

The Union of Theology and Doxology: A Comparative Study of Jonathan Edwards and Anne Dutton

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*“And safely bring them home again, through all these various ways,
Infinite wisdom did ordain electing love to praise.”*

–Anne Dutton, Hymn XVII²

The simultaneous existence of the Age of Reason and the Age of Piety during the eighteenth century stands as a great historical paradox. Although it was an age marked by distinct inclinations toward science, logic, and human reasoning, the era also witnessed theologians and authors whose works expressed heightened levels of reverence, devotion, and religious experience. This study will provide a doctrinal and literary interaction between two such authors: Reformed pastor and revivalist Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), who provided one of America’s most prolific and impactful theological legacies, and Anne Dutton (1692–1765), a British Particular Baptist and pastor’s wife who voiced a lifelong mission to point others to Christ through her extensive theological writings in the form of treatises, poetry, hymns, and personal letters.³

A comparative study of the two theologians will offer a new perspective on spiritual writings during the Evangelical Revival and

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² Anne Dutton, *Hymns Composed on Several Subjects*, in *Selected Works of Anne Dutton, Volume 2: Discourses, Poetry, Hymns, Memoir*, ed. JoAnn Ford Watson (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 192–93.

³ In a tirelessly devoted manner (much like that of Edwards), Dutton spent the greatest majority of her time writing, often upwards of sixteen hours per day. Dutton was so dedicated to her ministry of writing that she even expressed regret over the time spent eating and sleeping. See Joann Ford Watson, ed., *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton: Eighteenth-Century, British-Baptist, Woman Theologian*, vol. 1, *Letters* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), xxxvi.

a new way to contemplate Edwards, especially since Dutton is under-researched.⁴ Like Edwards, Dutton faithfully proclaimed a staunch defense of Calvinism against various Arminian doctrines that she deemed objectionable and “nurtured the distant American awakening” through her vocation of religious writing.⁵ As will be seen, for an eighteenth-century Baptist female author to have published works with a theological depth and acumen that could withstand a comparison to Edwards was remarkable and extraordinarily rare. Accordingly, the establishment of specific connections and correlations between Edwards and Dutton would be a useful and compelling addition to eighteenth-century evangelical research.

In this paper, I will argue that Jonathan Edwards and Anne Dutton display a notable similarity of content, depth, and intensity, both in their doctrinal writings of theology and in their devotional language of doxology.⁶ To sustain this argument, I will first establish the historical context for the study by briefly noting the impact of Edwards upon Particular Baptists in England as well as Dutton’s position and influence during the eighteenth century. Next, after a brief discussion of the Puritan notion of the joining of theology and doxology, I will compare specific theological works of Edwards and Dutton to elucidate striking resemblances in depth and content as demonstrated in their writings on such topics as *resignatio ad infernum*, union with Christ, justification by faith alone, and the Lord’s Supper. As will be shown, both Edwards and Dutton shared the conviction that the Holy Spirit should receive equal consideration and emphasis along with the Father and the Son in theological discourse.

⁴ See Michael Sciretti, “‘Feed My Lambs’: The Spiritual Direction Ministry of Calvinistic British Baptist Anne Dutton during the Early Years of the Evangelical Revival” (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2009), 8. Sciretti reports that even with the vast abundance of her extant theological discourses, “no critical evaluation of Dutton exists.”

⁵ Barbara J. MacHaffie, *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 84.

⁶ Throughout this project, the term “doxology” will refer to “vertical” language and expressions that either praise God or address him directly. For additional background on this definition, see Stuart Sheehan, “The Changing Theological Functions of Corporate Worship among Southern Baptists: What They Were and What They Became (1638–2008)” (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2017).

In the next section of the paper, I will identify several metaphors and figures of speech common to the writings of Edwards and Dutton (such as light, sweetness, and love), and will indicate similarity of usage. This section will also indicate the authors' mutual love for the Song of Solomon, whose rich imagery and symbolism made it a favorite book of both writers.

Finally, I will examine the intense doxological expression shared by Edwards and Dutton—a devotional use of language describing religious experiences that some scholars interpret as “mystical.” Fredrick Youngs identifies several attributes of mystical religious experiences: impassioned feelings of bliss and peace, a strong awareness of the sacred, and an overwhelming sense of the presence and ineffability of God—perceptions that are indescribable and extend beyond the capacity of words.⁷ Their shared use of rhapsodic language to express their experiences of the divine, along with the parallels of thought found within their theological treatises, will clearly indicate a remarkable, compelling likeness and connection between Edwards and Dutton.

The Impact of Edwards and Dutton on Particular Baptists in England

During the eighteenth century, religious works by American authors were commonly and regularly read by British readers—particularly so among non-Anglican evangelicals. The works of Edwards were first received in England as a welcomed harbinger of revival. Additionally, David Bebbington asserts that Edwards held other points of interest for British believers: he was “a profound explorer of Christian doctrine” who captivated his readers' imaginations with his descriptions of revival and heightened Christian experiences.⁸ Furthermore, he championed Calvinism in a manner that was “intellectually acceptable” and compatible with contempo-

⁷ In this paper, the term “mystical” will refer only to these specifically named characteristics. See Fredrick Youngs, “Jonathan Edwards, a Mystic?” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 52.

⁸ David Bebbington, “The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in Britain,” in *The Global Edwards: Papers from the Jonathan Edwards Congress Held in Melbourne, August 2015*, ed. R S Bezzant (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 2–4.

rary Enlightenment principles such as “light, liberty, and progress.”⁹ Most impactful of all (and of great significance to the present comparison to Dutton) was Edwards’s “authority [in] *shaping theological discourse*.”¹⁰

Among British Particular Baptists, the writings of Jonathan Edwards were celebrated and his influence was profound and “decisive.”¹¹ The *Faithful Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (first printed in London in 1737) was the first work of Edwards to impact England—it was widely read and received as “an exemplary narrative” that brought with it a “spirit of optimism and possibility.”¹² Although originally a piece of personal communication between pastors, the *Narrative* was enthusiastically presented before entire congregations and appeared in various evangelical periodicals. In Hindmarsh’s estimation, it was a “runaway best-seller” that invigorated the spiritual landscape of Britain and spurred on her believers to embrace the active work of evangelism. Succinctly put, the works of Edwards “gave them hope—hope that they might see revival, too.”¹³

Although they were greatly encouraged by Edwards’s dramatic accounts of revival in New England, the Particular Baptists still wrestled through various theological debates and controversies. Their emphasis on election and predestination caused some to espouse antinomianism,¹⁴ which maintained that because salvation comes “by grace and through faith alone” and not by means of human effort, man’s behavior was predestined and unbound by the

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3. Emphasis added.

