Engaging the Heart:
Orthodoxy and Experimentalism in
William Gadsby’s *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship*

Dissertation

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Abstract

William Gadsby (1773-1844) stands out as an exceptional figure in the history of nineteenth-century English Particular Baptist churches: he is at once a defender of high orthodoxy, a radical separatist (as perceived by his Baptist peers), a popular preacher in the areas surrounding Manchester, and a vanguard of high Calvinistic, experimental hymnody. He is also the compiler of one of the oldest English hymnbooks still in current use, A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship (1814), known informally as “Gadsby’s Hymns.” During his lifetime Gadsby was criticized both for his anachronistic high orthodoxy and for his experimentalist modernity. To the men who argued with Gadsby, the relationship between his traditional orthodoxy and his experimentalism must have seemed bewildering, but seen from a more distanced perspective, his theological stance may be understood as a synthesis of two cultural movements: the Enlightenment and romanticism.

Gadsby’s high Calvinistic orthodoxy was influenced by the Enlightenment teachings of eighteenth-century Baptist theologians John Brine and John Gill, but as the eighteenth century came to a close the influence of high Calvinism began to decline. At the same time, Andrew Fuller’s moderate Calvinism, which encouraged free evangelism, was sweeping through the Calvinistic Baptist churches, reaching the laity through the
“Bristol Collection” and John Rippon’s *Selection of Hymns*. Gadsby sought to revitalize high Calvinistic orthodoxy through experimentalism, which he gleaned from the Protestant Reformers, the English Puritans, and in particular, the nascent romanticism evident in the teachings of William Huntington. Because Gadsby believed singing to be the duty of all men, he turned to hymnody as a means through which to communicate what might be called a romantic high Calvinistic theology, which I shall term “romantic orthodoxy.” Gadsby’s romantic orthodoxy led him to develop a distinct method of evangelism through his hymnbook: by combining his duty to preach with mankind’s duty to sing, Gadsby discovered a method of evangelism that accommodated his high Calvinistic theology. In this way, Gadsby’s publication may be understood as both a response to and a participation in the Evangelical Revival. Through his hymnbook, William Gadsby succeeded in defining (and essentially transforming) high Calvinistic Baptist theology for the romantic generation of English Baptists.
Dedication

“This is from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”
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Introduction

Brief History of the English Baptists

At a fundamental level, one might say that the “Baptist” churches of England developed from the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The theological and ecclesiastical initiatives of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and King Henry VIII made way for reassessments of Biblical interpretation, Christian doctrine, and church order in general, and produced such differing groups as the radical Anabaptists of Switzerland, the Calvinists of Geneva, the Lutherans of Germany, and the Anglicans of England. The English Baptists emerged out of this period of theological reconsideration, but as historian Roger Hayden comments, “those churches that came to be known as Baptist evolved slowly and began with individual congregations, not a coherent group of churches called Baptist.”¹

The English congregations of the late sixteenth century that later came to be identified as Baptist were originally Anglican congregations with Puritan leanings, or in the most extreme cases, separatist congregations. Under England’s Catholic Queen, Mary I (reg. 1553-1558), the Protestants of the newly-formed Church of England were violently persecuted, resulting in a flight of pious Protestants to the Continent. Many of

these exiles fled to Geneva, where they learned the teachings of Swiss reformer John Calvin (1509-1564). With the ascension of Queen Elizabeth I (reg. 1558-1603), England once again became a “Protestant country,” and many of these exiles returned to England, bringing their new-found Calvinistic convictions with them. English Puritans and separatists of this period, however, considered the English Reformation to have been incomplete, particularly when compared to Protestant churches of the Continent. Many English Puritans hoped to change the Church of England from the inside; separatists, on the other hand, desired complete independence from the State Church.  

With the 1593 “Act for Retaining the Queen’s Subjects in Due Obedience,” Queen Elizabeth declared separatism illegal, and many religious dissenters made the decision to flee England for the Continent once again. Religious persecution persisted under King James I (reg. 1603-1625), and separatists continued to flee England, particularly for the Netherlands due to the country’s policy of religious tolerance.

During the early-seventeenth century, the Dutch Protestant churches were involved in intense theological debates concerning the teachings of John Calvin and

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2 In addition to radical Puritans, separatist groups included Quakers, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. For a brief survey of English Baptist history see http://www.baptisthistory.org/baptistbeginnings.htm.

3 Roger Hayden comments that “the concept of an independent gathering of adult believers, who pledged personal loyalty first to Christ and then to each other as members of the body of Christ, was completely foreign to the Church of England as established by Queen Elizabeth and her successors” (Hayden, 20-21). See also Joe Early, Jr., “The Life and Times of Thomas Helwys,” in Thomas Helwys, *The Life and Writings of Thomas Helwys*, edited by Joe Early, Jr. (Macon, GA: Macon University Press, 2009), 8, Google eBook.

4 Early, 19.
Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). “Calvinists” of this period held to Calvin’s view of “particular atonement”: that God’s salvation extended only toward the elect, not all mankind. The followers of Arminius, who was a professor at the University of Leiden, rejected particular atonement, believing that Christ died for all men, the doctrine known as “general atonement.” In 1610 the followers of Jacobus Arminius summarized his teachings in five articles of faith, which they presented as a protest (known as the “Ramonstrance”) against the standards of the Church of Holland. The Five Articles of Remonstrance may be summarized as: 1) individuals are never so corrupted by sin that they cannot receive the gospel according to free will, 2) individuals may reject the salvation that God offers, 3) God elects to salvation according to his foreknowledge of those who will believe, 4) Christ’s death does not secure salvation for anyone, but it does make salvation possible for everyone (i.e.- “general atonement”), and 5) believers are responsible for remaining in grace, lest they lose their salvation by falling away.

In response to theological controversy caused by the Arminian’s Five Articles, in 1618 the Church of Holland called for a council at Dordrecht, in South Holland, to examine the claims of Arminius against Scripture. The council comprised eighty-four members (including seventy-seven delegates from Germany, Switzerland, and England)

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6 See Steele and Curtis, 16-18.

7 The standards of the Church of Holland at this time followed the doctrines expressed in the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism, both of which were rooted in Calvinistic theology.
and eighteen secular commissioners. This council came to be known as the “Synod of Dordt,” and was critical in defining early Calvinism. The Synod drew up five conclusions, later known as the “Five Points of Calvinism,” which counter each of the Five Articles of Remonstrance: 1) due to sin, individuals are incapable of savingly believing the gospel of their own free will (i.e.- “total depravity”), 2) the call to saving faith (given only to the elect) cannot be rejected (i.e.- “irresistible grace”), 3) God’s election depends only on his sovereignty and divine choice, not on his foreknowledge (i.e.- “unconditional election”), 4) Christ death secured salvation for the elect (i.e.- “limited atonement”), 5) the salvation of the elect is secure, eternal, and cannot be “lost” (i.e.- “perseverance of the saints”). These doctrines are also generally called the “doctrines of grace.”

Theologians Steele and Curtis provide a helpful summary of the differences between Arminian and Calvinistic doctrines of salvation (Table I.1):

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8 Steele and Curtis, 16-18.
Table I.1. Summary of Arminian and Calvinistic Soteriology. 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arminian:</th>
<th>Calvinistic:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond)—man’s response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, “choose” to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man’s will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.</td>
<td>Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ’s death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the later sixteenth century, English refugees in the Netherlands were exposed to both of these theological positions. By the early seventeenth century, the teachings of Arminius had reached the British Isles and two distinct types of Baptist congregations had emerged: those who held to the Arminian view, later known as General Baptists, and those affirming a Calvinistic view, later called Particular Baptists. 10

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9 Steele and Curtis, 19. Soteriology is the study of the doctrines of salvation. It is important to note that the controversies between the Calvinists and the Arminians were actually ancient Christian controversies. Similar disagreements occurred between Augustine and Pelagius in the 5th century (ibid.)

10 Throughout this work the term “Calvinistic” will be used instead of “Calvinist.” The Particular Baptists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries held many of Calvin’s teachings, including those that were summarized by the Synod of Dordt in 1619 and known generally as the “Five Points of Calvinism,” but they rejected other teachings of Calvin. Unlike Calvin, who affirmed paedobaptism (i.e.- “infant baptism”) and a presbyterian form of government, the Particular Baptists of England believed in credobaptism (i.e.- “believer’s baptism”) and the independency of the local church. For this reason, I shall identify the Particular Baptist of this period as “Calvinistic” (that is, associated with the teaching of Calvin), rather than “Calvinist” (holding to all the views of Calvin).
The General Baptists of England trace their history to the Puritans John Smyth (c.1570-c.1612) and Thomas Helwys (c.1575-c.1616), who together with their followers fled England for Amsterdam in 1607 in search of religious freedom.\textsuperscript{11} The group found a place to live and worship in several buildings owned by a Dutch Mennonite, Jan Munter, who held to the Arminian view of atonement. Munter, along with the other “Anabaptists” of the period, also affirmed adult (or believer’s) baptism.\textsuperscript{12} Between 1607 and 1609, the Smyth-Helwys congregation experienced a theological transformation: they moved away from the Calvinism of their fellow Puritans toward the teachings of Arminius, and even adopted believer’s baptism.\textsuperscript{13} With the 1609 publication of Smyth’s *The Character of the Beast*, in which he argued for the doctrine of adult baptism as the only biblical pattern for the sacrament, the Smyth-Helwys church became the first English Baptist church (though, ironically, it was exiled on Dutch soil).\textsuperscript{14} In 1610, Smyth and Helwys parted ways: Smyth and several in the congregation formally joined the Mennonites of Amsterdam, while Helwys and his followers insisted on returning to England as a distinct Baptist congregation.\textsuperscript{15} Finally, in 1612, Helwys and his group of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Some of the members of this particular congregation later sought religious freedom in North America about the *Mayflower*. Early, 18-19.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} The term “Anabaptist” was derived from the Greek word *anabaptista*, meaning to baptize again. The Anabaptist movement originated in Switzerland and southern Germany in the 1520s. See Early, 20.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 26-27.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Hayden, 23.
\end{itemize}
English Baptist exiles returned to England with the hope of convincing King James I to change his policies of religious persecution against dissenting Protestant groups.¹⁶

The English Particular Baptist churches, those who held to a Calvinistic theology, identify their history with the Puritans who remained in England during the persecutions of the early seventeenth century. The first evidence of Calvinistic Baptists in England is associated with the Independent church known as the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey gathering in London.¹⁷ At least as early as 1638, records from this London church show that six members were dismissed to join with the church of John Spilsbury. Samuel Eaton (d. 1639) was also a member of this church. In a fragment of verse, poet John Taylor notes that Spilsbury

.....rebaptiz’d in Anabaptist fashion
One Eaton (of the new found separation)
A zealous Button-maker, grave and wise,
And gave him orders, others to baptize.¹⁸

The records of the church note the 1838 group “were of the same judgment with Samuel Eaton,” that is, they practiced believer’s baptism.¹⁹ Like the General Baptists, the

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¹⁷ Henry Jacob (1563-1624), John Lathrop (1584-1653), and Henry Jessey (1603-1663) were the first three pastors of this congregation (Hayden, 69-72).

¹⁸ John Taylor, “A Precious Youth,” in *A Swarme of sectaries and schismatiques, etc.* (1642), Early English Books Online (Wing T514), 8.

¹⁹ The division of this London church actually began in 1833, when split from Lathrop’s church because they were convinced that Anglican baptism was invalid. It is unclear, however, whether they actually affirmed believer’s baptism at this early date. Soon after 1833, Eaton joined this breakaway church. Hayden, 69, 72. See also James Leo Garret, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 51; B.R. White, “Samuel Eaton, Particular Baptist Pioneer,” *Baptist Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (January 1971): 12, http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/24-1_010.pdf.
Calvinistic Baptists in London looked to the Dutch Mennonites for advice concerning believer’s baptism. In 1641, Eaton’s church sent Richard Blunt to the Netherlands to discuss the proper mode of baptism, and he returned as a convinced immersionist, that is, he believed one must be baptized by immersion, rather than sprinkling or pouring.\(^{20}\) In 1644, seven Particular Baptist churches in London drew up a *Confession of Faith*, which affirmed believer’s baptism and the Calvinistic doctrines stated at the Synod of Dordt. In 1677 this confession was revised, but because of persecution it was published anonymously.\(^{21}\)

Throughout the seventeenth century, both types of Baptist churches endured persecution, with a brief period of relief under Cromwell, until the Act of Toleration of 1689.\(^{22}\) This Act allowed dissenters—including Baptists, Presbyterians, and Independents (also known as Congregationalists), but not Catholics—the freedom to worship and hold public assemblies. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Particular Baptist churches were the more numerous of the two English Baptist denominations.\(^{23}\)

The General Baptist churches of the late-eighteenth century were divided over the issue

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\(^{20}\) Hayden, 72.

\(^{21}\) See Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1771-1892: From John Gill to C.H. Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), xvii. Following the 1689 Act of Toleration, this confession was commended officially to the Particular Baptist churches, and for this reason, it is known alternately as the 1677/89 *Confession* or the *Second London Confession* (ibid., xvii-xviii).

\(^{22}\) Betteridge, 4.

\(^{23}\) C. Douglas Weaver notes that between 1715 and 1750, the number of General Baptist churches declined from one hundred forty-six to sixty. During this same period of time, the number of Particular Baptist churches decreased from two hundred twenty to one hundred forty-six. C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 216, Google eBook.
of increasing Unitarianism, which included the denial of Christ’s divinity. The Particular Baptist churches of the eighteenth century were divided over the question of high Calvinism.

High Calvinism vs. Low/Moderate Calvinism

Independent minister Richard Davis (1658-1714) is often credited as the father of high Calvinism in England, along with Anglican minister Tobias Crisp (1600-1643) and Independent minister Joseph Hussey (1660-1726). Although the precise definition of high Calvinism is complex and controversial, for the purposes of this work, I shall take the rejection of duty-faith and its corollary (free-offer evangelism) as its distinguishing characteristics. These two issues may be understood as two sides of the same coin: duty-faith is the doctrine that every individual is obligated to repent and believe in Christ; free-offer evangelism is the practical response to this teaching. The teachings of these early English high Calvinists concerning duty-faith and evangelism may be summarized by the title of Hussey’s 1707 publication: *God’s Operations of Grace; but no offers of Grace.* Particular Baptist theologians John Gill (1697-1771) and John Brine (1703-1765) took up

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24 Hayden, 51-54.

