

Friendship with a Cause: Revival in the Thought of Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge

BRITT STOKES

Britt Stokes is founder and president of Propago Ministries, an organization that helps local churches navigate leadership transitions. He earned his PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky where he researched the spirituality of hymnwriter, Isaac Watts. He also received a ThM and MDiv from Southern Seminary, and a MBA from Charleston Southern University. He is a pastor residing in Charleston, South Carolina.

INTRODUCTION

If the names Isaac Watts (1674–1748) and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751) are remembered in modern times, it is often due to their place as ministers, authors, theologians, educators, or hymnwriters.¹ They both advanced the cause of Christ through a profound commitment to the early eighteenth-century dissenting church of England. Forged in the religious upbringings of English Puritanism, Watts and Doddridge understood the “dissenting interest” of their context in a similar vein. They shared many of the same doctrinal commitments, wrote hymns in an effort to reform public worship, and committed a lifetime of resources and vigor toward the formal education of dissenting ministers.²

Perhaps one overlooked aspect of the legacies of Watts and Doddridge is their providential friendship as co-laborers through a uniquely transitional era of church history. The closing of the seventeenth-century and beginning

years of the eighteenth-century functioned as a time of historic and unexpected change. The English Puritan movement had largely faded, while the rise of science, art, and law from the English Enlightenment began to take root in the spiritual contours of Christianity.³ Even further, Evangelicalism was rapidly developing through the monumental influences of figures such as John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards. These factors capture a confluence of adjustment which formed a narrow transitional period between “old Dissent” and Evangelicalism. This transitional period, in which Watts and Doddridge were key leaders, brought about challenges due to the marked decline of the English dissenting church. Watts and Doddridge wrestled intellectually and spiritually with the nature of revival during this time, while simultaneously functioning as enthusiastic bystanders to the sweeping conversions on America shores and in Scotland. For the better part of three decades (from roughly 1720 to 1751), Watts and Doddridge navigated a discouraging, confusing, and often thrilling period in the kingdom of God. Their position as leaders during the era brought them face-to-face with important questions. Why were the dissenting churches of England declining? Were the awakenings of modern-day Massachusetts indicative of how revival might be prompted? And maybe, most importantly, how did transatlantic revival impact their thought as spiritual leaders during a period of religious decline in England? This article aims to help clarify answers to these questions through examining revival in the thought of Watts and Doddridge. As (1) bystanders to the eighteenth-century transatlantic awakenings and (2) key transitional leaders of the era, Watts and Doddridge forged a devote friendship around commitment to “real inward religion” as a means of revival.⁴

“OUR COLDNESS IN RELIGION”: WATTS AND DODDRIDGE PRIOR TO 1737

On May 24, 1736, the rector of then Yale College, Elisha Williams (1726–1739), penned a letter to Isaac Watts. In this correspondence, Williams acknowledges gratitude for sermons and other publications Watts gifted to the library at Yale. As the letter continues, Williams makes note about a “remarkable revival of religion” in the Northampton area of modern-day Massachusetts. This is likely the first instance Watts gained any knowledge of what become the First Great Awakening. Williams notes,

Since the advancement of Christ's kingdom is always your [Watts's] rejoicing it will not be disagreeable to you if I should acquaint you that there has been a remarkable revival of religion in several parts of this country, in ten parishes in the county of Hampshire, in the Massachusetts province where it first began a little more than a year since, and in near 20 parishes of this colony.⁵