¹¹ D. Bruce Hindmarsh, “The Reception of Jonathan Edwards by Early Evangelicals in England,” in *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons*, ed. David W. Kling (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 207.

¹² *Ibid.*, 203.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 202–3.

¹⁴ From the Greek terms *anti* meaning “against” and *nomos* meaning “law.” See “Antinomianism,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics*, edited by James D. G. Dunn. *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/opr/t430/e10> (accessed 17-Nov-2019).

obligations of moral law.¹⁵ Because of a strongly emerging “hyper” Calvinism (a position held by a good number of influential theologians and pastors), many Calvinistic Baptists arrived at the conclusion that if certain people were not predestined for salvation, the matter was settled and no evangelical effort would change the outcome. With this outlook, offering the Gospel to the lost was “at best a waste of time, and at worst an insult to God and divine providence” and therefore to be avoided.¹⁶

The dilemma for the Particular Baptists was how to preach faith and repentance to all while remaining true to their Calvinist principles. In his *Freedom of the Will* (1754), Edwards provided Baptist preachers with the perfect answer: Mankind was endowed with the “natural ability” or potential to accept the Gospel. Even so, some individuals experience a “moral inability” to embrace salvation because of a steadfastness of sin springing from their own hearts.¹⁷ Accordingly, it was clearly the “duty” or responsibility of each person to repent and come to faith. This realization—that a belief in the doctrine of election need not impede preaching repentance—enabled pastors to make an open invitation to all in good conscience. This newly found freedom and shift in doctrinal thinking greatly stimulated evangelism and missions among Particular Baptists.¹⁸ Michael Watts observes that “the writings of the Congregational pastor of Northampton, Massachusetts [led] to religious revival among the Particular Baptists of Northamptonshire, England and set in train the dispersion of the principles of English Dissent to the four corners of the world.”¹⁹

Within Anne Dutton’s sphere of influence, her own extensive ministry of writing was securely set within this Particular Baptist theological context. Anne’s husband, evangelical minister Benjamin Dutton (1691–1747), assumed the pastorship of the Particular Baptist church of Great Gransden in Huntingdonshire in 1732.

¹⁵ Michael D. Thompson, “Edwards’s Contribution to the Missionary Movement of Early Baptists,” in *The Contribution of Jonathan Edwards to American Culture and Society: Essays on America’s Spiritual Founding Father (The Northampton Tercentenary Celebration, 1703–2003)* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 320.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 322.

¹⁸ Bebbington, “The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards,” 6.

¹⁹ In Leonard George Champion, “Evangelical Calvinism and the Structures of Baptist Church Life,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 28, no. 5 (January 1980): 197.

Anne's distinguished ministry of writing began soon thereafter, appropriately coinciding with the early dawning of the Evangelical Revival.²⁰ By the year 1737, when Edwards's *Faithful Narrative of Surprising Conversions* first appeared in London, Anne had published seven discourses on various theological topics, including her acclaimed poetic work *Narrative on the Wonders of Grace* (1734) and *A Discourse upon Walking with God* (1735). By 1740, the full flames of revival were sweeping over England, and by August of 1741, Dutton's treatises were being published and circulated in *The Weekly History*. Scholars have recently acknowledged the full weight of Dutton's evangelical impact during this time, noting that she was "perhaps the most theologically capable and influential woman of her era, an uncommon interpreter of Scripture, and an obedient servant of Christ."²¹

In addition to her extensive theological publications, Dutton penned an immense number of personal letters of spiritual encouragement to evangelical leaders and lay people who sought her wisdom in both doctrinal and personal matters of faith. Among her many correspondents were George Whitefield (1714-1770), John Wesley (1703-1791), Phillip Doddridge (1702-1751), Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), William Seward (1702-1740), and Howell Harris (1714-1773).²² Dutton befriended Whitefield and fully supported his evangelical efforts at a time when most Calvinistic Baptists were distinctly "opposed to the new Evangelical movement."²³ William Seward, who accompanied Whitefield in his travels, expressed that Dutton's letters were "full of such comforts and direct answers to what I had been writing that it filled my eyes with

²⁰ Sciretti, "Feed My Lambs," 2. In this passage, Sciretti also notes the intriguing fact that Dutton's theological treatises and poetry were first published "two years before the conversion of George Whitefield and five years before the conversions of Charles and John Wesley."

²¹ Karen O'Dell Bullock, "Anne Dutton," in *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters: A Historical and Biographical Guide*, ed. Marion Ann Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 172-73.

²² Sciretti, "Feed My Lambs," 5. Additionally, through her published discourses, Dutton sparred theologically with John Wesley regarding his belief in the ability to attain a state of sinless perfection while on earth.

²³ *Ibid.*

tears of joy.”²⁴ Welsh revivalist Howell Harris affirmed Dutton’s ministry of writing when he confirmed to her that “our Lord has entrusted you with a Talent of writing for him.”²⁵ In addition to these noteworthy friendships and associations, Dutton had a special concern for the newly converted who found themselves troubled in their personal circumstances or doubtful about whether they would be counted among God’s elect. Dutton’s influence eventually stretched across the Atlantic into the American colonies, where she gained a solid reputation particularly among converts in Georgia and South Carolina through her publications and personal correspondence.²⁶

Whether Edwards and Dutton ever corresponded directly is unknown. Nevertheless, evidence that Dutton knew of Edwards and his writings does exist. In her Letter XX, Dutton mentions Edwards by name and comments at some length upon his “late account of the work of God in the conversion of souls to Christ in New England.”²⁷ Moreover, because she was a published author and was particularly well read (having frequently corresponded with several key evangelical ministers and having served as editor of the evangelical periodical *The Spiritual Magazine*), Dutton was engaged with contemporary evangelical writings and events throughout her life. In all probability, a figure of Edwards’s magnitude would have impressed upon the shape and tone of Dutton’s theological writings.