25 I shall use the term “high Calvinism” instead of the colloquial term, “Hyper-Calvinism,” because of negative associations with the latter and because I desire to respect Gadsby’s own designation for his theological system.

these high Calvinistic doctrines, which quickly spread among the Particular Baptists of the mid- and late-eighteenth century.²⁷

Duty-faith and free-offer evangelism presented multiple problems for eighteenth-century Calvinist thinkers because both teachings seem to contradict the doctrines of grace. If it is every man’s duty to believe, this implies that the offer of salvation extends to all men, which would mean that Christ died for all. The logical conclusion of duty-faith, then, is universal atonement; thus, high Calvinists viewed this teaching as a veiled form of Arminianism. Duty-faith creates problems for the Calvinistic concepts of irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints because it is clear that some will not believe, and this denies the effective nature of God’s grace and also suggests the possibility of falling from grace. Free-offer evangelism is simply the practical working out of duty-faith theology: if it is the duty of everyone to repent and believe, then a Christian minister must offer Christ to everyone and persuade the listener to believe. This offer is “free” for two reasons: it is given indiscriminately to everyone and it can be freely received or rejected according to the desires of the individual.

The issue of duty-faith and its practical corollary (free offers of the gospel) were raised in the high Calvinistic churches of Britain during the late 1730s and 1740s in what

²⁷ See Ch. 2 for details of Gill and Brine high Calvinism. I shall refer to the theological system of Gill and Brine as being “high Calvinistic;” however, for the sake of simplicity, I shall also employ the term “high Calvinism” rather than the phrase “high Calvinistic theological system.” Richard A. Muller has argued that the “Calvinistic” theology of eighteenth-century Baptist theologians, such as John Gill, is more rightly described as “Reformed” due to the wide influence of Reformed thinkers other than Calvin (Muller, 51-56). I shall not use the term “Reformed” throughout this work because the Particular Baptists of this period would not have identified themselves as such.
has become known as the “Modern Question Controversy.” This controversy may be understood as a Calvinistic response to the growing interest in evangelism during this time. This period, which is often termed the Evangelical Revival, is closely associated with the Arminian teachings of John (1703-1791) and Charles Wesley (1707-1788). The Evangelical Revival challenged Calvinists to reexamine the issues of duty-faith and free-offers. The Modern Controversy split the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist churches into two camps: “high” and “low.” The “high” Calvinistic Baptists were led by John Brine and John Gill, whose high Calvinistic teachings became synonymous with “high orthodoxy.” The teachings of these men will be discussed in Chapter Two. The low side (alternately called “bastard,” “moderate,” or “evangelical” Calvinism, or simply “Fullerism”) was led by Hugh (1713-1781) and Caleb Evans (1737-1791), Andrew Fuller (1745-1815), and John Rippon (1751-1836), and will be the subject of Chapter Three.

By the early nineteenth century, low Calvinism (not high Calvinism) was the dominant view in the Particular Baptist churches. Historian W.T. Whitley writes in his *A History of British Baptists* that as the Victorian era began

the Confession of 1677 had dropped out of mind, the five points of Calvinism were even more obsolete, and men insensibly ceased to proclaim that the redemption through Christ was simply for a particular number of people. People no longer were content with [such] limitations…

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30 Ibid.
This turn toward Fullerism is reflected in the evolution of the labels for these two types of
Calvinism: since the mid-nineteenth century, the term “high Calvinism” has taken on
connotations of “extreme,” while the late eighteenth-century derisive term “low
Calvinism” has been relabeled as “moderate” or “evangelical” Calvinism. Due to the
negative associations with the term “low,” I shall refer to the Calvinism of Fuller and his
followers as “moderate Calvinism.” It is within this context of the Particular Baptist
divide between high and moderate Calvinism that William Gadsby lived and worked.

The Enlightenment, Romanticism, and William Gadsby

In essence, high and low Calvinism, as well as some aspects of the Evangelical
Revival, flow out of a period of intense scientific, philosophical, and theological inquiry
known as the Enlightenment. In Britain, high Calvinism emerged as the doctrines of
grace were subjected to the rigorous logic of the Enlightenment. The Evangelical
Revival of the 1730s and 40s combined the Enlightenment’s quest for knowledge with
the enthusiasm of faith. Supported by Arminian theology, this revival swept through the
British Isles and North America. Moderate Calvinism may be understood as a middle
ground between the logic of high Calvinism and the evangelical optimism of the Revival.

Isaiah Berlin provides a helpful description of Enlightenment thinking in his A.W.
Mellon Lectures. He writes that the Western tradition of “The Enlightenment” of the late
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rested on three axiomatic propositions.31 The first

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31 Berlin is careful to note that these principles “are not confined to the Enlightenment, although
the Enlightenment offered a particular version of them, transformed them in a particular manner” (Isaiah
The proposition states that all genuine questions can be answered. The second principle assumes that the answers to these questions are “knowable” by men and can be discovered through scientific means, whether inductively or deductively. Finally, the third proposition states that all answers must be compatible with each other. This dependence on humanity’s ability to understand truth through intellectual and experimental exercises is generally accepted as the main focus of the Enlightenment, thus its designation as the “Age of Reason.”

William Gadsby (1773-1844) was born in early January 1773 in Attleborough, near Nuneaton, Warwickshire and baptized into the Particular Baptist church at Cow Lane, Coventry, in 1793, where he sat squarely under the high Calvinistic teachings of the Particular Baptist church. His inquiring mind savored the rationality of leaders such as John Gill and John Brine, and following in their footsteps, he rejected moderate

32 Berlin adds the corollary that if a question cannot be answered, then it is not a genuine question: “We may not know what the answer is, but someone else will . . . if not to men, then at any rate to an omniscient being, to God. If the answer is not knowable at all . . . then there must be something wrong with the question” (ibid). It is important to note that scholars have debated the definition of the Enlightenment. Ian Shaw writes, “Indeed, Richard Bernstein has questioned the value of using the term ‘Enlightenment’: ‘There is no single platform, no set of substantive claims, no common essence that thinkers of the age of Enlightenment share.’ Suffice it to say, in the nineteenth century we are dealing with people who were largely unfamiliar with the term ‘Enlightenment’, and it should not come as a surprise [that] we search in vain for it in their writings” (Richard Bernstein, ‘Are we beyond the Enlightenment Horizon?’ in W.M. Shea and P.A. Huff [eds], Knowledge and Belief in America: Enlightenment Traditions and Modern Religious Thought [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 338, quoted in Ian Shaw, “The Evangelical Revival through the eyes of the ‘Evangelical Century’: nineteenth-century perceptions of the origins of evangelicalism,” in Haykin and Stewart, The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities [Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008], 318).

33 Berlin, 21-22.

Calvinism’s free-offer theology. In 1805, Gadsby moved his family to Manchester and began a life-long pastorate at the St. Georges Road Particular Baptist Chapel. During his pastorate in Manchester, however, Gadsby perceived that some high Calvinistic ministers taught the teachings of high orthodoxy, but they seemed never to have experienced these doctrines personally. The academic rigor of Enlightenment high Calvinism and, subsequently, the culture of resistance that had developed in opposition to moderate Calvinism, had left many high Calvinistic Baptists on the doctrinal defensive with little thought to touching the hearts of their listeners.

In order to combat what he considered to be “dry Calvinism,” Gadsby turned to other high Calvinistic strains of teaching, namely, those of William Huntington (1745-1813). Instead of appealing to the intellect, Huntington’s high Calvinistic teachings were based on emotional reasoning, metaphors, paradoxes, and experiential knowledge. In the nineteenth century this experientialism was often called “experimentalism” because it involved testing biblical knowledge against the realities of life and the human heart. Experimental preachers, such as Huntington, emphasized that true Christianity needed to be felt, not simply known intellectually. Due to his reliance on experimentalism, Huntington is identified as a romantic theologian.

Like the term “Enlightenment,” the concept of “romanticism” is difficult to define. In literature, the term “Romantic” is often used to describe the works of Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Hugo, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. In philosophy, romantic roots are often identified in the works of such varied figures as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel

35 J. Gadsby, Memoir, 32.
Kant, and Friedrich Schleiermacher. In theology and church history, “romanticism” is often credited as the driving force behind such varied movements as eighteenth-century German pietism, the Evangelical Revival, and the Oxford Movement in the Anglican churches of the latter nineteenth century.

Due to this breadth of sources, summaries of the “romantic spirit” abound. Walter Pater has noted that romanticism is “the addition of strangeness to beauty.” Henry A. Beers identified it as “the reproduction in modern art or literature of the life and thought of the Middle Ages.” In the religious realm, Reardon asserts that romanticism “marked a re-evaluation of religion as an experience[,] the authenticity of which must be sought within itself.” These descriptions are thoughtful, but not necessarily helpful in tracing the romantic tendencies of William Gadsby. Therefore, instead of defining key romantic ideas ex nihilo, the following analysis presents romanticism as it flowed out of the Enlightenment. For the purposes of this work, the term “romantic Calvinism” will be

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36 For a discussion of the various romantic attitudes of Kant, Schiller, and Goethe, see Berlin, 68-117. See also Bernard Reardon’s analysis of Schleiermacher’s romantic theology (Bernard M.G. Reardon, Religion in the Age of Romanticism [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 29-58).


40 Reardon, 29.
used to describe the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century response to the perceived limitations of Enlightenment Calvinism.\footnote{Contrary to the present discussion, David Bebbington asserts that the initial impact of romanticism was not felt in the English churches until the second half of the nineteenth century (Bebbington, Holiness, 13).}

William Gadsby’s \textit{A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship} (1814) stands at the intersection of late eighteenth-century Enlightenment and early nineteenth-century romanticism. Trying to define both of these cultural movements precisely, or even prove that they did indeed take place in the history of the Western world, is a difficult, if not labyrinthine, task. The moment one begins to point to absolutes in an attempt to define a cultural movement, a counter-example may be found to “prove” the assumption false. So why try?—because any conversation about a cultural artifact, in this case William Gadsby’s \textit{Selection}, must take into account the dominant cultural climate in which it was created if conclusions are to be gleaned from it. As historian Isaiah Berlin asserts, “a comparison of historical documents and literature from the late seventeenth century to those of the late-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries suggests that a widespread change in thought, ideals, opinion, morals, politics, and aesthetics between these two time periods had indeed taken place.”\footnote{Berlin, 1-20.} I shall take this assertion as axiomatic. Due to the complexity and amorphous nature of these cultural movements, however, I shall refer to various Enlightenment or romantic “tendencies” and “inclinations” instead of precisely identifying certain aspects of the hymnbook or Gadsby’s thinking as belonging to one particular cultural movement.
It is also important to note that Enlightenment traits and characteristics of romanticism are not mutually exclusive, nor are they bound to a particular period of time. Walter Pater has noted that “outbreaks of [the romantic] spirit come naturally with particular periods: times when…men come to art and poetry, with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long ennui, or in reaction against the strain of outward practical things.”  

Gadsby’s hymns are an example of balancing between these two ways of thinking, as is the Evangelical movement itself, which is described as both “enlightened” and “romantic.” During his lifetime Gadsby was criticized both for his anachronistic orthodoxy and for his radical modernity. To the men who argued with Gadsby, the relationship between his traditional orthodoxy and his modernity may have seemed bewildering. As seen through the analytical lens of history, however, his seemingly disparate ideologies may be understood as a synthesis between an Enlightenment mindset and a romantic one. In the context of this study, the teasing out of these meanings will help to situate Gadsby’s hymnbook (and the ideologies it represents) as a progressive and influential body of work.

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43 Pater, 64-70. Henry A. Beers adds that the terms Enlightenment (what he calls “classic”) and Romantic “do not describe particular literature, or particular periods of literary history, so much as certain counterbalancing qualities and tendencies which run through the literatures of all times and countries. There were romantic writings among the Greeks and Romans; there were classical writings in the Middle Ages; nay, there are classical and romantic traits in the same author” (Beers, 9).

Because hymns both reflect and inform the theology of a congregation, hymnbooks became a battlefield for opposing theological systems and evangelical models within the Particular Baptist churches of England during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Gadsby’s hymnbook, *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship*, was the vehicle through which Gadsby would communicate to his congregation (and the peoples of the surrounding villages) his fusion of Enlightenment Calvinism and romanticism.\(^{45}\) Despite its place as one of the oldest Calvinistic Baptist hymn compilations still in use, Gadsby’s hymnbook has received little critical attention from musicologists or Baptist historians.

**Primary Sources for Gadsby Scholarship**

Ironically, the neglect of scholarly research concerning Gadsby’s life is due both to the scarcity of biographical material as well as to the great volume of secondary contemporaneous materials. Gadsby himself left no autobiography. Gadsby’s son John writes that his mother’s long mental illness prevented his father from writing his own autobiography: “Many papers too were either lost or destroyed through her peculiar propensity to put out of the way whatever was most valued to him…he could commit nothing to paper without the fear of its too soon being consigned to the fire.”\(^{46}\)

Information about his life, then, must be gleaned from insights collected and preserved by

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\(^{46}\) J. Gadsby, iii.
others, whether through stories or anecdotes recorded in magazines and newspapers or in the biographies of his acquaintances. As B.A. Ramsbottom has noted, the difficulty for Gadsby researchers is “the sheer hoard of material that lies hidden away—odd references, little stories and old memories, hidden in sermons, magazines, biographies, even newspapers, books and political pamphlets.” The laborious task of collecting and reviewing these fragments is one reason for the many holes in Gadsby scholarship.

In the mid-nineteenth century, many of these materials were collected and published by Gadsby’s adoring son, John. In 1844, the year his father died, John Gadsby wrote a hurried and fragmented memoir of his father. This memoir is the main source of biographical information on William Gadsby; John Gadsby’s memoir of his father, however, is incomplete and his dating of facts is often unreliable. John Gadsby himself admits that his father left little in the way of autobiography, but he notes that his father’s sermons, many of them published, give a full account of Gadsby’s spiritual experiences. John Gadsby preserved his father’s sermons in two publications: one in 1851, *The Works of the Late William Gadsby of Manchester*, a two-volume set that contains many of his sermons, many of them published, give a full account of Gadsby’s spiritual experiences.