At almost the same time, Benjamin Colman (1673–1747), the pastor of Brattle Street Church in Boston, sent correspondence to John Guyse (1680–1781) in London regarding the revival movement in Northampton. Specifically, Colman provided Guyse with brief details of the revival, upon which, Guyse communicated them to his congregation in a sermon during late spring of 1736.⁶ These letters from Williams and Colman would generate significant interest among congregations and ministers in the London area. In July of 1736, Colman (by way of Jonathan Edwards's uncle William Williams) requested Edwards provide a detailed account of God's unique work in order to further inform the ministers and congregations of London about the happenings.⁷ By November 6 of 1736, Edwards acquiesced to Colman's request and produced a detailed account of the situation, which was published in a now recognized epistle with the well-known title, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. Subsequent to Edwards's letter, the nature and contours of the "surprising work" began to spread a bit more rapidly. In December 1736, Colman published an abridged version of Edwards's letter as an appendix to a volume of sermons.⁸ Colman immediately also sent a copy of the volume to Watts, along with a note insinuating that Watts should consider publishing a full extract of Edwards's insight.⁹ Watts obliged, and in April of 1737, he and Guyse placed a deposit toward the printing of Edwards's letter. By October of 1737, Watts notified Colman that the first London edition of *A Faithful Narrative* was complete and ready for distribution abroad.

Perhaps the most overlooked portions Edwards's original publication is the preface, which was written by Watts and Guyse. Along with providing general details on how the letter's printing came to fruition, it also gave a key insight into the current state of religion in England. Watts and Guyse note, "we have reason to fear that our iniquities, our coldness in religion, and the general carnality of our spirits, have raised a wall of separation between God and us."¹⁰ This sentiment captures a lingering, almost two-decades long,

concern by religious leaders regarding the dissenting church of England.¹¹ The epistolary account of Edwards only served to further galvanize a commitment to revival by Watts and Doddridge. Nevertheless, it was several years prior to 1737 that Watts and Doddridge began crystalizing their thought on revival in the context of a challenging period in England's dissenting church. Through two publications, which contributed to a persistent debate among religious leaders, Watts and Doddridge began to formally address the "coldness of religion" during their era.

Debates Surrounding the Decline of the Dissenting Church

Beginning in 1730, Strickland Gough published, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, to detail his interpretation of the dissenting decline.¹² Part of Gough's aim was to clarify the causes of the decline, which was necessary to remedy the situation.¹³ In his estimation, Gough found the "grand cause" of decline included "ignorance of their [dissenter's] own principles," not the least of which included liberty of conscience with respect to "discretionary" decisions regarding worship and preaching.¹⁴ Disputes within the dissenting movement were examples of the lack of Christian liberty.¹⁵ Gough harkened to the English Puritans as generational leaders in Christian liberty and pleaded for a refocus on liberty as a "fundamental principle of the Dissenters, and the support of their interest."¹⁶ Therefore, the remedies, according to Gough, were practical in nature. Sermons needed shorting and delivered in a "more easy and natural manner," students for ministry should be selected with care, and the congregations should be "fewer... [with minister's] salaries larger."¹⁷ In reply to Gough, another dissenting minister, Abraham Taylor, published a letter of opposition.¹⁸ Taylor refuted the comprehensiveness of the decline and argued that Gough's "zeal" had taken him to the point of forgetting and contradicting his "own principles."¹⁹ From Taylor's vantage, the Baptist, Independents, and Presbyterians all maintained a healthy level of autonomy and liberty in matters of church practice.²⁰

Several months later, Doddridge published a reply to Gough's letter aimed at "common use," rather than a criticism of Gough or an addition to the polemics.²¹ Doddridge affirmed that Gough was correct to note that dissenters had experienced "great damage" due to "unscriptural impositions and uncharitable contentions."²² Doddridge aimed to identify

additional causes for the “decay” as a supplement to Gough’s thoughts. In Doddridge’s view, the decline was foremost about the conduct of dissenting ministers.²³ The manner in which ministers carried themselves in the course of the pastorate were of critical importance to spurring renewal of religion. Doddridge was thinking in terms of pastoral leadership, but not just any type of pastoral leadership. He categorized three broad issues with dissenting ministers: (1) the lack of piety, (2) the propensity for doctrinal controversy, and (3) preaching techniques. With respect to ministerial piety, Doddridge argued,