The Theology of Edwards and Dutton: Expressions of Resolute Faith

To demonstrate the notable parallels of thought in the theological convictions of Edwards and Dutton, it is first important to note that the two theologians shared a common body of divinity handed down from their Puritan forefathers. “Communion with

²⁴ Stephen J. Stein, “A Note on Anne Dutton, Eighteenth-Century Evangelical,” *Church History* 44, no. 4 (December 1975): 488.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 489.

²⁷ See Watson, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 1:138–44.

God,” states J. I. Packer, is the nucleus of Puritan theology.²⁸ The firmly held beliefs of the Puritans led them to establish a faith system that was “first and foremost about the worship of God . . . theology and the life informed by such convictions were to be one harmonious act” of worship and praise.²⁹ Put simply, worship is the “external manifestation” of theological “internal convictions.”³⁰ Theology inspires doxology—and the two are intricately woven together and inseparable.

The theological legacy of the Puritans, inherited and expressed by Edwards and Dutton, was an unwavering commitment “to search the Scriptures, organize their findings, and then apply those to all areas of life.”³¹ Additionally, while the Puritans were exceptional interpreters of Scripture, “their intellectual rigor was matched or even surpassed by their piety.”³² Only through strict obedience and adherence to the Word, reflection upon God’s character and his work among mankind, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit could a believer properly live unto God, in harmony with his will and to his glory.³³ The Puritans also trusted that the influence of God would be visibly manifested within their practical, day-to-day life experiences. Succinctly put, their arduous intention was “to live *coram Deo*”—in the presence of God and “before the face of God.”³⁴

One of the “giants” among Puritan thinkers who undoubtedly influenced the theologies of Edwards and Dutton was John Owen (1616–1683). Timothy Edwards, Jonathan’s father, owned a good number of Puritan classics in his library, including works by Owen—writings that are considered to also have been spiritually formative for his son.³⁵ In the case of Dutton’s works, the names of

²⁸ In Peter Beck, “Worshipping God with Our Minds: Theology as Doxology among the Puritans,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 5, no. 2 (2013): 194.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

³¹ Joel R. Beeke, “Reading the Puritans,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 3, no. 2 (2011): 197.

³² *Ibid.*, 198.

³³ Beck, “Worshipping God with Our Minds,” 196.

³⁴ Beeke, “Reading the Puritans,” 199.

³⁵ Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61.

Puritan authors who influenced her writing are often cited, and John Owen is among the men most frequently mentioned.³⁶

The pathway to communion with God, in Owen's view, was a "proper biblical theology," achieved through careful exegesis that was precise and free of error.³⁷ As theological knowledge increases, communion with God deepens and matures. God's purposes in this communion are grounded in love and always to his greater glory: "God would have it so," writes Owen, "for the manifestation of his own glory. This is the first great end of all the works of God. That it is so is a fundamental principle of our religion. And how his works do glorify him is our duty to inquire."³⁸

This notion is also found and clearly demonstrated in the writings of Edwards and Dutton. In his *Dissertation on the End for Which God Created the World* (1755), Edwards states that "the great and last end of God's works which is so variously expressed in Scripture, is indeed but *one*; and this *one* end is most properly and comprehensively called, THE GLORY OF GOD."³⁹ Similarly, in her treatise *A Discourse Upon Walking with God* (1735), Dutton writes that "God's end in walking with his People in Christ, and in all the Ways of Divine Appointment, is *ultimately his own Glory*; and subordinatedly their Good and Salvation."⁴⁰ As will be shown, the theological harmony and agreement shared by Edwards and Dutton extend to several additional religious topics that were points of discussion during the eighteenth century.

Resignatio ad infernum

The topic of *resignatio ad infernum* (resignation to hell) is a concept with a long history, having been discussed by theologians dating back to the medieval period. A person would voice a "will-

³⁶ Sciretti, "Feed My Lambs," 119.

³⁷ Beck, "Worshipping God with Our Minds," 196.

³⁸ John Owen, *Christologia*, in Ryan L. Rippee, "John Owen on the Work of God the Father," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 8, no. 2 (2016): 90.

³⁹ Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards, in Four Volumes: A Reprint of the Worcester Edition* (New York: Leavitt, Trow & Co., 1844), 254.

⁴⁰ Dutton, *A Discourse Upon Walking with God*, in *Selected Works of Anne Dutton*, 2:53. Emphasis added.

ingness to be damned" if s/he had achieved such a selfless state of piety that if condemnation was ordained as part of the divine will, and if their damnation would somehow glorify God more than their salvation, it would gladly be accepted "out of absolute love and absolute obedience to God."⁴¹ Edwards, however, considered this to be the mindset of a person who "seems" to have a love for God and Christ, but has "no grace." In a footnote written by Edwards in *Religious Affections*, he paraphrases a passage from his grandfather Stoddard's *Guide to Christ*, stating that "sometimes natural men may have such violent pangs of false affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned."⁴² The concept appeared in Edwards's writing years earlier in the *Narrative of Surprising Conversions*; Edwards describes believers who have such a strong "sense of the excellency of God's justice" and an "exceeding loathing" of their own sinful unworthiness that they experience

a kind of indignation against themselves, that they have sometimes almost called it a willingness to be damned; though it must be owned they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some have more clearly expressed it, that salvation has appeared too good for them, that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not tell how to think of salvation's being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty.⁴³

Dutton addresses this matter in a personal letter to a man who was troubled that his love for God had not achieved "such a height" as to be content with damnation if it would "advance the Kingdom and the glory of Christ."⁴⁴ Dutton counsels that it had never once entered her mind that "God would be more glorified in

⁴¹ Clark R. West, "The Deconstruction of Hell: A History of the Resignatio Ad Infernum Tradition" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 2013), 4.