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47 Benjamin A. Ramsbottom, *William Gadsby* (Harpenden, Hertfordshire [England]: Gospel Standard Trust, 2003), 9-10. Ramsbottom adds, “there are hundreds, if not thousands of these references—invariably with no date and often not even the place. Even the source is often unidentifiable, especially in the numerous letters published in the old magazines, some anonymous, others merely signed with an initial or pen name” (ibid.).

48 Ramsbottom adds that Gadsby’s son John may have also impeded nineteenth century Gadsby scholarship: “John Gadsby’s influence in his own circle was so extensive that, as long as he lived, it was unthinkable that anyone should be so bold as to attempt the task [of writing Gadsby’s biography]. And John Gadsby outlived his father almost fifty years. After John Gadsby’s death there were few who possessed any details of his father’s life” (Ramsbottom, *Gadsby*, 9).

49 John Gadsby asserts that his father was ordained in 1801, and then he proceeds to quote a newspaper reporting on the event, dated July 24, 1800 (J. Gadsby, *Memoir*, 28).

50 Ibid., iii-v.
father’s early sermons and pamphlets, and one in 1884, *Sermons, Fragments of sermons and letters by William Gadsby of Manchester*, which includes his father’s later sermons. In addition to these three publications, numerous volumes of the *Gospel Standard, or Feeble Christian’s Support* contain editorial columns, sermons, poems, and insights into Gadsby’s life and ministry. The *Gospel Standard* is a monthly magazine that Gadsby co-founded with John in 1835, and it is the most likely source for information about the hymnbook and its compiler. Regrettably, however, much of the information contained in the *Gospel Standard* is second-hand, poorly referenced, and scattered throughout its more than one hundred fifty volumes.

These four sources, despite their occasional inaccuracies and tendencies toward panegyric, serve as the foundation for Gadsby research. The difficulty of working with the primary sources above is only one of the reasons Gadsby’s legacy has been neglected by Baptist historians. An ulterior motive for this lack of scholarly attention on the part of English Baptist historians is the doctrinal shift that took place in the mainstream Particular Baptist denomination during Gadsby’s lifetime.

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53 Fortunately for the modern scholar, all four of these publications have recently either been reissued by the Gospel Standard Trust or, in the case of the *Gospel Standard*, digitized for preservation and wider distribution (http://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Home).
Theological Divergence

When Gadsby first started his ministry in 1798, he was part of the theological majority of the Particular Baptist denomination; by the end of his life, he was an outsider. This transition was the result of disagreements between Particular Baptist ministers concerning “true” Calvinism, the nature of communion, and the need for Baptist associations—all of which can be understood as flowing out of the Evangelical Revival of the mid- and late-eighteenth century. During the late eighteenth century, particularly after the publication of Andrew Fuller’s *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, most Particular Baptist churches began to lean toward a more moderate and evangelical Calvinistic system, dividing the Particular Baptist churches into “high” and “moderate” factions.

Further division occurred during the mid-nineteenth century regarding the practice of communion: whether to admit only members who had been baptized by immersion to the Lord’s Table (the “strict” position), or to allow a member of any Christian church to join in communion (the “open” or “mixed” position). The majority of Particular Baptist churches in England had historically affirmed the strict position, but the open position gained favor through the far-reaching effects of the Evangelical Revival.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the strict position was becoming increasingly less popular

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54 Ramsbottom, *Gadsby*, 41.

55 See Ch. 3 for further explanation of this theological shift.

56 Robert W. Oliver writes, “until well into the 1830s most English Particular Baptist churches continued to practice strict communion just as they had done since the seventeenth century… Particular Baptists of both closed- and open-communion convictions had always considered themselves to belong to one ‘denomination’” (Oliver, *History*, 231). By the mid nineteenth century, this denominational solidarity was beginning to wane.
with the Baptists, while at the same time, it was becoming closely identified with high Calvinism.

Many Particular Baptist churches during the early nineteenth century also began to focus on missionary activities and unification for the purpose of aiding evangelistic endeavors. In 1813, the “General Meeting of the Particular Baptist Denomination,” later known simply as the Baptist Union, was founded in order to assist the missionary activities of the churches. By 1832, however, the Baptist Union was reorganized to include members of the General Baptist denomination (professed Arminians), thus weakening its Calvinistic distinctives and creating tension between “union” Baptists (who, in the name of ecumenism, favored open communion) and “non-union” Baptists (who tended to be strict communionists).  

William Gadsby aligned himself with the minority group in each case: he affirmed high Calvinistic views, he was a a strict communionist, and he purposefully distanced himself from Baptist associations. By the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of Particular Baptist churches in England had abandoned high Calvinism and strict communion; they also rejected Gadsby’s hymnbook due to the theology and

\[57\] For an overview of the origins of the Baptist Union, see Hayden, 144-145.

\[58\] John Howard Hinton, secretary for the Baptist Union, remarked on the diversity of the Baptist denomination in 1863: “The Baptist denomination, while in name one, is in fact many…it is divided into two by a difference of doctrinal sentiment, some churches holding the Calvinistic system, some the Arminian…Of these two bodies the larger, or the Particular Baptists, is itself divided by a doctrinal diversity, according as the Calvinistic system has been found capable of being modified into two forms, which have been called High and Moderate Calvinism…The Particular Baptist body is further divided by a practical diversity on the subject of communion. It contains churches which restrict fellowship at the Lord’s Table to persons who have made profession of faith by Baptism, and churches who admit to Communion professed believers in Jesus, although unbaptized. These are respectively Open-Communionists and Strict-Communionists. We have then six parties” (J.H. Hinton, quoted in Hayden, 146). It is important to note, however, that these Baptist “parties” were not necessarily mutually exclusive.
evangelistic model that it represented. Due to this evolution of mainstream Particular Baptist theology, Gadsby’s legacy has experienced the effects of changing historiographic sentiments.

Gadsby in Secondary Literature

Baptist commentators in the nineteenth century, like the Particular Baptist denomination as a whole, were divided in their opinion of Gadsby and the effects of his ministry. By the end of his life, Gadsby was venerated in his hometown of Manchester.\(^{59}\) In wider Baptist circles, however, Gadsby’s (and, subsequently, his followers’) refusal to support Baptist unions and missionary associations was criticized harshly.\(^{60}\) In 1869 Robert Halley noted the unpopularity of high Calvinism with a particular reference to Gadsby: “in these days of charity and tolerance it is considered proper to speak well of all sects excepting these particular Calvinists.”\(^{61}\) Two years later, in his *Baptist History*, John Mockett Cramp ignored Gadsby’s work and legacy, which, considering his negative

\(^{59}\) Gadsby’s reputation in Manchester is evident from an article that appeared following an accident in which Gadsby broke his leg. A reporter for the *Manchester Times* stated that “any cessation of the activity of such a man is a public calamity.” “Accident to the Rev. W. Gadsby,” *Manchester Times and Gazette,* September 26, 1850, 19\(^{th}\).Century British Library Newspapers, Gale Document Number BC3206352574). The reporter also identifies Gadsby as a “remarkable man” of “natural genius.”

\(^{60}\) In an 1866 article titled, “Baptist Union,” a reporter for the *Baptist Magazine* lamented the separation between the various factions of the English Baptist churches, particularly the divide caused by the “extreme ignorance and consequent narrowness of mind” of Gadsby’s followers (W.G. Lewis, ed., “Baptist Union,” *The Baptist Magazine* 58 [September 1866]: 538, Internet Archive, http://archive.org/stream/baptistmagazine05unkngoog#page/n576/mode/2up).

\(^{61}\) Halley adds “I should like to say a good word even for them. They have undoubtedly done a great work in Manchester and in several of the neighboring towns…[Gadsyb] seemed [to be] a preacher made on purpose for the working classes. The common people heard him gladly. His popularity with the factory people of Manchester was extraordinary…” (Robert Halley, *Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, vol. 2 [Manchester: Tubbs and Brook, 1869], 484, Google eBook).
opinion of high Calvinism, is not surprising. By the late-nineteenth century, moderate Calvinism had taken hold in most of the Particular Baptist churches in England and America, and high Calvinism ceased the subject of debate within the wider Particular Baptist churches. Along the lines of fostering Baptist unity, Baptist historian William Cathcart minimized the tensions between high and moderate Calvinism in his 1881 Baptist Encyclopaedia, which included a commendatory description of the theologies of both Gadsby and Andrew Fuller.

Late in the nineteenth century, the general opinion of Gadsby and his ministry became decidedly negative due to increasing tensions and divisions within the Baptist denominations. This unfavorable perspective on Gadsby’s legacy came from two sides: from the wider Particular Baptist church, which by this time was engaged fully in union activities, and from other so-called “Strict Baptists.” Gadsby’s followers became further isolated from the mainstream Particular Baptist churches when, in 1891, the General Baptist Association was assimilated into the Baptist Union, thus completing the latter

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62 In his discussion of John Brine and John Gill, Cramp writes, “…and this is certain, that these eminent men, and all their followers, went far astray from the course marked out by our Lord and His Apostles. They were satisfied with stating men’s danger, and assuring them that they were on the high road to perdition. But they did not call upon them to ‘repent and believe the Gospel.’…” They were so afraid of intruding on God’s work that they neglected to do what He had commanded them” (John Mockett Cramp, Baptist History: from the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Present Time [London: Elliot Stock, 1871], 435-436, Google eBook).

63 William Cathcart writes, “Dr. Gill was the theological teacher of one section of his denomination, and Mr. Fuller of the other. Mr. Fuller’s doctrine of the great sacrifice is generally received by English and American Baptists, though there are still some among us who regard Dr. Gill, in the main, as approaching nearer to Paul’s representation of the nature of Christ’s glorious propitiation than the profound theologian of Kettering…” (William Cathcart, ed., The Baptist Encyclopaedia: A dictionary of the doctrines, ordinances, usages, confessions of faith, sufferings, labors, and successes, and of the general history of the Baptist Denominations in all Lands [Philadelphia: Louis E. Everts, 1881], 422, Google eBook).

64 Ibid., 429.
association’s transition from a Calvinistic entity to a broadly evangelical one.\textsuperscript{65} This cooperation between Calvinistic and Arminian Baptists was symptomatic of the theological decline of many of the Particular Baptist churches during the nineteenth century, which, for the purpose of supporting missionary activities, no longer held to any theological distinctives beyond “Baptist” and “evangelical.”\textsuperscript{66} Considering the denomination’s move away from high Calvinism, it is not surprising that by the end of the nineteenth century the name “Gadsby” (or even Gill and Brine) did not appear on William Landels’s list of “Baptist worthies.”\textsuperscript{67}

Gadsby’s legacy also suffered in the late nineteenth century due to strained relations between the various “Strict Baptist” denominations, which had emerged distinct from the Particular Baptist churches during the 1860s.\textsuperscript{68} In 1859-60, the “Eternal Sonship” Controversy arose between Strict Baptist ministers J.C. Philpot and C.W. Banks.\textsuperscript{69} Philpot, editor of the \textit{Gospel Standard Magazine}, argued that Jesus is eternally the Son of God, while Banks, editor of another Strict Baptist magazine, the \textit{Earthen

\textsuperscript{65} Hayden, 145.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 152-153.
\textsuperscript{67} William Landels, \textit{Baptist Worthies: a series of sketches of distinguished men who have held and advocated the principles of the Baptist denomination} (London: Baptist Tract and Book Society), 1883, Google eBook.
\textsuperscript{68} The emergence of self-identifying “Strict Baptist” churches during the 1860s is evident in John Gadsby’s emendation to the title of the Articles of Faith for the Gadsbyite churches. In 1852, John Gadsby began publishing these Articles for the churches and titled them the \textit{Articles of Faith and Practice for the Particular Baptist Church meeting at...} with a space for the specific church to fill in the appropriate meeting place. In 1866, he began substituting the word “Particular” with “Strict” in order to distinguish the Gadsbyite churches from their “open” brethren. See Kenneth Dix, \textit{Strict and Particular: English Strict and Particular Baptists in the Nineteenth Century} (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2001), 297.
\textsuperscript{69} For details concerning this controversy, see Dix, \textit{Strict and Particular}, 93-96.
maintained that “Christ is the Son of God only in his complexity, as the incarnate God/Man.”

This controversy did not result in any official division between the Strict Baptist churches, but it did foster allegiances to one magazine or the other. Since that time, Gadsby’s followers have been known as “Gospel Standard Strict Baptists.” Further division occurred when, in 1878, Gadsby’s followers added four new articles to their Articles of Faith and Practice. Of these four new statements, the first three (Articles 32 through 34), which rejected general gospel invitations, were added in response to a controversy with the more openly evangelical Septimus Sears, a Strict Baptist minister in Bedfordshire. These new articles gave creedal definition to the divide that was becoming increasingly apparent in the Strict Baptist churches: that between the experimental evangelism of the Gadsbyites and the open evangelism of the some of the

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70 Dix, Strict and Particular, 95.

71 These Articles appear in “‘Gospel Standard’ Aid Society,” wrapper to Gospel Standard (June 1878), xi.

72 The ideas of the “Four Added Articles” were not new. In particular, Articles 32 through 34 reinforced the ideas already expressed in Article 24 (that gospel invitations are “intended only for those who have been made by the blessed Spirit to feel their lost state as sinners and their need of Christ as their Saviour,” Article 26 (the rejection of duty-faith) and Article 29 (that the gospel is to be preached, not offered). These views were also summarized in an 1841 review, written by J.C. Philpot and John M’Kenzie, regarding James Wells’s The Moral Government of God (1840), which had appeared in The Gospel Standard (J.C. Philpot and John M’Kenzie, eds., “Editor’s Review of The Moral Government of God: wherein it is shown that the general exhortations of the Bible are not founded on the principle of individual responsibility. By James Wells,” Gospel Standard 7 [1841]: 52-57, 76-84, 174-180, CD-ROM). For Wells’s original work see James Wells, The Moral Government of God: wherein it is shown that the general exhortations of the Bible are not founded on the principle of individual responsibility (London: Groombridge, 1840). For commentary on these added articles, see J. H. Gosden, What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe (Chippenham, Wilts.: Gospel Standard Societies, 1993), 150-156; see also J.A. Watts and G.D. Buss, A Goodly Heritage: An Insight into the Gospel Standard Articles (Harpenden: Gospel Standard Trust, 2006), 47, 51, 57, and K.F.T. Matrunola and T. Abbott, Articles of Faith: Why and Where From? (Harpenden: Gospel Standard Trust, 2011), 104-106. For a discussion of the controversy with Septimus Sears, see Dix, Strict and Particular, 261-265. For Sears’s effect on Gadsby’s hymnbook, see Ch. 1.
other Strict Baptist churches. The final separation of the Gospel Standard Baptists from the Strict Baptist denomination was formalized on July 13, 1934, during a meeting held in London. Since that time, tensions between the various Strict Baptist denominations have remained.