[D]ivine warmth and fervency of our own souls [ministers’ souls], will be the means to kindle the like holy fires in theirs [the congregations] ... The advanced piety of our fathers in the ministry, did eminently conduce to their remarkable success. The *Memoirs* which we have of the lives of several of them, manifest their great attainments in vital and inward religion; and I fear we shall never recover the dying interests of Christianity, ‘till that be found in us, which render’d them so signally useful in their generation.²⁴

Likewise, Doddridge grieved the propensity of dissenters to enter into doctrinal controversies in which “pulpit skirmishes have made sport for unbelievers.”²⁵ The place for controversy is far beyond the scope of the pulpit. Rather, the minister “must be an evangelical, an experimental, a plan, and an affectionate preacher.”²⁶ Though Doddridge’s reply was certainly not aimed at being comprehensive, his entrance into the discuss spurred a close friend to pen the most comprehensive and authoritative work on the issue, Watts’s 1731 publication, *An Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion*.

Similar to Doddridge, Watts was equally concerned with the “departed glory” of the dissenting interest and saw the issue in bipartite terms – the minister’s role and the congregant’s role. Watts’s *An Humble Attempt* spans three-hundred and sixty pages, covering everything from the minister’s private studies and personal piety, to the general congregant’s approach to holiness and pursuit of Christian virtue. It even gives directive on how dissenting ministers should carry on godly conversation in their daily life. In the preface, Watts explicitly cites Doddridge’s *Free Thoughts* as the authoritative “pamphlet” on the general contours of the issue because it

set the “whole affair in the best light.”²⁷ For Watts, the matter was exactly as Doddridge estimated, with “vital religion in the hearts and lives of men” as the leading cause of decline.²⁸ Like Doddridge, Watts associated “vital religion” with practical matters of piety, but with an “evangelical” aim toward “the conversion of sinners . . . from a corrupt nature and the course of this world to a life of God by Jesus.”²⁹ The work of salvation, according to Watts, functions as the “hope and design” for the dissenting church. As the work of salvation becomes more effective, the coldness of religion would begin to dissipate. Watts’s *An Humble Attempt* built upon the assessment of Doddridge, with the aim of *being a guidebook* to ministers and congregants in their renewal of religion. Furthermore, Watts overarching aim was to stimulation of true inward religion. Like Doddridge, Watts believed “novelties and elegancies” were unnecessary, rather, “plan rules and duties of practical religion” would suffice to prompt “heavenly influences” of the Holy Spirit.³⁰

Prior to Edwards’s extraordinary and unforeseen letter, Watts and Doddridge were years into fashioning a unique friendship around mutual concern for revival and spiritual means toward that end. By 1737, the increase of “real inward religion” was foundational to Watts’s and Doddridge’s proposals for overcoming an era of church decline.

“HINTS OF A SCHEME”: WATTS AND DODDRIDGE FROM 1737 FORWARD

Once Edwards’s account of the revivals in New England was published in London, the reality of true awakening only served to intensify a focus on revival by Watts and Doddridge. The details of the New England awakenings became increasingly more commonplace in lives, ministry, and correspondence of Watts and Doddridge. By the end of October, 1737, Doddridge had received and began to read the first London edition of Edwards’s *A Faithful Narrative*.³¹ Through much of their subsequent correspondence from 1737 to 1744, Watts and Doddridge were in consistent exchange regarding the awakenings. Take for example a letter from Watts to Doddridge in December of 1741, wherein Watts notes using Doddridge’s sermons on regeneration as part of their congregation’s Sunday evening studies.³² Watts’s focus on a doctrine such as regeneration comes as no surprise given the events occurring in New England. At the conclusion of the same letter, Watts updates Doddridge on the nature of the transatlantic

revivals, with particular attention given the efforts receiving God's supernatural blessing:

I have received several letters from New England this autumn and winter, wherein they give me an account of a great work of conviction and conversion going on, both at Boston and among other towns in those plantations, ever since the preaching of Mr. Whitfield there, last September or October was twelvemonths. God has certainly owned and blessed that man's zeal, piety, and itinerant labours.³³