⁴² Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, *Religious Affections* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 147.

⁴³ Edwards, *Narrative of Surprising Conversions*, in *The Works of President Edwards*, in *Four Volumes* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1879), 3:247.

⁴⁴ Dutton, Letter XX, in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, ed. Watson, 1:138.

my damnation than in my salvation.”⁴⁵ In the next paragraphs of her letter, she expresses a view on the subject that is in complete agreement with that of Edwards:

I think Mr. Edwards, in his late account of the work of God in the conversion of souls to Christ in New England, gives a hint concerning some persons who had such a sense of the justice of God in their damnation, if he were to send them to hell, that they were ready to express themselves after such a manner as if they were “content to be damned;” and then adds, “that he knows no Scripture that requires it.” An absolute contentment with damnation is doubtless unlawful; it is incompatible with that principle of self-preservation which God hath put into all his creatures.⁴⁶

Dutton encourages the recipient of her letter to focus instead upon the eternal, “unsearchable” love of Christ, assuring him that the Father, to save his people from their sins, had placed “the cup of damnation, of curse and wrath, into Christ’s hand, and through his drinking it up for us he puts the cup of salvation into ours.”⁴⁷

The Believer’s Union with Christ through the Holy Spirit

Parallels of thought between Edwards and Dutton are also displayed through their corresponding points of view regarding union with Christ, a topic that both theologians wrote about extensively. Edwards states that “all divine communion, or communion of the creatures with God or with one another in God, seems to be by the Holy Ghost.”⁴⁸ As Robert Caldwell aptly explains, “In the theology of Jonathan Edwards, the Holy Spirit’s activity as the bond of the trinitarian union between the Father and the Son is paradig-

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 139.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 143.

⁴⁸ Edwards, “Miscellanies” No. 487, discussed in Robert W. Caldwell III, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 86.

matic for all other holy unions in his theology.”⁴⁹ Edwards affirmed that the Spirit also creates the union between Christ’s human and divine natures, the union that believers have with Christ, and the union that Christians have with each other.

In the view of Edwards, for a saint to have union with Christ requires an act of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who brings holy authority and influence into his life. Edwards clearly states that the Spirit

unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and *influences* him as a new, supernatural principle of life and action . . . the Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly, by uniting himself to them, and living in them, and *exerting his own nature* in the exercise of their faculties.⁵⁰

Dutton expresses the reality of divine influence upon the Christian believer in different words, yet the underlying message is essentially the same; the saint experiences union with Christ, whose influence enables him to live a new life:

But that if any man be in Christ by *influential union*, if he be vitally *united to him as his root and head of influence*, he partakes of Christ’s life, has a sameness of nature with him, a new life of grace from Christ the new Adam communicated to him; or, that by virtue of his thus being in Christ, he (the man) is a new creature; old things are become new in him.⁵¹

The topic of union with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit also appears in several of Dutton’s hymns, such as the following example taken from Hymn L, “Faith, the Gift of God, the Effect of Christ’s Death, and the Work of the Spirit,” stanzas five and six. The biblical references provided for each line of poetry are Dutton’s,

⁴⁹ Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 8.

⁵⁰ Edwards, “A Divine and Supernatural Light,” in *The Works of President Edwards* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1879), 4:440. Emphasis added. See also Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 102–4.

⁵¹ Dutton, in *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, 6:178–79. Emphasis added.

and incidentally demonstrate a meticulous devotion to Scripture that is reminiscent of Edwards:

The Spirit works this grace,	1 Cor. xii. 9.
By his almighty power,	Eph. i. 19.
In every of the chosen race,	Acts xiii. 48.
At the appointed hour.	John v. 25.

Faith lives in Christ its root,	Gal. ii. 20.
And 'cause its union lasts,	John xiv. 19.
It brings forth all its precious fruit,	Col. i. 6.
Though nipp'd with stormy blasts. ⁵²	1 Pet. i. 6,7.

In sum, Edwards understood the Holy Spirit to be the “meeting place” of the communion shared by the Father and the Son—and consequently, the work of the Spirit forms the basis of all manifestations of Christian communion.⁵³ As such, Edwards firmly believed that the Holy Spirit should receive equal honor along with the Father and the Son; he perceived a notable “deficiency” in the church’s discourse regarding pneumatology and sought to rectify it.⁵⁴ Dutton shared Edwards’s desire to give equal honor and consideration to the Holy Spirit. In the Preface to *A Narration of the Wonders of Grace*, she writes:

I would not have any from thence think, that I esteem that part of the Spirit’s work as a wonder of grace *inferior* to the rest. No; I believe that all the acts and works of the three Persons in God, as they have a joint hand in the salvation of the elect, shine forth with as equal splendour.⁵⁵

⁵² Dutton, in *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, 2:228.

⁵³ Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 45.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁵ Dutton, Preface to *A Narration of the Wonders of Grace*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, 2:114.

Justification

Another area of theological similarity between Edwards and Dutton comes to light when exploring their respective treatises regarding justification. Edwards's *Justification by Faith Alone* was published in 1738; Dutton's *A Treatise on Justification* was published anonymously two years later and went through three editions (1740, 1743, and 1778).

In his treatise, Edwards refutes the theological views of John Tillotson (1630–1694), a former Archbishop of Canterbury who believed that justification referred to the “pardon or remission of sins” and nothing more.⁵⁶ Edwards agreed that guilt and sin are indeed removed, but he also believed that an additional act takes place—the believer *gains* right standing before God through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Edwards wrote that “a person is said to be justified, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment; and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life.”⁵⁷ Edwards based his discourse on the following passage from Romans 4:5: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,” thereby confirming the traditional Reformed position that justification is by faith alone.

Edwards maintained that justification released believers from the bondage of sin and its rightful penalty and provides the gift of Christ's righteousness through imputation. The dual nature of justification correlates with the dual nature of Christ's sacrifice: his suffering erases the sinner's guilt, and his obedience provides “the reward of heaven.”⁵⁸ Justification is based only on God's grace and not any “moral qualifications” of man. Here once again appears the concept of union with Christ, which occurs when the sinner accepts Christ's invitation to redemption. Edwards believed that spir-

⁵⁶ In Michael McClenahan, “Justification by Faith Alone,” in *A Readers Guide to the Major Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Nathan A. Finn and Jeremy M. Kimble (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 84.