During the twentieth century, Baptist historians tended to label William Gadsby as a “hyper-Calvinist” and cast him as an extremist, emphasizing his position outside of the main English Baptist narrative. In his History of British Baptists, first published in 1923, William Thomas Whitley reveals his bias against Gadsby and his followers when he describes nineteenth-century high Calvinism as having a “chill logic as to the

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73 Not all Gospel Standard ministers were entirely comfortable with these added articles. William Wileman noted Grey Hazlerigg’s uneasiness (Hazlerigg served as editor of the Gospel Standard Magazine from 1878 to 1880) in an article for The Christian’s Pathway. Hazlerigg writes, “I confess to having held, as is well known by some, strong objections to the addition of Articles 32, 33, and 34 to the original ones. The multiplication of highly elaborate Articles seemed, and still seems, to me dangerous. It may be a source not of safety, but of division” (Grey Hazlerigg, quoted by William Wileman, The Christian’s Pathway 26 [1921]: 209, as quoted in Dix, Strict and Particular, 263n).

74 This meeting was the result of the culmination of the self-proclaimed “God-Honouring Movement” within the Gospel Standard churches of the early 1930s. This movement renewed the “Eternal Sonship Controversy” and called for formal separation from all Strict Baptist churches and ministers who did not affirm that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. The vote was 407 for separation; 28 against (James Kidwell Popham, ed., “RE ‘A God-Honouring Movement,’ Gospel Standard 100 [1934]: 237; G.D. Clark, Condensed Report of the Meeting of the ‘Gospel Standard’ Churches,” Gospel Standard 100 [1934]: 257-284). See also Dix, 96. In defense of this separation from the wider Strict Baptists, S.F. Paul writes, “We believe the separation was made for Truth’s sake, and particularly from a godly jealousy to maintain the Truth of the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have nothing whatever to do with those who were in any way connected with the denial of it. To purge their churches and pulpits from this grievous error, was the main motive which animated our forefathers in taking up the separate and distinct position” (S.F. Paul, The Gospel Standard Library: A Conducted Tour [(England): Gospel Standard Library Trustees, 1999], 40).

75 In his forward to Dix’s Strict and Particular, Alan P.F. Sell writes, “In the course of my research I soon learned what long memories some Strict Baptists have, both of the leaders they revere and those they revile. I discovered how sensitive doctrinal antennae can sometimes be: in some circles one hardly dares to mention having opened The Christian’s Pathway” (Alan P.F. Sell, forward to Strict and Particular, by Dix, ix). The Christian’s Pathway was a Strict Baptist magazine that was in publication between 1895 and 1969 (Brackney, 549). See note 30 above.
uselessness of preaching for conversion.” Whitley also criticizes Gadsby’s followers for their aloofness from the Particular Baptist denomination and for affirming the 1878 Articles, thus separating themselves even from their fellow Strict Baptists. Whitley writes, “by 1850 they had so secluded themselves that they ceased to be a brake upon others, and their claim that they alone were ‘Particular Baptists’ ceased to be taken seriously.” Whitley continues his criticism by citing the ratification of the 1878 Articles: “A generation later on the suggestion of the Gospel Standard some threw away another Baptist tradition, every member literally subscribing a creed; a creed which is the quintessence of hyper-Calvinism and of exclusiveness.”

In his 1947 History of the English Baptists, A.C. Underwood tells of the revival of the Particular Baptist churches after (what he considers to be) a period of decline in the eighteenth century due to the “paralysing effect” of hyper-Calvinism. Underwood presents a somewhat kinder picture of William Gadsby than does Whitley, but he notes happily that Gadsby’s influence did not extend beyond a small number of those trapped

76 Whitley, History, 306. Whitley must have been misinformed concerning Gadsby’s political and social work: he writes, “[in] civil life [those holding the high Calvinistic view] did not care to take any public part, their concern was wholly with the Kingdom of Christ” (ibid.).

77 Whitley, History, 306. See also Gosden, What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe, 156.

78 Ibid. Despite his negative opinion of Gadsby’s theology, Whitley notes Gadsby’s popularity as “the indefatigable leader of the high Calvinists” such that “new churches were planted in abundance” (William Thomas Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism in England [London: Kingsgate, 1933], 38).

79 Underwood writes, “the notion that for multitudes of men no salvation was either intended or provided by Christ, devitalized evangelistic preaching and effort, depriving men of any feeling of responsibility for extending the Kingdom of God” (Alfred Clair Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, with a foreword by J.H. Rushbrooke [London: Kingsgate, 1947], 134).
in the “spell of hyper-Calvinism.” Underwood emphasizes that Gadsby and his followers stood outside of the “stirrings of new life” of moderate Calvinism, noting that “the victory of Fullerism was not quite complete among the Particular Baptists.”

Despite his minimization of Gadsby’s influence on the wider Particular Baptist denomination, Underwood makes the astute observation that Gadsby may be accurately called an “evangelical high Calvinistic” Baptist—one of the main arguments of this thesis—suggesting that Gadsby was not untouched by the enthusiasm of the Evangelical Revival.

In the past decade, modern Baptists historians have taken varied approaches regarding Gadsby’s life and work. In his survey, *English Baptist History and Heritage*, Roger Hayden ignores Gadsby completely, which is not surprising considering his negative opinion of the “arid, dry, ‘non-invitation’” preaching of high Calvinism. In light of this omission, historians within the Gospel Standard denomination have begun to take responsibility for recording their own history. In 2003, B.A. Ramsbottom, current editor of *The Gospel Standard*, published a formal biography of William Gadsby. Ramsbottom’s work is helpful for the casual reader and it is obvious that he is intimately

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80 Underwood writes of the Gadsbyites, “they were evidently acutely aware of the smallness of their numbers and their isolation from the main currents of religious life—a fact which may explain the stridency with which they criticized all who differed from them” (ibid., 161, 172, 187).

81 Ibid., 187.

82 Underwood writes, “there were some who repudiated Antinomianism and became ardent evangelists, but who, nevertheless, retained high-Calvinistic doctrines”; he then describes Gadsby as the leader of this party. Underwood also calls Gadsby a “pulpit genius” and a “remarkable man” (ibid., 185).

83 Hayden, 122.

84 Ramsbottom, *Gadsby*. 

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familiar with the primary sources above. Ramsbottom’s book, however, is poorly documented and eulogistic and therefore of limited use as a critical assessment of Gadsby’s work. In addition to Ramsbottom’s biography, various publications from the Gospel Standard Trust, in addition to the digitization of the entire *Gospel Standard* collection, are indicators of a growing interest in Strict Baptist history, and specifically, Gadsby’s legacy.  

Several Baptist historians who work outside of the Gospel Standard denomination (but still self-identify as Calvinistic Baptists) have also attempted to include William Gadsby in their narratives of Baptist history. In 2006, the Banner of Truth published a reworking of Robert W. Oliver’s 1985 dissertation, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1771-1892: From John Gill to C.H. Spurgeon*. Oliver devotes a chapter to Gadsby’s theological and political ideologies, calling him one of the patriarchs of the modern Strict Baptist movement, but his conclusion that “the more conservative [English Baptist] churches [of the nineteenth century] were fossilizing in Hyper-Calvinism” is dismissive and misleading. Kenneth Dix provides a more balanced and extensive critique of Gadsby’s legacy in his 2001 book, *Strict and Particular: English Strict and Particular Baptists in the Nineteenth Century*. The aim of Dix’s study is to trace the

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87 Oliver, *History*, 336.

theological divisions within the nineteenth century Strict Baptist churches, which he does successfully; however, he devotes only two paragraphs to Gadsby’s hymnbook.\textsuperscript{89}

The oversight of Gadsby’s hymnbook in Baptist literature has been offset slightly by a modest amount of attention from musicologists. In 1855, John Gadsby published \textit{Memoirs of the Principal Hymn-Writers & Compilers of the 17\textsuperscript{th}, 18\textsuperscript{th}, and 19\textsuperscript{th} Centuries}, in which he included a biography of his father as well as a brief publishing history of his father’s \textit{Selection}.\textsuperscript{90} In 1888 Henry Sweetser Burrage included a short biographical account of Gadsby and his hymnbook in his \textit{Baptist Hymn-Writers and Their Hymns}.\textsuperscript{91} The importance of Gadsby’s hymnbook was again affirmed at the close of the nineteenth century with its inclusion in John Julian’s mammoth study \textit{A Dictionary of Hymnology}.\textsuperscript{92} Julian includes a short biography of Gadsby and distinguishes Gadsby’s \textit{Selection} as one of the three hymnbooks in current use among high Calvinistic English Baptists.\textsuperscript{93}

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, musicological discussions of Gadsby’s \textit{Selection} have appeared in only a handful of publications. Early in the twentieth century,

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\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 59. Ian Shaw has also added to Gadsby scholarship (Ian J. Shaw, \textit{High Calvinists in Action: Calvinism and the City, Manchester and London, c. 1810-1860} [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002]). In his 2009 Baptist encyclopedia, William H. Brackney presents a straight-forward account of Gadsby’s life and legacy (Brackney, 239-240).

\textsuperscript{90} John Gadsby, \textit{Memoirs of the Principal Hymn-Writers & Compilers of the 17\textsuperscript{th}, 18\textsuperscript{th}, and 19\textsuperscript{th} Centuries}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. (London: John Gadsby, 1870), 60-62, Google eBook.

\textsuperscript{91} Henry Sweetser Burrage, \textit{Baptist Hymn-Writers and Their Hymns} (Portland, ME: Brown Thurston, 1888), 128-129, Google eBook.

\textsuperscript{92} John Julian, \textit{A Dictionary of Hymnology, setting forth the origin and history of Christian hymns of all ages and nations, etc.} (New York: C Scribner’s Sons, 1892).

\textsuperscript{93} Julian, 113, 403. Julian notes that the other two hymnbooks in common use at the time were David Denham’s \textit{Selection} of 1837 and John Stevens’s \textit{Selection}, first published in 1809. See Ch. 5 for details on Steven’s \textit{Selection}.
\end{flushleft}
Gadsby’s hymnbook caught the attention of Louis F. Benson in his research for his 1914 *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship.* Benson devotes only a paragraph to high Calvinistic hymnody, including Gadsby’s *Selection.* Despite the brevity of his comments, Benson describes accurately its historical context when he writes, “while the Unitarians were renouncing Watts’ *Psalms and Hymns* as ‘Trinitarian and Calvinistic,’ the high Calvinistic Baptists were turning from them as not sufficiently differentiated from Arminianism.” In the late twentieth century, J.H.Y. Briggs included a discussion of Gadsby’s *Selection*, in his chapter on congregational worship, as part of his 1994 study *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century.* Briggs’s observation that Gadsby “heavily edited [the Wesleys’ hymns] for [high] Calvinistic use,” however, singles out Gadsby unfairly for this type of editing, which was common practice among hymn compilers. Finally, Ramsbottom devotes an entire chapter and an appendix to the *Selection* in his biography of Gadsby. Ramsbottom’s discussion, consisting of a mere fifteen pages, is the most extensive musicological treatment that Gadsby’s hymnbook has received since its publication nearly two hundred years ago.

The oversight of Gadsby’s hymnbook in musicological scholarship might be understandable considering that Gadsby’s *Selection*, like many eighteenth- and

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*95* Benson, 146.


*97* Ibid., 37. See Ch. 4 and Ch. 5 for details on the common practice of hymn alteration during this period.

nineteenth-century hymnbooks, contains no music and therefore seems an unlikely subject for musicological discourse. Gadsby’s hymnbook, however, is inherently musical, despite its lack of printed music, because it was compiled for the express purpose of aiding worship through song. In his 1838 preface, Gadsby writes, “to be employed, with solemn pleasure, in singing the praises of God.”99 The book was first conceived as a musical object, it functioned as a tool for worship through music, and since that time, Gadsby’s selection has continued to serve a musical purpose.100 In the last decade, Gadsby’s hymnbook has come to the attention of a new generation of church musicians who, encouraged by modern reprints of the hymnbook, have set many of Gadsby’s texts to new tunes.101 Although it is valued for its texts, little research has been done to situate the hymnbook in the context of nineteenth-century worship and theology. Filling this gap in Gadsby scholarship is the aim of this work.

Situating Gadsby’s Selection as an Historical Object

In order to reconstruct an accurate picture of Gadsby’s hymnbook, his theology of worship, and its influence in the English Particular Baptist churches, I have relied on the primary and secondary sources discussed above, as well as various editions of Gadsby’s hymnbook. This study is confined to the hymns of Parts 1 through 3 of Gadsby’s

99 W. Gadsby, Selection (1814), iii.

100 Gadsby’s hymnbook continues to be the only acceptable hymnbook for worship in the Gospel Standard Baptist churches; it has also enjoyed a “renaissance” in American reformed circles as songwriters, such as Sandra McCracken, Clint Wells, and Brian T. Murphy have set new music to these texts. See Red Mountain Music, The Gadsby Project: A Collection of Hymns, Red Mountain Music, 2005, CD. See also Red Mountain Music, Help My Unbelief: A Second Collection of Gadsby’s Hymns from Red Mountain Church, Red Mountain Music, 2006, CD.