Beyond gratitude for the conversions, Watts's interest in how God was leveraging the piety of Whitefield is of particular note. Given Watts's and Doddridge's focus on the spiritual aspects of revival, it only reasons they were keenly interested in how men like Whitefield were operating on a devotional front. Two months later, in February of 1742, Watts penned Doddridge yet again to provide further updates. Once more, he explicitly notes his use of Doddridge's sermons on regeneration and their welcomed reception among the people of his congregation.³⁴ Watts also updated Doddridge on the nature of awakenings happening in both Scotland and Boston, by way of Whitefield.³⁵ The consistent updates on the transatlantic conversions indicates their continued preoccupation with the contours of the revival movement. Their mutual interest had now bloomed into a serious fervor to contribute to God's work, while possibly spurring a similar movement within the dissenting interest of England. As a result, Doddridge and Watts were involved in the publication of three more works regarding revival in 1742, 1744, and 1745. Each have an important place in understanding how the pair continued to approach revival.

The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men (1742)

In 1742, Doddridge published a sermon capturing his continued thought on revival—*The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men*.³⁶ This publication was originally given as a sermon at a gathering of ministers in Kettering, Northamptonshire, on October 15, 1741. Though a meeting of ministers was not uncommon for Doddridge, it was *the aim of this particular meeting* that is unique and often overshadowed. The gathering, according to Doddridge, was to “concert measures for the more effectual revival of religion.”³⁷ The

content of the sermon is a rousing and grave reminder of the minister's duty to labor in God's work of saving the human soul. According to Doddridge, God chose ministers "to negotiate his cause and interest on earth" while "consign[ing] over to our immediate care that gospel he [Christ] brought down from heaven."³⁸ Though the sermon is a theological exhortation of sorts, it is in fact the dedication to the published sermon that provides a key insight into Doddridge's advancing thought on revival.³⁹ Doddridge makes detailed reference to an "interview" of ministers in Denton on June, 30, 1741. Similar to the Kettering meeting, the topic of the Denton gathering was that of religious revival. Doddridge notes he held a "private conference" wherein he "laid before" the ministers "some hints of a scheme, which I was then forming for the revival of religion in our parts."⁴⁰ Doddridge then goes on to provide a glimpse into ten organized and systematic "resolutions" that form his approach to revival. These resolutions were first presented at Denton, then discussed with ministers in London, again discussed at a meeting in August of 1741 in Northampton, and finally approved at the Kettering conference of October 1741.

The ten resolutions continue a familiar flow of thought by Doddridge because they largely cover matters of inward piety. For example, the first resolution is the commitment by ministers to preach one sermon a year on "family religion" and "secret prayer."⁴¹ Resolutions two and three deal with pastoral visitation and commends the minister to visit the "head of the house" within each congregant's family. This visit would serve to charge the head of home with commitment to greater personal and family holiness.⁴² Resolution four provides direction on the practice of catechizing, particularly with children, while resolutions five and six address the practice of properly taking communion.⁴³ Resolution seven asks congregations to commit to "little bands or societies" of Christian gatherings for "religious discourse and prayer."⁴⁴ Resolutions eight and nine function a short directive toward selecting individuals for local councils. These councils would aim to promote religion in their community, while also establishing associations of ministers that would gather for "united consultations" and prayer.⁴⁵ Finally, the closing resolution details the manner by which young ministers should be vetted and selected. Among other requirements, men aiming to enter the pastorate must produce a theological thesis in Latin and submit sermons to associations of ministers for purposes of examination.⁴⁶