⁵⁷ Edwards, “Justification by Faith Alone,” in *The Works of President Edwards*, 4:66.

⁵⁸ Sang Hyun Lee, “Grace and Justification by Faith Alone,” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 137.

itual union should be a reciprocal “mutual act of both,” in which each one receives and joins with the other.⁵⁹ Once a believer gains admission into communion with Christ, God sees the worthiness of Christ when looking upon the regenerate soul. Edwards teaches that the state of justification happens only by faith, the “instrument by which we receive Christ.”⁶⁰

Dutton’s treatise on justification approaches the topic with a theological depth and sophistication that can withstand a comparison to Edwards; her acumen is lauded by the publisher of the 1778 edition, who stated that the treatise “needs no recommendation” because its content would “sufficiently recommend itself.”⁶¹ The treatise was thoroughly endorsed based on its skillful hermeneutic, described as “Scripture interpreting Scripture.”⁶² Dutton’s heavy reliance upon the Bible is clearly seen in the detailed outline she provides for her discourse:

Section I. Of the Matter of Justification. Jeremiah 23:6. *This is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

Section II. Of the Manner of Justification. Romans 4:6, 1:17, 10:10. *God imputeth righteousness without works. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. With the heart of man believeth unto righteousness.*

Section III. Of the Time of Justification. Romans 4:25, 3:26, 1 Timothy 3:16. *He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. God was justified in the Spirit.*

Section IV. Of the Effect of Justification. Romans 5:1, 4:7, 2 Corinthians 5:14. *Being justified, by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed are they whose iniqui-*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁶⁰ Edwards, “Justification by Faith Alone,” in *The Works of President Edwards*, 4:68.

⁶¹ Dutton, *A Treatise on Justification*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, 4:xiv.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4:xv.

ties are forgiven. The love of Christ, who died for us, constraineth us to live unto him.

Section V. An Objection, urged against the preceding Scripture-Doctrine of Justification, answered. James 2:21. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar?*

Section VI. The Insufficiency of legal obedience to the justification of a Sinner. Romans 3:20. *By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.*

Section VII. The Conclusion. Isaiah 45:24. *Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness.*⁶³

A perusal of this outline shows the great extent and depth of Dutton's treatment of the subject, including the anticipation and explanation of possible objections, a feature also present in Edwards's treatise. Similarities to Edwards are also apparent in the themes and language she employs in explicating the topic: "the manner of justification, as with respect unto God, it is by imputation; and with respect to ourselves, by Faith."⁶⁴

The Lord's Supper

Perhaps one of the strongest points of agreement shared mutually by Edwards and Dutton is their "highly sacramental" interpretation of the Lord's Supper. As Calvinists, both would have inherited the *via media* view of John Calvin. As Michael Haykin explains, the elements of the Table are "signs and guarantees of a present reality. To the one who eats the bread and drinks the wine with faith, there is conveyed what they symbolize, namely Christ. The channel, as it were, through which Christ is conveyed to the believ-

⁶³ Dutton, *A Treatise on Justification*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, 4:67-146.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:95.

er is none other than the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁵ The Spirit connects or “unites” believers to the risen Christ. In the Supper, Christ is received “not because Christ inheres the elements, but because the Holy Spirit binds believers” to himself. If faith is not present, “only the bare elements are received.”⁶⁶

Edwards maintained a strong conviction that one must be a professing Christian to gain admittance to the Table, reflecting his belief that there should be a “clear distinction between the church and the world” and that the Lord’s Supper was a privilege reserved only for believers.⁶⁷ Defending his case with 1 Corinthians 11:28 (“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat”), Edwards indicates that “it is necessary, that those who partake of the Lord’s Supper, should judge themselves truly and cordially to accept of Christ, as their only Saviour and chief good; for of this the actions which communicants perform at the Lord’s Table, are a solemn profession.”⁶⁸

Dutton’s view of the Supper had a historical foundation in the *Second London Confession of Faith* (1689), which ratified for Baptists that the ordinance serves as “confirmation of the faith of believers . . . their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him.”⁶⁹ Therefore, and not surprisingly, Dutton concurs with Edwards completely; in her treatise *Thoughts on the Lord’s Supper* (1748), she states clearly that the Supper is only for the members of Christ’s body, the Church: “For as the Lord’s Supper is a Church-Ordinance, those that are the subjects thereof must be Church Members.”⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Michael A. G. Haykin, “Anne Dutton and Her Theological Works,” in *Eight Women of Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 63.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Edwards, *A Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church*, discussed in Mark E. Dever, “Believers Only—Jonathan Edwards and Communion,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172 (July–September 2015): 262.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Michael A. G. Haykin, “His Soul-Refreshing Presence: The Lord’s Supper in Baptist Thought and Experience in the ‘Long’ Eighteenth Century,” *Institute for Christian Worship Lectures* (February 2008): 2.

⁷⁰ Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord’s Supper: Relating to the Nature, Subjects, and Right Partaking of this Solemn Ordinance; Written at the Request of a Friend, and Addressed by Letter to the Tender Lambs of Christ* (London: J. Hart, 1748), 9.

For both Edwards and Dutton, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper demanded solemnity, reverence, and preparation of heart. Edwards expressed in no uncertain terms the "magnitude of the sacrament," warning that "those who contemptuously treat those symbols of the body of Christ slain and his blood shed, why, they make themselves guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, that is, of murdering him."⁷¹ Dutton's words express the same conviction; she insists that anyone who partakes of the elements without receiving Christ by faith in their hearts is "so far from partaking of the Lord's Supper, that they are guilty of a great Abuse of it: Not discerning the Lord's Body therein, which can only be done by Faith, they become guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11.27."⁷² The weight of these strong words clearly indicate that both Edwards and Dutton believed the observance of the Lord's Supper to be an occasion that demanded the utmost solemnity, reverence, and piety.