101 See Gadsby, Hart, and Philpot, Gadsby’s Hymns.
Selection, known as the “Original Selection,” “Gadsby’s hymns,” and “Gadsby’s Supplement,” respectively. These parts were compiled by Gadsby himself. Parts 4 through 6, “Hart’s Hymns,” “Philpot’s Supplement,” and the “Occasional Hymns,” were added after Gadsby’s death. To understand the historical and doctrinal context of Parts 1 through 3 of the hymnbook, I have concentrated on Particular Baptist theology and history throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a focus on the theologies of John Gill, John Brine, Andrew Fuller, and William Huntington. In my study of Gadsby’s hymn sources, I have relied heavily on various editions of John Rippon’s Selection, the Bristol Collection of John Ash and Caleb Evans, Isaac Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, and John Stevens’s Selection; I have also consulted multiple congregational songbooks, including the works of John Berridge, Joseph Hart, Daniel Herbert, John Newton, Augustus M. Toplady, and John Wesley. Finally, in an effort to understand the philosophical and ideological mores of the nineteenth century, I have utilized and built on the ideas of Isaiah Berlin, Bernard Reardon, and David Bebbington.

In the first chapter of this work I shall trace the development of and sources for Gadsby’s Selection as it is used today. The second chapter is devoted to defining and exploring the high Calvinistic system of the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist churches as it was expressed through the theological works of Gill and Brine. During the late eighteenth century, however, the dominance of high Calvinism began to decline in the Particular Baptist churches. The rise of moderate Calvinism, as well as its dissemination through evangelical hymnody, is the subject of Chapter Three. The

102 See Ch. 1 for details of the development of the hymnbook.
remaining chapters focus exclusively on William Gadsby and his contribution to experimental, high Calvinistic hymnody, as evidenced through the first three parts of the hymnbook. Chapter Four establishes Gadsby in the high orthodox tradition of Enlightenment high Calvinism and explores his desire for a hymnbook that reflected his doctrinal convictions. The following chapter discusses Gadsby’s eventual dissatisfaction with the perceived spiritual “dryness” of Enlightenment high Calvinism and his desire to infuse orthodoxy with romantic experimentalism. The sixth Chapter discusses the mode through which Gadsby chose to bring about this romantic reform, namely his hymnbook. Gadsby’s Selection redefined high Calvinism for the romantic Generation and allowed him to participate in the Evangelical Revival. Finally, Chapter Seven discusses Gadsby’s hymnbook from a critical standpoint as a source for a “Gadsbyite” identity within the English Baptist churches as well as its success in fostering a rather unconventional, and yet highly orthodox, model of romantic evangelism. Grounded in the Enlightenment orthodoxy of high Calvinism and communicated through the experimentalism of early nineteenth-century romanticism, Gadsby’s Selection of Hymns for Public Worship stands as a pivotal collection of Baptist hymnody.
Chapter 1: Hymnbook Development, Content, and Sources

*Gadsby’s Hymns*, as the collection is known today, is the product of over one hundred years of revisions and enlargements. The hymnbook comprises six parts with over one thousand hymns, making it one of the largest Baptist hymn collections of the early nineteenth century. To a reader without any prior knowledge of the Gospel Standard Baptists or nineteenth-century hymnody, however, the modern edition of the hymnbook, printed in 1999, presents a mystery. Although the modern edition bears the title *Gadsby’s Hymns* and includes the subtitle “chosen by William Gadsby,” two other authors are associated with the volume: Joseph Hart (1712-1768) and Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869). The title page includes a brief table of contents (Table 1.1):

| Part 1: Original Selection |
| Part 2: Gadsby’s Hymns |
| Part 3: Gadsby’s Supplement |
| Part 4: Hart’s Hymns |
| Part 5: Philpot’s Supplement |
| Part 6: Occasional Hymns |

Table 1.1. Table of Contents for modern edition of *Gadsby’s Hymns*.¹

An inspection of the prefatory material, which includes prefaces by both Gadsby and Philpot, hints at a developmental process with several stages of abridgement and augmentation, but regrettably, these prefaces do not present an exact timeline. This internal evidence raises many questions: What constituted the original hymnbook? How much of it is actually Gadsby’s own compilation? Who are Hart and Philpot, how and why were so many separate parts added? Although the hymnbook itself does not recount its own history or the implications of these alterations, much of this information may be reconstructed by studying various editions of the hymnbook as well as consulting the writings of its contributors.

The development of the hymnbook as a physical object comprises five major stages. When the hymnbook was first published in 1814, it had only two parts. These first two parts, known as Gadsby’s “Original Selection” and “Gadsby’s Hymns,” respectively, make up the hymnbook’s core with six hundred seventy-one hymns. The second stage of development involved the addition of a third part, Gadsby’s Supplement, in 1836. The third and fourth stages of development occurred within six years of each other: Part 4 (Hart’s Hymns) was added in 1844, and the Second Supplement (Part 5), compiled by J.C. Philpot, was added in 1850. The final stage of development was not

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2 The first preface is dated “Manchester, November, 1838” and signed by William Gadsby himself. The Preface to the Second Supplement is signed “J.C. Philpot,” but there is no date.

3 I shall define “major stage” as the addition of an entirely new part to the hymnbook. Subsequent alterations to individual texts, omissions, and reversions—although very important in the history of the hymnbook, its meaning, and the identity of the Gospel Standard Baptists—are not substantive in terms of the physicality of the object.
taken up for another eighty years, when the sixth part was finally included in 1930. Since that time Gadsby’s collection has remained, for the most part, unaltered.⁴

William Gadsby himself oversaw the first two stages of the hymnbook’s development. The original collection of hymns was called *A Selection of Hymns from Various Authors Designed for Public Worship* and contained six hundred seventy-one hymns in two parts.⁵ The first part includes many works by Independent ministers Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and Joseph Hart, as well as Anglican ministers John Newton (1725-1807) and John Berridge (1716-1793). Gadsby also included many hymns by Baptist poet Samuel Medley (1738-1799), Charles Wesley (despite his leadership of the Arminian Methodists), and Calvinistic Anglicans Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778), John Kent (1766-1843), and William Cowper (1731-1800).⁶ The second part of the collection consists of Gadsby’s own hymns, which he also published separately as *The Nazarene’s Songs* in the same year.⁷ The immediate success of Gadsby’s *Selection* is evident in view of the eight editions that were printed in the first twenty years of its use.

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⁴ See Table 1.2 below.

⁵ Parts 1 and 2 of the hymnbook comprises Hymns 1-670, but it actually contains six hundred seventy-one hymns. Part 1 includes Hymns 1 through 513; however, this part contains five hundred fourteen hymns due to the accidental repetition of the number 506. Hymn 506 is a doxology by Watts; Hymn 506A, sometimes written as 506*, is a doxology by Bishop Ken. See W. Gadsby, *Selection* (1814). See also Matthew Hyde, “Gadsby’s” 1814-2014: the Biography of a Hymnbook (forthcoming).

⁶ Gadsby’s son, John, recorded a list of authors included in the hymnbook in his companion volume. See John Gadsby, *A Companion to Gadsby’s Selection of Hymns, and the Supplements* (London: J. Gadsby, 1851).

Gadsby undertook the second stage of development of the hymnbook in the 1830s. A number of Gadsby’s compositions were extraordinarily long, and as Gadsby writes, they were “comparatively useless” for public worship. In order to make the hymnbook more functional, he amended it by cutting entire stanzas from Part 2 for the ninth edition (1836). He also added a third section containing one hundred two more hymns. This section comprises Hymns 671-772 and is commonly referred to as “Gadsby’s Supplement.” This third section of the hymnbook contains more verses by John Berridge, Joseph Hart, and Calvinistic Independent Daniel Herbert (1751-1833), along with several more by John Newton, Isaac Watts, and various other authors.

Gadsby also included sixteen additional verses of his own composition.

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8 William Gadsby, A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship, in three parts (Manchester: J. Gadsby, 1838), iii, Google eBook. One of the most extreme abridgements was made to Hymn 640, “Blessed Jesus, Lord of All.” In previous editions, this hymn includes 21 stanzas, but for the ninth edition (1836), this hymn appears in a four-stanza form. See W. Gadsby, Selection (1836). For this shorter version, Gadsby cut out stanzas three through nineteen, leaving only the first and last two stanzas intact. Gadsby made similar adjustments to Hymn 664, “What solemn tidings reach our ears,” which Gadsby wrote following the deaths of two women at the Particular Baptist Church at Hinckley. This hymn originally included twenty-nine stanzas. Gadsby included only the first, eighth, ninth, fifteenth, and sixteenth verses in the 1836 edition of the hymnbook. He also substituted references to “two sisters” with a general reference, “a brother” (modern editions add “or sister”). These hymns appear in their long forms in The Nazarene’s Songs, 1824. Gadsby might have had help cutting his verses from a sympathetic dissenting minister from Abingdon, William Tiptaft. See Joseph Charles Philpot, Letters by the Late Joseph Charles Philpot, M.A., edited by W.C. Clayton and S.L. Philpot (London: J. Gadsby, 1871), 18, 42-43, Google eBook.

9 In his Companion, John Gadsby gives 1838 as the date of the new three-part edition: “In 1838, a new edition was issued with a Supplement, now called the ‘First Supplement,’ many of Mr. G.’s original hymns being curtailed to make room for it” (J. Gadsby, Companion, 101). The 1836 edition, however, proves John Gadsby’s timeline is wrong. John Gadsby’s confusion undoubtedly arose from two factors: 1) the 1836 edition, despite its three parts, includes a table of contents that lists only the first two parts, and 2) William Gadsby did not write a new preface for the 1836 edition. The 1836 edition simply includes the preface from the first edition, signed 1814. In the 1838 “stereotype edition,” Gadsby included a revised preface, explaining that the curtailment of his hymns allowed room for the addition of Part 3. See W. Gadsby, Selection (1836, 1838).

10 Gadsby included the names of the authors of the hymns in the first part of the hymnbook; in the supplement, however, names were not given. After Gadsby’s death, names were added to the supplement. In the preface to the 1838 edition, Gadsby writes that the hymns in the supplement “have principally been
After Gadsby’s death on January 27, 1844, the editors of the hymnbook continued to expand its content by adding Parts 4 and 5. The exact chronology of the hymnbook’s development during the five years immediately following Gadsby’s death is difficult to determine due to several inaccuracies in Gadsby’s memoir, written by his son, John, and to misleading references in the hymnbook itself. The first of these posthumous additions, Part 4, comprises Joseph Hart’s *Hymns Composed on Various Subjects, with the Author’s Experience* (1759).\footnote{Joseph Hart, *Hymns Composed on various subjects. With a preface, containing a brief and summary account of the author's experience* (London: J. Everingham, 1759), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3321083204).} Joseph Hart was a minister at the Independent Chapel on Jewin Street, London, from 1759 until his death nine years later. His hymnbook was widely used for public worship services in Calvinistic dissenting congregations during the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century.\footnote{John Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology, setting forth the origin and history of Christian hymns of all ages and nations* (New York: Dover, 1957), 492. Hart was converted to Christianity under the preaching of the Moravian Chapel, in Fetterland, London, which may have impacted his passionate style of poetry. He published his hymns in 1759, and subsequently added a supplement and an appendix. Editions of his hymnbook published after his death included the supplement and appendix. See Joseph Hart, *Hymns, &c. composed on various subjects. By J. Hart. The fifth edition. With the author's experience, the supplement, and appendix* (London, [1765?]), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3321441400).} Experimental preachers in particular utilized Hart’s hymns as examples of the “unction” of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.\footnote{Gadsby frequently quoted from Hart’s hymns in his sermons and letters. See W. Gadsby, *Sermons*, 20, 43, 58, 151, 153, 161, 163. For more on experimentalism and hymnody, see Chs. 5 and 6.}

In *A Companion to Gadsby’s Selection of Hymns*, John Gadsby writes that “[i]n 1846-7…the whole of Hart’s hymns which did not already appear in the Selection, were selected from Hart and Berridge, these two men being, I believe, the sweetest and greatest experimental writers that have left any hymns on record” (W. Gadsby, *Selection* [1838], 4). See also Ramsbottom, *Gadsby*, 304.

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added thereto, making the total number of hymns in the book 882.”\(^{14}\) John Gadsby’s date in this companion volume is again misleading, however. The tenth edition of the hymnbook, in four parts, was actually published in 1844.\(^{15}\) In the preface to this edition, John Gadsby himself writes, “At the request of several dear friends in the ministry, I have added to this edition the whole of Hart’s Hymns which did not already appear in the Selection, and I trust that the usefulness of the book will be thereby increased.”\(^{16}\) This paragraph is signed “John Gadsby. Manchester, November 23, 1844.” Hart’s hymns, therefore, were added to Gadsby’s hymnbook in 1844, not in 1846/7 as later biographers have assumed based on John Gadsby’s *Companion*.

John Gadsby’s comment concerning the usefulness of the hymnbook warrants reflection at this point. Hart’s *Hymns*, first published in 1759, was particularly popular among the Calvinistic dissenters of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.\(^{17}\) Gadsby himself was fond of many of Hart’s hymns, having included one hundred nine of them in the first and third sections of his compilation. By 1796, Hart’s book had gone

\(^{14}\) J. Gadsby, *Companion*, 101.

\(^{15}\) The designation “tenth edition” is misleading. The 1836 edition (in three parts) is clearly identified as the “ninth edition;” the 1838 edition is simply marked “stereotype edition,;” and the 1844 edition (in four parts) is marked as the “tenth edition.” The 1838 “stereotype edition” is not counted as a numbered edition.

\(^{16}\) William Gadsby and Joseph Hart, *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship, in four parts*, 10th ed. (Manchester: Gadsby, 1844), i. John Gadsby’s statement regarding “the whole of Hart’s hymns” is not entirely true. Many of Hart’s hymns were included in the original selection, but many of them were abridged. The tenth edition incorporated the remaining hymns of Hart, but it did not include the verses cut from Hart’s hymns in original selection. Thus, as Matthew Hyde pointed out in an e-mail to the author, February 9, 2011, “‘the whole of Hart’s hymns’ have never been entirely included in Gadsby’s Hymnbook.”