Perhaps one of most important aspects of Doddridge's dedication is found in an eleventh resolution that, by his own admission, only occurred to him after the sermon was preached at Kettering. According this outlying resolution, congregations must labor "towards assisting the propagation of Christianity abroad."⁴⁷ Doddridge visualized the formation of a society to systematically spread the gospel to "darker parts of our own land."⁴⁸ The particulars of this mission society included eight "rules," which Doddridge planned to use as the basis for formal subscription. Among other administrative matters, and beyond the general aim of spreading the gospel, an underlying thrust of the subscription is, yet again, about pietistic and devotional efforts. Take for example, the first two rules of the society which center around the explicit need to pray for revival. Doddridge believed daily prayer, along with a quarterly assembly of ministers for public prayer, was necessary to stimulate true revival. These times of prayer should aim toward clear petitions of God toward "the advancement of the gospel in the world, and for success of all the faithful servants of Christ ... among the heathen nations."⁴⁹ In his fourth rule, Doddridge asks all signers of the subscription to produce information regarding the progress of the gospel at their quarterly meetings. The updates served to encourage the society and make them "capable of judging how far God answers our prayers."⁵⁰ Doddridge's 1742 publication is thus a proving ground of his revival fervor. As the publication makes plain, Doddridge was expending significant effort, both intellectually and pastorally, to form and sustain efforts that might spur a renewal among nonconformist, similar to the awakenings beyond England. Perhaps it is Doddridge's conclusion to the dedication that best captures his anticipatory, and hopeful, sentiments during this particular period: "we are praying and waiting for that happy day, which, whenever it appears, will be the glorious earnest of the revival of the protestant, and of the Christian cause."⁵¹

The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors (1744)

In addition to Doddridge's 1742 publication on revival, Watts made his own contribution to revival thought in 1744, through a preface to a London edition of *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England*. In a letter to Doddridge, dated January 27, 1743, Watts makes mention of writing the preface to what he considered the largest and "best

attestation to the work of God in New England.”⁵² Through the testimony of one hundred and eleven pastors, this publication provides the name, church, and locations of each pastor, along with their accounts of revival. Each account was communicated at a meeting in Boston on July 7, 1743. The representations of the awakenings are at points astonishing. Take for example, the details of salvations occurring in Middleborough through the first-hand witness of the minister Peter Thacher:

There have been above two hundred in a judgement of charity savingly wrought on since November of 1741... But on one day in November aforesaid, above eighty were pricked at the heart by a sermon from Rom. viii. i. had here from the Rev. Mr. Josiah Crocker... This revival of the power of godliness appears to be the genuine work of the Holy Spirit accompanying his Word, and in answer to a spirit of prayer poured out from God to plead with faith in Christ from this good. Spiritual things are now treated and felt as realities.⁵³

Watts not only interpreted the updates as encouraging, but also as *paradigmatic to the English cause of revival*. In other words, as the title indicated, the testimonies serve as part spiritual wisdom, and part, spiritual warning. By Watts’s estimation, one clear feature taken from these testimonies pertained to the devotional aspect of the movement. It was the pietistic efforts of pastors and ministers, coupled with the gospel doctrine, that “has been the happy means of [the] joyful work” in New England and Scotland.⁵⁴ Watts’s mere involvement with the publication further indicates his desire to see God’s unique work propagated through England by he terms “real inward religion.”⁵⁵ Watts’s preoccupation with the revival was part thankfulness and part visionary. Accordingly, he thought *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors* was “proper to appear in London, that the world... may see and judge” what was occurring in the awakenings.⁵⁶ A robust testimony from New England, according to Watts, only served to “enliven the prayers, strengthen the faith, and raise the hopes” of those waiting for God to do a similar work in England proper.⁵⁷

The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul (1745)

Though the aforementioned publications were central to Watts’s and Doddridge’s continued thought on revival, it was not until 1745 that their