Coming together by faith to the Lord's Table was also an endeavor of the soul to gain spiritual sight, to look upon Christ "with spiritual eyes."⁷³ This spiritual sight was not merely attaining intellectual insight into doctrine; it was an engagement or "betrothal" of the heart in which a "mixture of affections" was to be anticipated. Consequently, a believer could feel sorrow for his sins while simultaneously rejoicing in Christ's willingness to die in his place.⁷⁴ Edwards, in a sermon on Luke 22:19 preached in June of 1734, declared: "Another thing meant by 'Do this in remembrance of Me' is that we should do it to revive suitable affection towards Christ, not merely to revive thoughts of Christ in our understanding, but also suitable exercises towards him in our hearts."⁷⁵ Dutton similarly references affections within the Lord's Supper, and her message closely resembles that of Edwards: "We ought then, in an especial

⁷¹ Matthew Westerholm, "The 'Cream of Creation' and the 'Cream of Faith': The Lord's Supper as a Means of Assurance in Puritan Thought," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 1 (2011): 209.

⁷² Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, 22-23.

⁷³ Westerholm, "The Cream of Creation," 210.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁷⁵ Edwards, "The Lord's Supper Ought to Be Kept Up and Attended in Remembrance of Christ," in *Sermons on the Lord's Supper*, ed. Don Kistler (Orlando, FL: Northampton Press, 2007), 60.

Manner . . . to regard the affections of our souls, that they intensely fix upon Christ crucified, that glorious object presented to our Faith, and act suitably towards him."⁷⁶

In the view of Edwards and Dutton, when the elements of the Supper are received by faith, the Christian receives the body and blood of Christ spiritually, signifying union with him.⁷⁷ Around the years of 1750–51, Edwards preached a sermon based on 1 Corinthians 10:17 in which he distinctly states that the Lord's Supper is "a representation of the union of Christ and his people, a union of hearts . . . here is also represented their union one with another, for here they meet together as brethren, as children of one family, as one spouse of Christ."⁷⁸ Dutton also employs language that speaks of union with Christ while feasting at his Table: "So by our repeated eating of Christ by Faith, in this Ordinance, our spiritual life is maintain'd and increased, we grow up into Union and Communion with him."⁷⁹

Edwards and Dutton both viewed the ordinance as a "seal" of this union with Christ, presenting the Supper as "a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb," an eschatological reality of the coming Kingdom of God.⁸⁰ Edwards, in a sermon based on Luke 14:16, implored his listeners to consider all the glorious provisions that God has made:

Is it not worth the while to accept any invitation to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb? Blessed and happy are they who enter in with God into the marriage. Yea, is not she blessed who shall be the bride, the Lamb's wife, to whom it shall be granted to be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints (Revelation 19:8).⁸¹

⁷⁶ Dutton, "Thoughts on the Lord's Supper," 56–57.

⁷⁷ Westerholm, "The Cream of Creation," 215.

⁷⁸ Edwards, "The Lord's Supper Was Instituted as a Solemn Representation and Seal of the Holy and Spiritual Union Christ's People Have with Christ and One Another," in *Sermons on the Lord's Supper*, 74.

⁷⁹ Dutton, "Thoughts on the Lord's Supper," 39.

⁸⁰ McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 491–92.

⁸¹ Edwards, "The Spiritual Blessings of the Gospel are Fitly Represented by a Feast," in *Sermons on the Lord's Supper*, 125.

Dutton offers her readers a similar vision of the resplendent future awaiting those who are in Christ: “The Lamb will bring you as his Bride, into the Bride Chamber, and set you as married to the Lord, to feast with him at his Marriage Supper.”⁸²

Finally, the similarities between Edwards and Dutton on the Lord’s Supper can be traced even more closely to specific wordings and phrasings. Edwards preached that “Christ was not only with his disciples at the first sacrament, but he *sits with his people* in every sacrament.”⁸³ Dutton’s view matches that of Edwards both in meaning and expression: “the King is pleas’d to *sit with us*, at his Table.”⁸⁴ Additionally, Dutton and Edwards share a specific commonality of language in their descriptions of what is imparted to the saint during the Supper. “As our Lord is spiritually present in his own ordinance,” Dutton writes, “so he therein and thereby doth actually communicate, or give himself, *his body broken, and his blood shed*, with *all the benefits* of his death, to the worthy receivers.”⁸⁵ Correspondingly, in his *An Humble Inquiry*, Edwards writes that “Christ presents himself” through the sacrifice of his “*body broken and his blood shed*,” to “impart to them *all the benefits* of his propitiation and salvation.”⁸⁶

As has been shown, the kinship and correlations found in the respective theological expressions of Edwards and Dutton are extensive. After having established the numerous parallels of thought found in their doctrinal writings, I now turn my attention to their doxological language of praise.

The Doxology of Edwards and Dutton: Voices in Harmony

The Puritans saw their Creator as Lord over each aspect of human life—therefore human behavior must be governed by a

⁸² Dutton, “Thoughts on the Lord’s Supper,” 36.

⁸³ Edwards, “The Spiritual Blessings of the Gospel are Fitly Represented by a Feast,” in *Sermons on the Lord’s Supper*, 123. Emphasis added.

⁸⁴ Haykin, “His Soul-Refreshing Presence,” 3. Emphasis added.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

⁸⁶ Emphasis added. See discussion of this passage in Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 161–65.

proper understanding of God. A proper theology did not consist of merely a “set of rules” but was an all-consuming, authoritative “life-force.”⁸⁷ Beck explains: “Biblical theology produces practical results and eternal praise.”⁸⁸ Seventeenth-century Puritan John Owen said “the vital force of theology is piety, it is worship.”⁸⁹ Dutton alluded to this truth herself when she penned the words, “Salvation and Glory are put together in the Doxologies of the saved ones.”⁹⁰ As will be seen in the next sections, a harmonious synthesis and union of theology and doxology are demonstrated in the highly expressive language of Edwards and Dutton.