\(^{17}\) Hart’s hymnbook was published subsequently with a supplement in 1762 and an appendix in 1765 (Julian, 492-493).
through thirteen editions in England and multiple editions in America. The popularity of
the hymnbook, however, proved to be challenging for Gadsby’s congregation. As
Matthew Hyde writes:

The problem with Hart’s own hymnbook was there were many editions, all with
different numbering and paginations, hence announcing hymns was complicated
as not all the congregation would have the same number. Thus, the addition of
the remainder of Hart’s hymns to Gadsby’s was a practical way of solving this
problem.¹⁸

This fourth section seems to have been viewed initially as an addendum bound at
the end of the existing compilation, rather than an enlargement of Gadsby’s hymnbook
proper. Although it is bound with the original selection in the 1844 edition of Gadsby’s
collection, Hart’s work retains a separate identity. The index to the first three sections of
the hymnbook (Gadsby’s own compilation) precedes Part 4 (Hart’s Hymns). At the
bottom of this first index, the printer is clearly identified: “Manchester: Printed by John
Gadsby Newall’s-Building,” which suggests that the first three sections of the book were
prepared as a separate publication, perhaps even distributed separately.¹⁹ Part 4 is distinct
and almost completely independent from the rest of the book, complete with its own

¹⁸ Matthew Hyde, e-mail message to the author, February 9, 2011. It should be noted, however,
that Hart’s hymns were reproduced in Part 4 of Gadsby’s hymnbook in the same order as they appear in
Hart’s (excluding those that had already been included in the first three sections). Cross-referencing a
hymn from Gadsby’s Part 4 to Hart’s book would have taken some effort, but could have easily been
accomplished within the context of a worship service. The real difficulty would have arisen if the hymn
called out was one that had been included in Part 1 or 2 of Gadsby’s, where the order of the hymns does not
necessarily correspond to Hart’s book.

¹⁹ The author has found no three-part edition published in 1844. In 1845, however, John Gadsby
did publish a three-part version of the hymnbook, with a preface from the 1838 edition, presumably for
those who already had a copy of Hart’s popular hymnbook and who did not mind the different numbering
(S Starr, 161). A copy of the 1845 edition is held in the Columbia University Libraries.
index. Only the lack of a title page suggests this section’s co-identity with the rest of the collection.

Subsequent editions during the 1840s reinforce the separate identity of Part 4. The process of stereotyping perpetuated this separation and may have also created some confusion surrounding the actual content of these subsequent editions.20 The editions of 1845 and 1846 are both identified as stereotype editions “in three parts,” that is, without Part 4, Hart’s Hymns.21 The 1845 edition is true to its title page: it includes only the first three parts. The 1846 edition, despite its title page, however, is in four parts. This edition is a “stereotype edition” with regard to the first three sections; the fourth section and its index, however, are bound up at the end, mirroring the layout of the 1844 edition.22

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20 Stereotyping was the process of forming a mould of a page of moveable types, from which a metal plate was then cast. This process allowed for the reuse of types and for multiple print runs of a single edition. Stereotyping was invented in the Netherlands in the early eighteenth century, but it was not employed in Britain until 1725. In the early 1800s the method was improved by Charles Stanhope, from which time the process gained widespread use. In 1858 Henry Bradbury writes, “the method of stereotype still in use...consists in making plaster-of-Paris moulds of pages of types, and casting plates in type-metal” (Henry R. Bradbury, *Printing: its Dawn, Day, and Destiny* [London: Bradbury and Evans: 1858], 33, Google eBook). See also W. H. Brock and A.J. Meadows, *The Lamp of Learning: Two Centuries of Publishing at Taylor & Francis* (Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 91, Google eBook.

21 That is, stereotypes of the 1838 edition.

22 The question arises: why did John Gadsby choose to use the stereotypes of the three-part edition instead of making new stereotype plates for the four-part edition? The answer to this question may, of course, be financial. Undoubtedly it would have been cheaper to use the stereotype plates from the three-part edition and simply tack on the fourth section, rather than make new stereotype plates for the four-part 1844 edition. This decision, however, may be evidence that some of Hart’s hymns included in Part 4 were not readily accepted by Gadsby’s followers even from this early stage.
“Slaughter of the Innocents”

The seemingly amorphous character of Gadsby’s hymnbook during the mid-1840s may also be explained, in part, by the circumstances in the lives of William and John Gadsby during this time. The year 1844 opened with the death of William Gadsby. His son, John, was also ill during this time. Editorial responsibility for the hymnbook was most likely still under John Gadsby’s control at this time, as is evidenced by his signed preface in the 1844 edition, but a thorough analysis of the content of Hart’s hymns, as well as the format of the hymnbook, may have been neglected due to John’s emotional and physical difficulties. By 1849, however, editorial responsibility was assumed by Philpot, who would be instrumental in the next phase of the hymnbook’s development.

During the late spring of 1849, a fire at John Gadsby’s printing house destroyed the original stereotype plates of the hymnbook. The destruction of the original plates spurred a new printing of the hymnbook, which was published in 1850. At this time,

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25 In his *Companion*, John Gadsby writes that the new printing took place in 1849/50 (J. Gadsby, *Companion*, 101). In an e-mail to the author, February 9, 2011, however, Matthew Hyde writes that although this new edition bears the date 1850 on the title page, Philpot’s preface is dated “24 December 1849.” In a brief biographical sketch of Philpot, the editors of his *Letters* write that Philpot compiled and wrote a preface to the second supplement in 1846 or 1845, an effort that “employed much of his time and was no small labour” (J.C. Philpot, *Letters*, 560). These early dates are certainly incorrect considering the date of Philpot’s preface as well as his reference to the 1849 fire at the printing house. The editors’ mention of the amount of time Philpot took in preparing the second supplement is consistent with an effort that must have begun immediately after the fire (late spring of 1849) and finally finished by the end of the year.
J.C. Philpot, the new editor of the *Gospel Standard Magazine*, took up the responsibility of compiling a second supplement to be added to the book. Philpot writes about his motives in the preface to this edition, dated the 24th of December, 1849:

When, then, in consequence of the destruction of the stereotype plates by the fire in Bouverie Street, it became necessary to publish a new edition of the late Mr. Gadsby’s Selection, it seemed desirable to increase the number of hymns; and as the proprietor and publisher liberally consented to enlarge the Hymn Book (already much increased in size and value by the addition of the remaining hymns of Hart), without a corresponding enlargement of price, I felt induced to select the Second Supplement.

This fifth section of the hymnbook increased the number of hymns to 1138 and includes many hymns by Thomas Kelly, John Kent, John Berridge, Anne Steele, Charles Wesley, and John Newton. Philpot’s Supplement was also printed as a separate volume in 1850.

The 1850 edition includes a reference to a controversy within the Gospel Standard churches concerning the cutting of several of Hart’s hymns in Part 4. Grey Hazlerigg, editor of the *Gospel Standard Magazine* from 1878-1880 (for a brief period in June 1879 when John Gadsby assumed the role), called this controversy the “Slaughter of the

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28 Isaac Watts and Henry Fowler are also strongly represented with fifteen and fourteen hymns, respectively.

Innocents.”\textsuperscript{30} For the 1850 edition, the editors cut verses from four of the hymns and cut fifteen hymns that were previously included in Part 4.\textsuperscript{31} At the beginning of this fourth section the 1850 edition includes the note:

The following hymns are by Mr. Hart. Several which appeared in the last edition of the Selection, as also some verses, have been omitted from this edition as hardly suitable for being sung; though several such hymns have been retained, with a view to private reading rather than public worship. These hymns were added to the Selection after Mr. Gadsby’s death.\textsuperscript{32}

The reason these particular hymns were unsuitable is readily ascertained through an examination of the texts: several of the omitted hymns include views contrary to Gospel Standard teaching. For example, Hymn 846 proposes ideas associated with “duty-faith,” a doctrine that William Gadsby and J.C. Philpot ardently denied.\textsuperscript{33}

The question as to who initiated these cuts is more difficult to answer. Although John Gadsby took the credit for expanding the 1844 edition with the inclusion of the remaining hymns of Hart, he may have realized later why his father had not included some of these in his original compilation. It is also worth noting that during the 1870s, some of these hymns were cut in order to provide space for the new supplement. While extra space was undoubtedly a benefit, the amount actually obtained from cutting these hymns hardly seems substantial considering the length of the second supplement.


\textsuperscript{31} Verses in Hymn 779, 870, 880, and 882 are cut in the 1850 edition (Betty Bolden [Columbia University Libraries], e-mail message to the author, February 3, 2011). Hymns 781, 784, 793, 813, 819, 839, 840, 841, 846, 848, 849, 859, 877, 879, and 881 are omitted altogether. For the ease of the congregation, however, the numbering of the hymns was not modified in order to allow for the use of multiple editions during the service. Subsequent editions of the hymnbook simply skip over these numbers; Hymn 780 is followed directly by Hymn 782, for example. The number of hymns, regardless of their numbering, was reduced to 1123.

\textsuperscript{32} Matthew Hyde, e-mail message to the author, February 9, 2011.

\textsuperscript{33} Ramsbottom, Gadsby, 305. See also Ch. 2 for a discussion of duty-faith. It may be argued that these hymns were cut in order to provide space for the new supplement. While extra space was undoubtedly a benefit, the amount actually obtained from cutting these hymns hardly seems substantial considering the length of the second supplement.
either John Gadsby or Philpot altered individual words in several hymns, but without poetic success.\textsuperscript{34} Considering Philpot’s editorial role at this time, it seems more likely that Philpot was the primary instrument of reform for the 1850 edition, not John Gadsby.

J.C. Philpot’s editorial and literary background makes him the likelier candidate for the sweeping alterations of the 1850 edition. Philpot had a keen grasp on poetry and literary style, as well as an appreciation for these qualities in hymns.\textsuperscript{35} In a letter dated November 18, 1839, Philpot writes,

A certain amount of poetry is absolutely requisite in hymns, the want of which, as in the case of Herbert’s (of Sudbury), is a positive impediment to their wide diffusion, in spite of choice experience and sound doctrine; whilst Cowper’s and Kent’s owe much of their circulation to the sweetness of the poetry.\textsuperscript{36}

Along with beauty of expression, Philpot was equally interested in right teaching, as is clear from his expository writings on the Calvinistic doctrines of grace and many other issues of Gospel Standard doctrine.\textsuperscript{37} Beautiful expression was clearly important to Philpot, but it was not a substitute for right teaching. As Philpot would later write, “what

\textsuperscript{34} The alterations of the 1870s shall be considered a substage of the hymnbook’s development. One instance where these changes leave something to be desired is John’s changes to Hart’s verse “When we pray or when we sing” (Hymn 796). The first stanza begins:

When we pray or when we sing,  
Or read or speak or hear,  
Or do any holy thing  
Be this our constant care, etc.

Philpot changes the last two lines to:

Or do any other thing,  
Be this our constant aim.

In response to this particular alteration, Hazlerigg writes, “How weak the word other! How discordant the word aim, as made to rhyme with hear!” (Hazlerigg, 6-7).

\textsuperscript{35} Oliver, \textit{History}, 288-311.

\textsuperscript{36} J.C. Philpot, \textit{Letters}, 137.

\textsuperscript{37} These “doctrines of grace” is another name given to the historic “Five Points of Calvinism.”
would experience be unless supported by sound doctrine?"  

In particular, Philpot preached passionately against duty-faith and Arminianism: consequently, it is not surprising that he would have had little patience for these teachings in hymns.

Furthering the argument for Philpot’s part in cutting Hart’s hymns, it is important to note that Philpot was not a novice to hymn editing. In a letter dated April 18, 1867, Philpot writes,

I am fond myself of Berridge’s ‘Hymns,’ but there are many expressions in them, as in his other writings, of which I by no means approve. When, therefore, I edited, in 1842, his ‘Songs of Zion,’ though I did not feel warranted to alter much, yet I struck out some expressions or omitted some verses of which I could not altogether approve.  

The changes that Philpot made to Berridge’s collection concern references to universal atonement, a teaching that Philpot rejected according to the doctrines of grace.  

A similar situation seems probable in the case of Hart’s hymns. Although Philpot regarded Hart’s hymns with great respect, as is given evidence in his letters and sermons, his responsibility to his readership seems to have taken precedence over his personal admiration.  

The initial impetus for cutting several of Hart’s hymns may have come from John Gadsby, but considering Philpot’s previous experience as a hymn editor and

38 Ibid., 300.

39 Ibid., 147. Philpot similarly downplayed the alterations made to Hart’s hymns in Gadsby’s Selection. In a letter to John Grace, a minister at Brighton, dated February 1, 1855, Philpot writes that only one or two of Hart’s hymns had been cut: With you, I admire above all other’s Hart’s blessed hymns. I should be glad to help in their circulation, and I think a notice in the Standard, or short advertisement might help this. As all his hymns are in Gadsby’s Hymn Book (with one or two omissions), our friends are pretty well furnished with copies… (J.C. Philpot, Letters, 243).

Philpot’s reference to “one or two omissions” is an understatement, as the 1850 edition attests.


41 See note 38 above.
his editorial control over the second supplement as well as The Gospel Standard Magazine, it seems very likely that Philpot actually carried out the editorial process that resulted in the cutting of these texts.\footnote{Philpot was the sole editor of the Gospel Standard from 1849-1869 (Ramsbottom, History, 4).} Regardless of who made the changes, however, it seems that the 1849 fire in John Gadsby’s printing house offered the editorial board an opportunity to correct the theological inaccuracies in Part 4 that had troubled the Gospel Standard churches since its addition to the hymnbook five years earlier.