friendship and labor for revival culminated in one of the most influential works of the eighteenth-century—*The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745). Perhaps no other publication fully illuminates the mature thought of Watts and Doddridge with respect to revival. Though Doddridge formally authored the book, Watts's influence upon the publication was immense and is often overlooked. The original idea for the book, and much of its structure, in fact came from Watts. Due to serious health issues, Watts passed the project along to Doddridge and entrusted him with its completion. As early as 1742, Watts was urgently heartening Doddridge to stay the course and complete the publication, over and against his other responsibilities.⁵⁸ By September of 1744, Watts had received a draft of the publication, and provided critical feedback to Doddridge through an edited manuscript. In his letter to Doddridge regarding the edits, Watts commends *The Rise and Progress of Religion* as the best “treatise on practical religion” to be found in the English language.⁵⁹ Watts's encouragement, Doddridge's laborious efforts, and a mutual fervor for revival all culminated in the production of this important work on real inward religion. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Doddridge dedicates the entire work to Watts as part of their profound and affectionate bond as co-laborers.⁶⁰ Doddridge's dedication typifies a love for and deference to Watts, which could only be cultivated through a lifetime of devout friendship:

My much honored friend Dr. Watts had laid the scheme, especially of the former part: but as those indisposition, with which (to the unspeakable grief of the churches,) God has been please to exercise him, and forbid his hopes of being able to add this to his many labors of love to immortal souls, he was pleased in a very affectionate and importunate manner to urge me to undertake it. And I bless God with my whole heart, not only that he hath carried me through this delightful task...but he hath spared that worthy and admirable person to see it accomplished, and given him strength and spirit to review so considerable a part of it.⁶¹

In part, *The Rise and Progress of Religion* strikes a remarkable note of decades-long continuity between Watts's and Doddridge's sentiments about revival. As of its publication in 1745, Doddridge still bemoaned the “sad state” of religion in England. In an all-to-common refrain the unyielding

need of England, according to Doddridge, was to “revive the languishing cause of vital Christianity and substantial piety.”⁶² Furthermore, the work’s design echoes a lifetime commitment by Doddridge and Watts toward the awakening of souls and the revival of a declining cause:

When we look round about us with an attentive eye, and consider the characters and pursuits of men, we plainly see...many of them shamefully neglect it [religion]...if you hitherto have lived without religion, you may be now awakened to the consideration of it, and may be instructed in its nature and importance; or that, if you are already, through Divine grace, experimentally acquainted with it, you may be assisted to make a farther progress.⁶³

Through thirty-three chapters, each concluding with a meditation and prayer, *The Rise and Progress of Religion* is a considerable work of spirituality that covers the gambit of the Christian life. From details on unrepentant sin, conversion, and sanctification, the work is a guidebook through the entire arch of God’s work upon the human soul. It covers matters such as communion with God, temptation, affliction, self-examination, church communion, and even honoring God at death. The reception of *The Rise and Progress of Religion* was one of great esteem. Over the balance of his years after its publication, Doddridge would receive numerous accounts of how *The Rise and Progress of Religion* was useful in the conversions and edification of believers.⁶⁴ What began in the mind of Watts, culminated in the pen of Doddridge, all under the banner of commitment to awakening true inward religion. *The Rise and Progress of Religion*, in many ways, functions as the magnum opus of a friendship grounded in commitment to revival, and bound by a providential place as transitional figures toward the unforeseen rise of Evangelicalism.

CONCLUSION

Watts and Doddridge passed into their eternal inheritance within three years of one another. Their friendship was marked by an intellectual and pastoral kinship of providential accord and divine favor. They heralded the unique work of God in New England and Scotland as eager bystanders, while encouraging a fervor toward seeing an equal or greater awakening occur

within England among nonconformists. Watts's and Doddridge's spiritual wisdom on revival, and a kindred commitment to publishing on the matter, is often understated. These men labored intently to keep the embers of piety and practical devotion aflame in England during a time of serious challenge. Watts and Doddridge bridged an important gap between the English Puritans and the eighteenth-century Evangelicals through a concerted effort to emphasize a continued need for "real inward religion." Perhaps Bernard Manning's sentiments best capture the nature and results of Watts's and Doddridge's labor:

Though Congregationalism in the eighteenth century did not lack great men, isolated individuals play in its story a less prominent part than at some other times. It is a century not of striking careers or of dramatic incident, but of *quiet piety and faithful stewardship*. In an age of spiritual depression these forefathers of ours walked and did not faint...They asserted triumphantly in the most unfavorable circumstances...[and] there fell in due time the fire from heaven, the fire of the evangelical revival.⁶⁵

