frontier village of Stockbridge, Massachusetts and a missionary to the Mohawk and Hoosatonic Indians of the area.

There is little doubt that Edwards' removal from Northampton to Stockbridge in 1750 was providential, for it was during his seven years at Stockbridge that Edwards had the time to write the books which established him as the 'greatest Christian theologian of the eighteenth century'.45 Among these works was his notable defence of Calvinism, A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, Which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency (1754). This period of literary fruitfulness at Stockbridge came to an end in 1757 when Edwards reluctantly accepted an invitation to become president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. Edwards had been at the College only a few weeks when he was inoculated against smallpox, which was raging in Princeton and the vicinity. The vaccine initially appeared to be successful, but complications set in, and Edwards, never a strong man physically, died on March 22, 1758. Among his last words were some for his wife, who was still at Stockbridge with most of their children. To his one child who was present at his bedside, Lucy (1736-86), he said:

Give my kindest love to my dear wife, and tell her, that the uncommon union, which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature, as I trust is spiritual, and therefore will continue for ever.

Shortly after he had said this, those at his bedside, supposing he...
was unconscious, were lamenting what his death would mean to the College and the church, when they were surprised by his last words: ‘Trust in God, and ye need not fear’.48

What then can we learn from Jonathan Edwards? Well, first he can teach us about revival, for, as Lloyd-Jones has stressed, he is ‘pre-eminently the theologian of Revival’.49 He not only knew genuine revival at first-hand, but he also had the mind and the spiritual maturity to produce a rich and profound corpus of literature on revival. Here, we need to take our cue from some genuine revival at first-hand, but he also had the mind and the ability to protect and defend... and do all things.... He is the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: a strong rock, and a high tower. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heaven... and in his excellency on the sky: the eternal God is a refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms. He is a God who hath all things in his hands, and does whatsoever he pleases: he killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up; he maketh poor and maketh rich: the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s....

This is a God that delighteth in mercy; his grace is infinite, and endures for ever. He is love itself, an infinite fountain and ocean of it.

Edward is indispensable for a Christian generation that is largely indifferent to the glory and beauty of God

Second, and most importantly, Edwards is indispensable for a Christian generation that is largely indifferent to the glory and beauty of God. For Edwards was blessed with a mind keenly aware of God’s glory, permeated by the beauty of God, and devoted to the task of imparting that glory and beauty to his fellow men.50 Place the following passage, so characteristic of the way that Edwards’ mind thought about God, alongside much of modern Christianity’s reflection on God and the poverty of

the latter will be clearly seen. It is from a sermon entitled Ruth’s Resolution, which Edwards preached during the revival at Northampton in 1734 and 1735.

God is a glorious God. There is none like him, who is infinite in glory and excellency. He is the most high God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. His name is excellent in all the earth, and his glory is above the heavens. Among the gods there is none like unto him; there is none in heaven to be compared to him, nor are there any among the sons of the mighty that can be likened unto him.... God is the fountain of all good and an inexhaustible fountain; he is an all-sufficient God, able to protect and defend... and do all things.... He is the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: a strong rock, and a high tower. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heaven... and in his excellency on the sky: the eternal God is a refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms. He is a God who hath all things in his hands, and does whatsoever he pleases: he killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up; he maketh poor and maketh rich: the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s....

This is a God that delighteth in mercy; his grace is infinite, and endures for ever. He is love itself, an infinite fountain and ocean of it.54

1 This paper was originally given at the Canadian Carey Family Conference on August 29, 1990.
4 Puritans, p.355. 5 Ibid., p.355.
8 Cited Dwight, Memoirs (Works, 1:xiii).
9 Jonathan Edwards, p.73.
10 Cited ibid., p.91. Italics added.
13 A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God (Works,
1:347).


Faithful Narrative (Works, 1:347-348).

Ibid., (Works, 1:348).

Ibid., (Works, 1:348).

Ibid., (Works, 1:350).

Ibid., (Works, 1:351).

Ibid., (Works, 1:351).

Ibid., (Works, 1:350).

Ibid., (Works, 1:350).

For the details surrounding its publication, see Murray, Jonathan Edwards, p.117-122.

Ibid., p.122.

Cited ibid., p.122.


Letter from a Gentleman in Boston (Bushman, ed., Great Awakening, p.120).


Works, 1:243.

Ibid., 1:279.

Ibid., 1:281.

Ibid., 1:281.

Ibid., 1:306.

Ibid., 1:314.

Ibid., 2:282.

Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England (Works, 1:426).

For a good discussion of this controversy, see Murray, Jonathan Edwards, p.311-349.


Cited Dwight, Memoirs (Works, 1:clxxviii).

Cited ibid., (Works, 1:clxxviii).

Puritans, p.361.

This call to prayer is known as The Prayer Call of 1784 and may be found in John Ryland Jr., The Nature, Evidences, and Advantages of Humility (Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association, 1784), p.12.


Cited ibid., p.34.


Works, 1:665.