In the 1870s Philpot, most likely with the encouragement of John Gadsby, made considerable alterations to individual words in the hymnbook in response to controversy within the Strict Baptist churches concerning Septimus Sears (1819-1877).\footnote{See Hazlerigg, 9-10.} Sears’s teachings on the object of faith were contrary to William Gadsby’s teachings on the subject. Sears was a Strict Baptist minister in Clifton who, in 1875, published a sermon in The Sower magazine regarding the assurance of justification. In this sermon, Sears openly encouraged burdened sinners to believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection for their justification, rather than looking only to an inward spiritual experience. Sears feared that this inward experience might delude sinners into a false sense of assurance.\footnote{Sears was wary of the experiential teaching that encouraged believers to trust in a subjective personal encounter instead of the objective truth of Christ’s death (see Dix, Strict and Particular, 261-263). Robert Oliver points out that earlier Particular Baptists would have recognized these two aspects of the Christian experience as the difference between faith and assurance (Oliver, History, 190).} This point was fiercely refuted by John Gadsby (along with J.C. Philpot and John M’Kenzie), who, according to Gadsby’s teaching, strongly believed that faith was a work of the Holy Spirit
(not initiated by the human will), and that this work could only be ascertained through a
spiritual experience in a believer’s life.\textsuperscript{45}

In response to Sears’s more open evangelical teaching, Philpot altered many
verses in the hymnbook, particularly compositions of Hart, which might be understood as
supporting Sears’s position. For example, Hart’s “To comprehend the great Three-One,”
which William Gadsby included in his Original Section (Hymn 34), includes the stanza:

“Glory to God the Holy Ghost,
Who to our hearts this love reveals;
Thus God Three-One, to sinners lost
Salvation sends, procures, and seals.”\textsuperscript{46}

The last line of this stanza alludes to the three-fold interaction between the God-Head:

God the Father sends, God the Son procures, and God the Holy Spirit seals. Philpot
changed the last line of this stanza to “Salvation sends, salvation seals” in an effort to
highlight the inner working of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{47} As Grey Hazlerigg points out in his
pamphlet \textit{The Slaughter of the Innocents},

Thus the second Person of the Trinity [Jesus] is left out. Salvation is represented
as coming direct from the Father, and, as so coming, witnessed by the Holy Spirit.
How much sweeter and truer are the poet’s words…\textsuperscript{48}

In effect, through this change, Philpot deemphasized Christ’s role in salvation.\textsuperscript{49} The

\begin{footnotes}
\item[47] Hazlerigg, 5-6.
\item[48] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
continued to be a point of contention between the Gospel Standard Baptists and other Strict Baptists well into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{A New Edition}

The controversy of the 1870s culminated in the next stage of the hymnbook’s development. In 1930, a new edition was prepared for print, which restored most of the original wording. A note to the 1930 edition states:

The Trustees wish to point out that some deviations appearing in previous editions, revert to the author’s original in this edition. In two cases the original wording is deviated from. In each instance clear expression of the truth has been the first consideration.

It is hoped that the addition of eighteen \textit{Occasional Hymns} will meet the need of such occasions as they arise.\textsuperscript{51}

The editors’ set forth the 1930 edition as a kind of “authentic” edition, which implies that the demand for such an edition was high enough to warrant a new publication by this time. In addition to amending Philpot’s changes, the 1930 edition also included a new section. The sixth part, entitled “Occasional Hymns” contains only eighteen hymns, Hymns 1139 to 1156, with verses by Watts, Newton, and several other nineteenth century

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\textsuperscript{49} Philpot would have affirmed the importance of Jesus obeying his Father’s will, but belief in Christ’s death was not evidence enough to warrant assurance of faith. Hazlerigg softens his criticisms of Philpot by adding,

Of course, not to harshly judge the person who made the alteration, we will recognize his desire that the freeness of the Father’s love and gifts to His children shall not be obscured. But we must not forget the Divine perfections of his justice, holiness and truth. Hence it was necessary that a work of salvation should be accomplished by the Son for His people, and it is to a salvation from the Father, through the finished work of the Son, that the Holy Spirit witnesses and seals, giving peace to the conscience (Hazlerigg, 6)

\textsuperscript{50} See Dix, \textit{Strict and Particular}, 261-263.

\textsuperscript{51} William Gadsby, \textit{A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship} (London: C.J. Farncombe, 1930), viii. These “two cases” are actually five: in Hymns 727, 901, and 1001 Philpot’s changes remain; in Hymns 1002 and 803 some of Philpot’s alterations are kept and some are dropped. Notice that even the word “deviations” implies a negative view of Philpot’s changes.
poets. These hymns bear titles such as “At the appointment of Deacons,” “Harvest,”
“Prayer and Praise for national blessing,” and “For a revival.” No further additions,
besides minor corrections, have been made to the hymnbook since the 1930s.\textsuperscript{52} Table 1.2 provides a summary of the parts of the hymnbook as it is in use today.

\textsuperscript{52} This six-part form of the hymnbook has been reprinted multiple times by the Gospel Standard Trust in Great Britain as well as Solid Ground Christian Books, Grace and Truth Books, and Gospel Mission Christian Books in the United States. In 1999 the Gospel Standard Publications issued a new edition with corrected author’s names and Arabic numerals in place of the Roman numerals of the previous publications.
Table 1.2. Development of Gadsby’s *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship*, including primary authors in each part.
Content And Sources

A common question for those who are not familiar with Gadsby’s *Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* is, “Does the hymnbook include many common hymns?” The answer to this question is “Yes,” if the context is mainstream English Protestant hymnody. William Gadsby himself included texts that are well-known today, such as Isaac Watts’s “When I survey the wondrous cross” (439) and “Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?” (763) and Charles Wesley’s “Christ the Lord is risen today” (485), “Christ, whose glory fills the skies” (726), “Hark! the herald angels sing” (36), “Jesus, Lover of my soul” (303), and “Rejoice, the Lord is King” (127). Gadsby also included John Newton’s most famous hymns—“Amazing Grace” (198), “Glorious things of Thee are spoken” (372), “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds” (135), and “Let us love, and sing, and wonder” (416)—as well as William Cowper’s “There is a fountain filled with blood” (160) and “God moves in a mysterious way” (320).

Many of the hymns found in Gadsby’s collection, however, are not widely known outside of the churches that currently use the *Selection* for public worship. A third of all the hymns in the *Selection* are by Joseph Hart or William Gadsby. Nearly one-fifth of the hymns are taken from Hart’s *Hymns Composed on Various Subjects*, a hymnbook that

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53 The numbers in parentheses indicate the hymn’s number in Gadsby’s *Selection*. Other well-known hymns were included in the last two parts of the hymnbook: Watts’s “O God, our Help in ages past” (1139) as well as Wesley’s “Come, thou long-expected Jesus” (1054) and “Love divine, all loves excelling” (1053).

54 Gadsby included two hundred nineteen hymns from Hart’s works and one hundred seventy-three of his own hymns. No hymns by Gadsby or Hart appear in Parts 5 and 6, presumably because they had already been included in the previous parts. Isaac Watts is the third largest contributor with one hundred forty-five hymns, which span the entire collection. Together, the compositions of Hart, Gadsby, and Watts constitute nearly half of the hymnbook.
was embraced by many English Calvinistic Nonconformists because of the writer’s earnest poetic expressions of the doctrines of grace. Due to a general decline in the number of adherents to Calvinism over the past century, however, Hart’s hymns have ceased to be used widely. About fifteen percent of the hymns in Gadsby’s collection are by Gadsby himself, but the majority of his hymns are not known even in Calvinistic congregations due to their overtly High Calvinistic sentiments. The major contributors to Gadsby’s Selection are summarized in Table 1.3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Number of Hymns</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hart</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadsby</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watts</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berridge</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medley</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toplady</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swain</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3. Major Contributors for Gadsby’s Selection.

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56 By contrast, Gadsby included only forty-one hymns by Charles Wesley, a champion of Arminian teachings. Wesley’s hymns make up less than four percent of the entire collection—a very small number considering the thousands of hymns that Wesley either translated or wrote. Of the Wesleyan hymns that Gadsby included, many of them appear in an altered form with theological “corrections” made by himself or Toplady.

57 These percentages include the fourteen omitted hymns of Hart and Hymn 506A, making the total number of hymns in the Selection 1157.
A detailed study of the sources for Gadsby’s Selection is beyond the scope of this work; however, several broad observations are helpful in reconstructing the compilation process. As discussed above, the hymnbook comprises six parts. Only the hymns in the Original Selection (Part 1), Gadsby’s Supplement (Part 3), Philpot’s Supplement (Part 5), and the Occasional Hymns (Part 6) are from various sources.58 Discerning the sources for these texts is connected closely with who the compiler was, when the sources were being consulted, and why he (or they) felt the need to compile. Also discussed above, the three compilers of the hymnbook are 1) William Gadsby, who assembled texts during the early 1810s for the first edition of the hymnbook, and later in the mid-1830s for the Supplement; 2) J.C. Philpot, who compiled hymns in the 1840s for the Second Supplement; and, 3) the 1930 editorial committee, which organized the hymns of Part 6. Issues related to why Gadsby felt compelled to publish his hymnbook shall be discussed in subsequent chapters, but a brief stemmatic study of Gadsby’s self-disclosed sources, as well as an overview of the sources for Philpot and the editorial committee, is in order.59

According to Gadsby’s preface of 1838, his congregation had been in the habit of singing from Watts’s Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1707) and Psalms of David (1719), Rippon’s Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors (1787), which was published as a supplement to Watts’s work), and Hart’s Hymns (1759).60 From this internal evidence, it

58 See Table 1.2 above. The other two sections of the hymnbook, Part 2 and Part 4, are composed of Gadsby’s own hymns and Hart’s hymns, respectively.

59 A stemmatic study of texts involves a systematic tracing of the textual variations that Gadsby’s texts share with other collections.

is probable that he consulted these collections directly. Textual variants shared between these collections and Gadsby’s support this assumption. Many of Watts’s hymns appear in Gadsby’s Selection in the form in which they were first published in Watts’s works, not as they were printed in the popular Anglican compilations of Martin Madan and Augustus M. Toplady or in the popular Baptist hymnbook compiled by John Ash and Caleb Evans, A Collection of Hymns Adapted to Public Worship (1769). This suggests that Gadsby relied on Watts’s publication.

Gadsby also took many of his texts directly from Rippon’s Selection and Hart’s Hymns. A comparison of Gadsby’s hymnbook and Rippon’s reveals that the “Original Selection” of Gadsby’s hymnbook shares ninety-eight hymns with Rippon’s Selection—a full nineteen percent of the hymns in this part of the book. Many of these shared texts appear in Gadsby’s with Rippon’s adjustments to the text, stanza order, and headings; thus, it is very likely that Gadsby copied these verses from Rippon’s Selection.

Apply’d to the Christian State and Worship (London: J. Clark, 1719), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3319573856). John Rippon, Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, to be an Appendix to Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns (London: Thomas Wilkins, 1787), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3322317689). Joseph Hart, Hymns, &c. composed on various subjects. With a preface, containing a brief and summary account of the author’s experience, etc. (London: J. Everingham, 1759), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3321083204).

Gadsby’s Hymn 25, Watts’s “Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,” follows Watts’s original in his Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1709, as well as later editions), not those versions found in Madan’s Collection, Toplady’s Psalms and Hymns, and the Bristol Collection. The same is true of Watts’s “Salvation! O the joyful sound!” (Gadsby Hymn 213). See Augustus M. Toplady, Psalms and hymns for public and private worship (London: Dilly, 1776), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3321204921), and Martin Madan, A Collection of Psalms and Hymns, Extracted from various Authors, and published by the Reverend Mr. Madan (London: 1760), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3320305767).

For example, “Hark! the voice of love and mercy” (Gadsby’s Hymn 93) closely follows Rippon’s wording. This hymn first appeared in George Burder’s Collection of Hymns from Various Authors (1784), and Rippon included it in his Selection (1787). Rippon changed only one word in the second stanza: “Do these precious words afford” to “Do these charming words afford.” Gadsby copied
Considering Gadsby’s frequent quoting from Hart’s *Hymns* in his sermons, there is little doubt that he consulted a copy of Hart’s hymnbook as well. The variants in Gadsby’s texts, again, support this assertion. Several of Hart’s more popular hymns are reproduced in Gadsby’s *Selection* exactly as they were published in Hart’s *Hymns*, as opposed to their altered forms in Toplady’s *Psalms and Hymns* and Rippon’s *Selection*.\(^{63}\) The textual variants present in Gadsby’s texts, then, suggest that he relied heavily on Watts’s works, Rippon’s *Selection*, and Hart’s *Hymns* for the majority of his “Original Selection.”\(^{64}\) Another primary source, unnamed in the preface to Gadsby’s hymnbook, however, will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Along with the various publications named above, Gadsby also consulted the collections of many individual poets who were not included in the larger collections of the previous centuries. The “Original Selection” includes texts from John Newton and William Cowper, many of which do not appear in the Bristol *Collection* (a Baptist hymnbook that will be discussed in Chapter 3) or in Rippon’s *Selection* and, therefore,

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\(^{63}\) Hart’s “Come, Holy Spirit, come” (Gadsby Hymn 27) is printed in Gadsby’s as in Hart’s hymnbook, without the textual variations of Toplady’s version; similarly, Hart’s “The fountain of Christ, assist me to sin” (Gadsby Hymn 155), follows Hart, not Rippon.

\(^{64}\) As much as sixty percent of the hymns in the “Original Selection” may be from these three primary sources: ninety-eight from Rippon, one hundred eighteen from Watts, and ninety-two from Hart.
are most likely taken directly from Newton’s *Olney Hymns*.\(^{65}\) Also included are texts from smaller eighteenth-century collections, such as Philip Doddridge (1702-1751, a Nonconformist), the Anglican clergymen Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778) and John Berridge (1716-1793), and several Particular Baptist ministers: Samuel Medley (1738-1799), Joseph Swain (1761-1796), and Richard Burnham (1749-1810). Gadsby embraced the hymns of his contemporaries as well; he included hymns from the collections of Anglican John Kent (1766-1843), Congregational minister Daniel Herbert (1751-1833), and the Particular Baptist John Stevens (1776-1847).\(^{66}\) The breadth of Gadsby’s sources suggests that his goal was not simply to revise existing collections or provide a supplement to other popular hymnbooks (as Rippon had done), but to bring together hymns from many authors in order to make one comprehensive and orthodox volume for worship. Chapter 4 explores Gadsby’s motivations for compiling an orthodox hymnbook.

In the years following the hymnbook’s first publication in 1814, Gadsby continued to collect the hymns of several of his favorite authors, which he compiled into the First Supplement (Part 3), for the 1836 edition.\(^{67}\) In his 1838 preface, Gadsby notes that he curtailed his own hymns (Part 2) to make room for this new supplement:

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\(^{66}\) John Stevens’s hymnbook, in particular, seems to have played an important role in the overall conception of Gadsby’s hymnbook. This subject shall be explored further in Ch. 4.