-
- ¹ For a recent survey of Watts's life and thought, see Graham Beynon, *Isaac Watts: His Life and Thought* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 2013). For more on Doddridge's life and thought, see Alan C. Clifford, *The Good Doctor, Philip Doddridge of Northampton: A Tercentenary Tribute* (Norwich: Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2002).
 - ² For a treatment of Watts's thought as a pastor and leader during the era, see Graham Beynon, *Isaac Watts: Reason, Passion and the Revival of Religion* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016); W. Britt Stokes, *A Soul Prepared for Heaven: The Theological Foundation of Isaac Watts' Spirituality*, Reformed Historical Theology, vol. 72 (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022). For more on Doddridge's thought see, Robert Strivens, *Philip Doddridge and the Shaping of Evangelical Dissent* (New York: Routledge, 2016).
 - ³ See D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Spirit of Early Evangelicalism: True Religion in a Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7–68.
 - ⁴ For scholarly engagement on Watts as a type of transitional figure during this period, see Britt Stokes, "Seculum Est Speculum: Isaac Watts and Recovering the Use of Nature in Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 152, no. 2 (2022): 224–48. Britt Stokes, "Natural Religion, Isaac Watts, and Early Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Devotion," *Evangelical Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (2023): 1–19.
 - ⁵ Elisha Williams to Isaac Watts, May 24, 1736, in *Isaac Watts and His Gifts to Yale College*, Anne S. Pratt (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1938), 30.
 - ⁶ Pratt, *Isaac Watts and His Gifts to Yale College*, 32.
 - ⁷ Pratt, *Isaac Watts and His Gifts to Yale College*, 32.
 - ⁸ The appendix of Edwards's letter included by Colman in the edited volume, is entitled: *Part of a Large Letter from Rev. Mr. Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, Giving an Account of the Late Wonder Work of God in Those Parts*. For more on the sermon publication and appendix, see Pratt, *Isaac Watts and His Gifts to Yale College*, 33.
 - ⁹ Thomas Milner, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1834), 553–54.