Metaphoric Language Common to Edwards and Dutton: Types and Tropes

Edwards states that “types are a certain sort of language, as it were, in which God is wont to speak to us.”⁹¹ Figures or types in the Old Testament foreshadow subjects and occasions found in the New Testament. In his *Images of Divine Things* notebook of 1728, Edwards speaks of types that depict “the way all things point beyond themselves” to demonstrate a “higher spiritual principle.”⁹² For example, Edwards states that “the rising and setting of the sun is a type of the death and resurrection of Christ” and that “the juice of the grape is a type of the blood of Christ.”⁹³ Dutton also references the use of types in her writing; in her *Discourse Upon Walking with God*, she states: “As a Type of Christ, Joseph had this Name of

⁸⁷ Beck, “Worshiping God with Our Minds,” 203.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁹⁰ Dutton, *A Discourse Upon Walking with God*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:57.

⁹¹ Quoted in Tibor Fabiny, “Edwards and Biblical Typology,” in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to America’s Theologian*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 99.

⁹² Jennifer L. Leader, “In Love with the Image: Transitive Being and Typological Desire in Jonathan Edwards,” *Early American Literature* 41, no. 2 (2006): 157.

⁹³ Edwards, *Images or Shadows of Divine Things*, ed. Perry Miller (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1948), 58, 68.

the Shepherd of Israel given him, Gen. 49.24.”⁹⁴ The concept of types even appears in Dutton’s hymnody:

The law had figures, types and shades,	Heb. ix. Verse 9.
Of glorious things to come;	Chap. x. 1.
Which in the gospel are display’d	Col. ii. 17.
And follow in their room. ⁹⁵	

This sophisticated use of typological language by Edwards and Dutton points their readers to “an iconic window” through which they may “catch a glimpse of the desired eternal.”⁹⁶

Tropes: Light

The way to come to know Edwards best, in the estimation of Ronald Story, is “chiefly through his language.”⁹⁷ Story concurs with Marsden, who stated that the central core of Edwards’s life was “his devotion to God expressed with pen and ink.”⁹⁸ Story identifies several frequently recurring “tropes” or metaphorical figures of speech found in the works of Edwards; after identifying them, I will then demonstrate their usage in the works of Dutton.

First and foremost, “light was Edwards’s favorite image and metaphor,” observes Story, because Scripture hallows the concept of light from the very dawning of Creation through the coming of Christ, the Light of the World.⁹⁹ God is the “Father of Lights” and the saints walk together in the light of Christ, as “children of light.”¹⁰⁰ The most significant symbolism associated with Edwards’s treatment of light is that it represents “the beams of God’s glory,”

⁹⁴ Dutton, *A Discourse Upon Walking with God*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:68.

⁹⁵ Dutton, Hymn III, “The Glory of the Gospel Above the Law,” in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:178.

⁹⁶ Leader, “In Love with the Image,” 167.

⁹⁷ Ronald Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 28.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

his holiness, and the “manifestation of the excellency” of God, who is the Light to all creation in the same way the “fullness of the sun” touches, illumines, and brings warmth to all in the natural world. In his *Covenant of Redemption*, Edwards writes, “That beauteous light with which the world is filled in a clear day, is a lively shadow of his spotless holiness.”¹⁰¹ Dutton speaks of light in much the same manner as Edwards; in her treatise, *A Discourse Upon Walking with God* (1735), she writes: “God is Light; Light here, as I conceive, is put for Holiness. And we may read it thus, God is *Holiness*, and in him is no darkness, no sin. . . . And if we thus walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another. God with us, and we with God.”¹⁰² The metaphor of light as the brightness of Christ also occurs in Dutton’s hymnody:

No wonder that the moon and stars	Heb. viii. 13.
Are vanish’d out of sight;	
Since Christ, the glory-sun appears	Chap. ix. 11.
With his out-shining light. ¹⁰³	

Sweetness

Another figure of speech used by both Edwards and Dutton is the word “sweet,” described by Story as one of the most prevalent descriptive words “in the Edwardsian lexicon.”¹⁰⁴ Edwards uses the figure of sweetness to make declarative assertions about “God, grace, and the community of Christians.”¹⁰⁵ Edwards describes the beauty of Christ as “most sweet” and rejoices in “sweetly conversing” with him. The Song of Solomon “sweetly sings” about the eternal marriage feast of Christ and the Church. The Persons of the Trinity share among themselves an “infinitely sweet energy which

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Paul R. Baumgartner, “Jonathan Edwards: The Theory Behind His Use of Figurative Language,” *PLMA* 78, no. 4 (September 1963): 322.

¹⁰² Dutton, *A Discourse Upon Walking with God*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:21.

¹⁰³ Dutton, Hymn III, “The Glory of the Gospel Above the Law,” in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:178.

¹⁰⁴ Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love*, 45.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

we call delight.”¹⁰⁶ When writing about conversion, Edwards declared that it is a sweetness understood only by those who have tasted it. Those who embrace true religion experience the beauty of Christ, which exceeds the vain pleasures of this world “as much as gold and pearls” exceed “dirt and dung.”¹⁰⁷ In the works of Dutton, the concept of sweetness regularly finds expression when speaking of the communion between God and his people: “In the Way of Faith, or divine Revelation, they sweetly walk and talk together as Friends . . . in the Way of instituted Worship, God and his People sweetly commune together.”¹⁰⁸ In her hymnody, Dutton expresses the sweetness of salvation:

SALVATION, O how sweet, How joyful is the sound!	Ps. lxxxix. 15.
Free reigning grace, through Jesus Christ, O how it doth abound. ¹⁰⁹	Rom. v. 21. Verse 20.

Edwards’s and Dutton’s “Mystical” Language and Experience: Divine Love

The intense spiritual experiences recorded by Edwards and Dutton are often described as “mystical” because they express an overwhelming desire “to be united in rapturous love with [their] Creator.”¹¹⁰ Edwards stated that “true religion is summarily comprehended in love” and ultimately, all things unite and “resolve into love.”¹¹¹ Frequently in his writings on divine love, Edwards uses wordings and metaphoric language that possess a “lyrical, near-mystical” quality because he writes of a holy love that infinitely extends into all eternity. Succinctly put, love—in all its forms—points

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 45–46.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 47; in his discussion of these passages, Story cites *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* 19:82–85.

