

Diary - Dwight's Preface - 1829

by Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards' diary provides a unique glimpse into his inner life, showcasing his Christian simplicity and sincerity.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Proverbs 12:23, Philippians 2:3, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Personal Devotion"

Description

Sereno Dwight, in 1829, introduces Jonathan Edwards' diary, which begins when he was nineteen years old in 1722. The diary, initially written on detached slips of paper, reveals Edwards' deep religious thoughts and feelings, intended solely for his own reflection and improvement. Edwards used shorthand to conceal certain thoughts, following the wisdom of Proverbs 12:23, 'A prudent man concealeth knowledge.' The diary provides a unique insight into the sincere and humble reflections of a man seeking to grow spiritually and draw closer to God.

Transcript

PREFACE TO JONATHAN EDWARDS DIARY

By

Sereno Dwight, 1829

HIS DIARY

The diary of Mr. Edwards begins Dec. 18, 1722, when he was nineteen years of age. As far as to Jan. 15th, at night, it is written on two detached slips of paper; and the remainder in a book. [He mentions, Jan. 14th, his making the book, and annexing the loose papers to it.] As it commences abruptly, and as near as possible to the top of that paper; the beginning of it is undoubtedly lost; and it is not improbable, that as he originally wrote it, it may have reached back, at least to the period of his preparation for the ministry. It was intended, as will at once be perceived, for his own private use exclusively; and had it been with him at the close of life, it is not unlikely it might have been destroyed. Still, whatever is calculated to do good, and is perfectly consistent with an author's real reputation, may be published with honor, whatever his design might be while writing. The best of men, indeed, have thoughts, and opinions and feelings, which are perfectly proper and right in themselves, which yet it would be wholly improper for them to disclose to others. But a man of sound discretion, will take care that nothing of this nature is placed within the reach of

accident. What Mr. Edwards wished to have concealed from every eye but his own, he wrote in short hand. And on one occasion, after having written to a considerable extent in that character, he adds this remark in his customary hand, "Remember to act according to Pro. 12:23, 'A prudent man concealeth knowledge.'"

The reader, while perusing the diary in its various parts, will, I think, be struck with it, as possessing the following characteristics. It consists of facts; and of solid thought, dictated by deep religious feeling: and not of the mere expressions of feelings, or of commonplace moral reflections, or exhortations. It was intended for his own eyes exclusively; and not chiefly for those of his friends and of the public. It is an exhibition of the simple thinking, feeling and acting of a man, who is unconscious how he appears, except to himself, and to God: and not the remarks of one, who is desirous of being thought humble, respecting his own humility. If we suppose a man of Christian simplicity, and godly sincerity, to bring all the secret movements of his own soul under the clear, strong light of heaven, and there to survey them with a piercing and an honest eye, and a contrite heart, in order to humble himself, and make himself better; it is just the account which such a man would write. In these respects, it is, with only here and there a solitary exception, wholly unlike any diary of modern times; and, as such, is, with here and there a solitary exception, the only diary of modern times, that ought ever to have been published.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jonathan-edwards/diary-dwights-preface-1829/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net