- 10 Issac Watts and John Guyse, preface to *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, 1st ed. (London: John Oswald), 1737, vi.
- 11 For more on the numerical situation regarding this period in the English dissenting church, see Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 509–10.
- 12 Strickland Gough, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest. In a Letter to a Dissenting Minister* (London: J. Roberts, 1730).
- 13 Gough, *An Enquiry*, 3.
- 14 Gough, *An Enquiry*, 4, 7. See also, Beynon, *Isaac Watts: Reason, Passion and the Revival of Religion*, 126.
- 15 For example, Gough makes reference to a recent headed controversy, Salters-Hall, as “insuring the dissenting interest more than all their enemies together.” Gough, *An Enquiry*, 28. For more on the Salter’s Hall debate, see Jesse E. Owens, “The Salters’ Hall Controversy: Heresy, Subscription, or Both?,” *Perichoreis* 20, no. 1 (2022): 35–52.
- 16 Gough, *An Enquiry*, 30.
- 17 Gough, *An Enquiry*, 41–44.
- 18 Abraham Taylor, *A Letter to the Author of an Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest. Containing an Apology for Some of his Inconsistencies; with a Plea for the Dissenters, and the Liberty of the People* (London: J Roberts, 1730).
- 19 Taylor, *A Letter to the Author*, 6.
- 20 For more on Taylor’s sentiments, see Anonymous, *The True Cause of Declensions in Religion in a Letter to the Reverend Mr. Abraham Taylor or, Remarks on his Humiliation Sermon, Occasioned by what He Calls Spiritual Declensions, Preach’d in Hare-Court, Jan. 6, 1731–2* (London: Printed for T. Cox, 1732). A special thanks to Jacob Carron for bringing this source to my attention.
- 21 Philip Doddridge, *Free Thoughts on the Most Probable Means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest. Occasion’d by the Late Enquiry into the Causes of its Decay. Address’d to the Author of that Enquiry* (London: Richard Hett, 1730), 3.
- 22 Doddridge, *Free Thoughts*, 4.
- 23 Doddridge, *Free Thoughts*, 7.
- 24 Doddridge, *Free Thoughts*, 9–10.
- 25 Doddridge, *Free Thoughts*, 12.
- 26 Doddridge, *Free Thoughts*, 21.
- 27 Isaac Watts, *An Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion Among Christians, and Particularly the Protestant Dissenters, by a Serious Address to Ministers and People, In Some Occasional Discourses* (London: E. Matthews, R. Ford, and R. Hett, 1731), i.
- 28 Watts, *An Humble Attempt*, ii.
- 29 Watts, *An Humble Attempt*, ii.
- 30 Watts, *An Humble Attempt*, viii.
- 31 Philip Doddridge to Samuel Clark, October 30, 1737, in *The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D.D. Illustrative of Various Particulars in His Life Hitherto Unknown: With Notices of Many of His Contemporaries; And a Sketch of the Ecclesiastical History of the Times in Which He Lived*, ed. J.D. Humphreys (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1829–31), 3:279.
- 32 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, December 24, 1741, in *Correspondence*, 4:62.
- 33 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, December 24, 1741, in *Correspondence*, 4:62.
- 34 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, February 26, 1742, in *Correspondence*, 4:75–76.
- 35 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, February 26, 1742, in *Correspondence*, 4:75–76.
- 36 For an excellent foreword to this work, see Michael A. G. Haykin, “Introducing Philip Doddridge” in, *The Evil & Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men* (Ontario: H&E Publishing, 2021).
- 37 Philip Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men, Plainly and Seriously Represented in a Sermon Preached at a Meeting of Ministers at Kettering in Northamptonshire, October 15, 1741* (London: M. Fenner, 1742), 1.
- 38 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, 33.
- 39 For more on often overlooked contribution of Doddridge to Evangelicalism, see, Alan Everitt, “Springs of Sensibility: Philip Doddridge of Northampton and the Evangelical Tradition” in *Landscapes and Community in England* (London: Bloomsbury, 1985), 211–12.
- 40 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, ii.

-
- 41 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, iii.
42 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, iii-iv.
43 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, iv-v.
44 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, v.
45 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, v.
46 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, vi.
47 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, vii.
48 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, vii.
49 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, viii.
50 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, viii.
51 Doddridge, *The Evil and Danger*, xii.
52 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, January 27, 1743, in *Correspondence*, 4:188.
53 Order of the Assembly, *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England, at a Meeting in Boston. July 7, 1743. Occasioned by the Late Happy Revival of Religion in Many Parts of the Land* (London: J. Oswald, 1744).
54 Issac Watts, recommendation to *The Testimony and Advice*, ii.
55 Watts, recommendation to *The Testimony and Advice*, ii.
56 Watts, recommendation to *The Testimony and Advice*, ii.
57 Order of the Assembly, *The Testimony and Advice*, 2.
58 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, February 26, 1742, in *Correspondence*, 4:76.
59 Isaac Watts to Philip Doddridge, September 13, 1744, in *Correspondence*, 4:354–57.
60 For this wonderful dedication to Watts, see Philip Doddridge, *The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D. in Ten Volumes*, ed. Edwards Parsons and Edward Williams (Leeds: E. Baines, 1802), 1:211–12.
61 Doddridge, *The Works*, 1:214.
62 Doddridge, *The Works*, 1:219.
63 Doddridge, *The Works*, 1:219.
64 Job Orton, “Memoirs of the Life, Character and Writings of the Late Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D. of Northampton” in *The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D. in Ten Volumes*, ed. Edwards Parsons and Edward Williams (Leeds: E. Baines, 1802), 1:90.
65 Bernard Lord Manning, “Congregationalism in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Essays on Orthodox Dissent* (London: Independent Press, 1939), 195. Emphasis mine.