¹⁰⁸ Dutton, *A Discourse Upon Walking with God*, in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:44–45.

¹⁰⁹ Dutton, Hymn XXXVI, “Salvation in Election, and Covenant Settlements,” in *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 2:212.

¹¹⁰ Youngs, “Jonathan Edwards, A Mystic?,” 49.

¹¹¹ Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love*,” 99, 102.

the elect to the future eschatological reality of Heaven. Edwards employs “soaring, ecstatic language” to depict the heavenly kingdom as a place where love is perfectly united and realized between God and all its citizens: “The very light which shines in and fills that world is the light of love. It is beams of love; for it is the shining of the glory of the Lamb of God, that most wonderful influence of lamblike meekness and love which fill the Heavenly Jerusalem with light.”¹¹²

Passages from Edwards’s *Personal Narrative* clearly display a heightened or “mystical” sense of language and expression:

And as I was walking there, and looked up on the sky and clouds; there came into my mind, a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction: majesty and meekness joined together . . . there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God’s excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and love seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature.¹¹³

Elsewhere in his conversion narrative, Edwards reported that he felt an overwhelming “sense of the glory of the divine being” and pondered how happy he would be if he “might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up to God in heaven.”¹¹⁴ He also described feeling “an inward sweetness” that would “carry me away in my contemplations,” kindling “a sweet burning in my heart.”¹¹⁵

The conversion narrative of Dutton displays a passion and energy quite similar to that of Edwards. She used intense language and imagery in her description of coming to Christ, declaring that she laid “prostrate before the throne of God’s grace ‘with a Rope about my Neck.’” Her expression was both plaintive and theological all at once: “Out of the Depths of Misery, I cry’d unto the Depths of

¹¹² Quoted in Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love*, 121.

¹¹³ See this discussion in Youngs, “Jonathan Edwards, a Mystic?,” 50.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Mercy.”¹¹⁶ After this experience, Dutton sought God “in the means of grace” through hearing sermons in corporate worship and reading the Bible. She describes her attainment of spiritual sight, in which she gained a vision of “such a ravishing Beauty, and transcendent Excellency in Christ that my Soul was ready to faint away with Desires after him.”¹¹⁷ Hindmarsh notes the “strikingly Edwardsian vision of the incandescent beauty” offered in Dutton’s account.¹¹⁸

Like Edwards, Dutton often used language and imagery of love as found in the Song of Solomon, exclaiming that she was “pained with Love-Desires” and languished in “Love-sickness.”¹¹⁹ Additionally, doxological exclamations often appear within Dutton’s theological treatises; for example, in *Thoughts on the Lord’s Supper*, as she counsels the faithful regarding the proper, introspective manner in which to receive the Supper, Dutton suddenly erupts into rapturous praise:

O what a Love, to our loving, lovely, dying, rising, reigning, coming Lord, doth his Love of Bounty, call for as Duty from us! Let us, attracted, allured, enkindled by the Power of infinite Love, cast our little Drop, into Love’s vast Ocean, our little shining Spark, into Love’s vehement Flame, into Love’s adorable Brightness!¹²⁰

This type of emotive, rhapsodic language prompts Hindmarsh to make the following comparison: “If Catherine of Siena was a Third Order Dominican, then Anne Dutton must be reckoned something of a Third Order Baptist mystic.”¹²¹ Michael Sciretti concurs, stating that Dutton’s language mirrors that of Christian mys-

¹¹⁶ See this discussion in D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 296.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 299.

¹²⁰ Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord’s Supper*, 28.

¹²¹ Ibid.

tics who went before her and that her theology was admirable because it is tempered with “the words and images of Scripture.”¹²²

Conclusion

This historical comparison of Edwards and Dutton affirms that evangelical communities in England and the American colonies exerted influence over one another and often shared a unity of thought that crossed denominational boundaries. Accordingly, scholars such as Richard Carwardine attest that the impact of revivalism upon the overall “shaping of society and culture” cannot be overstated.¹²³

Through a close examination of their writings, I have shown in this study that Jonathan Edwards and Anne Dutton share a remarkable like-mindedness and a distinct resemblance in the content, depth, and intensity of their theological works and their doxological expressions of praise. I have shown the influence of Edwards within the historical context of the Particular Baptists, in which Dutton performed an extraordinary ministry of religious writing during the Evangelical Revival. To elucidate their strikingly similar theology, I have provided an analysis of their works on such topics as union with Christ, justification by faith alone, and the Lord’s Supper. To illuminate the kinship of their doxology, I have identified figures of speech shared between the two authors and have demonstrated a mutual use of rapturous, ecstatic language to express their experiences of the divine.

In addition to its historical significance, the implications of this study are also useful in the consideration of current worship practices. Allen P. Ross states that for corporate worship to effectively reach its full potential, the church must have a thorough understanding of the “biblical theology that informs worship.”¹²⁴ As

¹²² Michael Sciretti, “Anne Dutton as a Spiritual Director,” in *Women and the Church*, Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics (Waco: The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2009), 31.

¹²³ Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelism in Britain and America 1790–1865* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2007), xiii.

¹²⁴ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 38.

has been established, both Edwards and Dutton faithfully display an unswerving loyalty and commitment to the authority of Scripture—a rich theological legacy for present-day church leaders with like-minded commitments. Moreover, Inagrace Dietterich asserts that the proper “doing of theology—studying and talking about God—is the responsibility of all who participate in the church.”¹²⁵

Through their shared Puritan lineage and their similar religious experiences, Jonathan Edwards and Anne Dutton knew that theology must be built upon a proper understanding of God and must encompass all of life. As a person contemplates the mysteries of God and begins to understand his glorious excellency, s/he is inspired to obedience and a visible amendment of life, which ultimately creates a desire to praise, worship, and glorify God. Right belief leads to right practice— theology becomes doxology.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Inagrace T. Dietterich, “Sing to the Lord a New Song: Theology as Doxology,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 41, no. 1 (February 2014): 24.

¹²⁶ Peter Beck, “Worshipping God with Our Minds,” 201–3.