\(^{67}\) The First Supplement is also referred to as “Gadsby’s Supplement.” Gadsby did not organize these hymns according to subject as he did the first two parts of the hymnbook.
The pages gained by the curtailment of my own hymns, as above named, are occupied with a Supplement, consisting of [102] hymns, which have principally been selected from Hart and Berridge, these two men being, I believe, the sweetest and greatest experimental writers that have left any hymns on record.68

In this supplement Gadsby included twenty-one more hymns from Berridge’s collection and seventeen more from Hart’s *Hymns*. He also interspersed sixteen more of his own hymns—those not already in Part 2—and several more from Kent’s collection and Rippon’s *Selection*.69 Gadsby’s continued interest in experimentalism, as well as his “romantic” interpretation of Calvinistic orthodoxy, shall be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

In compiling the Second Supplement, J.C. Philpot enlarged Gadsby’s collection by adding two hundred fifty-six more hymns. Many of these texts are from the same collections that Gadsby had consulted. Like Gadsby, Philpot drew heavily from John Berridge’s *Divine Songs* (1760) and *Sion’s Songs* (1785), as well as John Kent’s *Collection of Original Gospel Hymns* (1803).70 Philpot also drew from Thomas Kelly’s *Hymns Not Before Published* (1815), from which Gadsby had copied “Lord, we plead with thee for pardon” (Hymn 753) for the First Supplement. While Gadsby included only one of Kelly’s hymns, Philpot included thirty-three hymns from Kelly’s various

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69 It may be argued, of course, that Gadsby might have consulted a source other than Rippon for the more popular hymns. For example, Gadsby includes Hart’s “Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched” (Hymn 723) in his supplement. This hymn has been amended many times, principally by Richard Conyers in his *Collection* (1772) and Augustus Toplady in his *Psalms and Hymns* (1776). See Julian, 254. Gadsby follows Toplady’s version exactly, but this is also the version found in Rippon’s *Selection*. Based on Gadsby’s heading “Come and welcome to Jesus Christ,” which Gadsby shares with Rippon (there is no heading in Toplady’s), it is likely that Gadsby consulted Rippon, not Toplady, for this hymn.

70 Philpot includes twenty-seven hymns by Berridge and thirty from Kent.
collections.\textsuperscript{71} The same can be said for Henry Fowler’s \textit{A Selection of Hymns} (1832) and Ann Steele’s \textit{Poems} (1760, 1778). Gadsby included only a handful of hymns by Fowler and Steele; Philpot included fourteen hymns by Fowler and twenty by Steele.

Other texts in Philpot’s Supplement are undoubtedly from Rippon’s \textit{Selection} and Watts’s works.\textsuperscript{72} Some of these hymns were initially passed over by Gadsby, probably for theological reasons. In order to include some of the more “unorthodox” hymns, Philpot altered them.\textsuperscript{73} Watts’s “How is our nature spoiled by sin,” (Hymn 946, which appears in Philpot’s Supplement as “How is our nature marred by sin”) for example, includes a couplet that asserts, “And peace and pardon from the skies/Are offered by thy hands.” Philpot changes this couplet to “And peace and pardon from the skies/Come down by Jesus’ hands” in order to avoid the obvious reference to free-offers of the gospel.\textsuperscript{74}

Philpot may have taken his cue from Gadsby in regards to some resources, but he did not confine himself entirely to the collections that Gadsby consulted. As Philpot wrote in the preface to the 1850 edition:

\textsuperscript{71} These include Thomas Kelly, \textit{Psalms and Hymns} (1802), \textit{Hymns on Various Passages of Scripture} (1804, 1806, 1809), \textit{Hymns Not Before Published} (1815).

\textsuperscript{72} Hymn 938, “When thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come” is attributed by Philpot to “Rippon’s Collection,” suggesting that Philpot did, indeed, consult Rippon’s collection. Philpot’s supplement shares twenty-eight texts with Rippon’s \textit{Selection}. Philpot also includes several hymns of Watts (Hymns 935 and 946, for example), that are not found in the Bristol \textit{Collection}, nor in any of the other major compilations of the eighteenth century. For this reason, I shall propose that Philpot copied them directly from Watts’s works.

\textsuperscript{73} Isaac Watts, Sermons on various subjects, divine and moral: with a sacred hymn suited to each subject, vol. 2, 5th edition. (London: 1734), 495-496, Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW123570265).

\textsuperscript{74} Similar changes and omissions may be seen in Philpot’s alterations of Kelly’s hymns.
In a Collection of Hymns, for the worship of God, three things seem desirable, if not essentially necessary—savour, variety, and number. Without the first, the sacrifice lacks salt (Lev. ii.13); without the second, the various experiences of the Lord’s people are not met; without the third, constant repetition of the choicest hymns has a tendency to deaden their effect…. 

In keeping with these sentiments, Philpot included many hymns from authors who do not appear in Gadsby’s Original Selection or in Gadsby’s Supplement. These authors include James Grant, James Montgomery, Henry Francis Lyte, Ambrose Serle, Joseph Hoskins, Rowland Hill, W.W. Horne, Thomas Haweis, Edward Mote, Job Hupton, William Williams, Simon Brown, S. Barnard, W. Bennett, William Burkitt, John Matlock, as well as selections from The Spiritual Magazine and Zion’s Trumpet.

The final portion of Gadsby’s hymnbook, compiled in 1930 by the Trustees of the Gospel Standard, comprises only eighteen hymns. These include Charles Wesley’s now famous “O God, our Help in ages past,” several more hymns from Watts and Newton, as well as various others suited for particular occasions, such as harvest, national confession, and the appointing of deacons. By the 1930s, the number of English hymnbooks had multiplied dramatically; consequently, pinpointing the sources for the hymns in this section is quite difficult. It suffices to note that the need for “Occasional Hymns,” as well as a desire to revert to Gadsby’s original wording following the revisions of the 1870s, warranted a completely new edition of Gadsby’s Hymns.

Conclusion

A perusal of the new edition of Gadsby’s A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship, published in 1999, gives little evidence of the changes that have been made to

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75 W. Gadsby, Hart, and Philpot, Selection (1856), 529.
the hymnbook over the past two centuries. A closer investigation of the timeline reveals that the hymnbook, as it is received today, is quite different from the book that Gadsby published in 1814. For this study, I shall focus on the sections of Gadsby’s hymnbook that were compiled by Gadsby himself (that is, Parts 1 through 3), and begin by situating the Selection in its historical and theological context: the eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinking of Particular Baptist orthodoxy.
Chapter 2: The Enlightenment and High Orthodoxy

The late-seventeenth and eighteenth century was a period of intense scientific discovery as well as philosophic and religious scholasticism. In keeping with the Enlightenment’s emphasis on human reason, eighteenth-century Calvinistic scholars and thinkers began to work out the logical consequences of the doctrines of grace with great vigor, convinced that there was no contradiction in the truths of God. For many Particular Baptist ministers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the sermons and published works of Gill and Brine became the standards for high Calvinistic orthodoxy.\(^1\) Gill and Brine became two of the most influential proponents of Enlightenment Calvinism within the Particular Baptist churches, answering the objections of Christian (and non-Christian) thinkers alike. Brine and Gill discussed various duties of mankind to God: whether it was the duty of mankind to believe in Christ, and how

\(^1\) In an era marked by increasing theological liberalism in England, Gill looked to the Puritan and Reformed writers of the seventeenth century to reestablish the boundaries of orthodox theology. Peter Naylor writes, “Gill was theologically orthodox and a true champion of the faith at a time when churches were being threatened by Arianism and Socinianism. Although his high Calvinism has often been criticized, his *Body of Divinity* was held by many in his denomination to be the standard exposition of Calvinistic doctrine. In short, his significance cannot be overestimated” (Peter Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists: A Study of English Calvinistic Baptists from the Late 1600s to the Early 1800s* [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2003], 60). Arianism and Socinianism were both associated with Unitarianism and the denial of Christ’s divinity; this same issue split the General Baptist churches in the late eighteenth century (Hayden 51-54). See Introduction above. See also Richard A. Muller, “John Gill and the Reformed Tradition: A Study in the Reception of Protestant Orthodoxy in the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*, edited by Michael A.G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 51-68.
believers and nonbelievers should approach the Lord in song. Both of these doctrines concerning the duties of man would become essential to Gadsby’s ministry and his development of orthodox worship, which will be discussed in the following chapters.¹

Christian Enlightenment

Christian philosophers and theologians of this period adopted the three basic tenets of the Enlightenment, as discussed above, and applied them to biblical inquiry. These three principles applied to Christian thought may be summarized as follows: all genuine questions about the nature of God and man can be answered; these answers can be discerned by a thorough search of the Scriptures; and all teachings contained in the Scriptures are inherently consistent and inerrant.³ These principles give rise to three core values of the Christian Enlightenment: 1) biblicism (the centrality of the Bible and the importance of biblical scholarship), 2) optimism (man’s ability to rightly understand the things of God), both of which are grounded in 3) rationalism and the belief in the harmonization of seemingly contradictory biblical teachings.⁴

² Joseph Ivimey writes that Gill’s opinions were “considered almost oracular among the Baptists” and that the preaching of both Brine and Gill “produced a very powerful influence among the Baptist Ministers” (Ivimey, vol 3, 272-273). For the last thirty years of his life, Gill, in particular, was the driving force over nearly all the affairs of the Particular Baptist churches, including the content and manner of musical worship. Gill was one of the leading members of the London Baptist Board, which advised the ministers of Particular Baptist churches around the country. See Peter J. Morden, Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth-Century Particular Baptist Life (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2003), 13.

³ This last principle follows from the Scripture’s identity as “the Word of God.”

⁴ David Bebbington identifies these three values of the Christian Enlightenment as central also to the rise of Evangelicalism (Bebbington, Evangelicalism, 2). Bebbington notes that along with biblicism, optimism, and rationality this renewed interest in human ability also encouraged pragmatism and moralism. Bebbington’s discussion applies generally to Calvinistic Evangelicals, whether Anglican, Methodist, Independent, or Baptist. He also notes that these “Enlightenment virtues” led to social activism (Bebbington, Holiness, 41-44).
**Enlightenment Calvinism and 18th-Century Orthodoxy**

This Enlightenment mindset spurred on an entire generation of rigorous Calvinistic Baptist apologists during the eighteenth century who further defined and delineated the boundaries of Particular Baptist “high orthodoxy.” 5 Two of the most influential Particular Baptist theologians of this period are John Brine and John Gill. 6 The “Age of Enlightenment” in which Brine and Gill lived brought ideas that challenged Puritan assumptions, but instead of merely attacking these new ideas, Gill and Brine engaged in the philosophical and theological debates of the age—particularly relating to Deism and the authority of Scripture—by fusing old teachings with the new “scientific method” of discovery. In a pamphlet published in 1743, Brine seeks to prove the rationality of Christianity, while affirming the three core principles of the Christian Enlightenment discussed above. Brine writes that the arguments for Christianity are “clear and justly founded, and regularly drawn” and that “a Man is inexcusable to disbelieve that which he sees evident Reason to conclude is true.” He continues that the proofs of Christianity are so “easy and plain” that once presented with them, a man has no excuse not to believe in Christ. 7 Rather than denying the rationalism that formed the foundation of Enlightenment ideas, Brine used rationalism as his primary argument to prove the truth of the Bible.

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5 Orthodoxy may be defined as an ongoing search for “right thinking.” In this broader sense, orthodoxy may be understood as a process of refinement and revision as new ideas are weighed and either accepted or rejected.

6 Brine and Gill were both born in Northamptonshire and were ministers in London.

7 John Brine, *The Christian Religion not Destitute of Arguments Sufficient to support it. In Answer to a Pamphlet, intitled, Christianity not founded on Argument, etc.* (London: A. Ward, 1743), 45, Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale CW3323187118).
While John Brine codified the methods of Reformed apologetics, John Gill applied these methods in his study of the Bible and in his defense of Calvinistic theology. Gill’s nine-volume *Expositions of Scripture* (1746-1765) was the first complete verse-by-verse commentary on the entire Bible in the English language. Several years later, he organized these teachings topically to produce a systematic theology book, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (1769-1770). Concerning the depth of Gill’s scholarship, Augustus M. Toplady writes:

The Doctor considered not any subject superficially, or by halves. As deeply as human sagacity, enlightened by grace, could penetrate, he went to the bottom of everything he engaged in. With a solidity of judgment, and with an acuteness of discernment, peculiar to few, he exhausted, as it were, the very soul and substance of most arguments he undertook.

The rigor of detail in Gill’s works, his optimistic view that one could better understand Scriptures through systematic exegesis, and his belief in the inerrancy of Scripture attest to his important role in the Christian Enlightenment. Within the context of the Particular Baptist churches, this period of intense biblical scholarship—infused with the principles of the Christian Enlightenment—gave rise to “Enlightenment Calvinism.”

Following the principles of Enlightenment Calvinism, Gill and Brine arrived at two doctrines expounding the various “duties” of men before God: 1) that it is not the

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10 The term “Enlightenment Calvinism” is discussed in detail in Bebbington, *Holiness*, 29-50. See also Hayden, 107-110 and Oliver, *History*, 4.
duty of every man to believe in Christ, and 2) that it is the duty of every man to sing to the Lord. The first of these doctrines, that of duty-faith, divided the Particular Baptist churches throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The second doctrine, the duty of all men to sing to the Lord, was not a point of contention for Particular Baptists (although General Baptists throughout the eighteenth century resisted congregational singing). The duty to sing to the Lord, however, would become a vehicle for conflict among evangelistic models, and consequently separate hymnbooks, within the Particular Baptist churches. These two doctrines were formative for Gadsby’s own theological perspectives, which, along with the doctrines of the Particular Baptist church, were transformed through the romanticism of the early nineteenth century.

The first doctrine to be considered, the rejection of “duty-faith” (that is, the question concerning whether all of mankind has a duty to believe in Christ), was specifically addressed by Brine. Brine argued that it is not the duty of all men to believe and have faith in Christ. The controversy surrounding “duty-faith” was particularly prominent in Enlightenment Calvinism and reflects the challenges that eighteenth-century Calvinistic thinkers faced in light of the Evangelical Revival. A second important doctrine for the Baptists of the Enlightenment period concerned the duty of all men to worship the Lord through song. Gill wrote on this topic on several occasions, arguing from an Enlightenment perspective that it is indeed the duty of all men to sing to God.11

11 This point was so important to Gill that he included the ordinance of singing as one of the twelve core doctrines of his church.
Brine on Duty-Faith

In 1737 Matthias Maurice (1684-1738), a Congregational minister and former high Calvinistic theologian, published an anonymous pamphlet entitled *A Modern Question Modestly Answer’d*. Maurice’s publication gave way a pamphlet war concerning whether it was the duty of all men to repent and believe in Christ. As discussed above, this pamphlet war is often called the “Modern Controversy.” Maurice argued that

Any person surely, who lays aside all Affectation of Singularity, and sincerely and unfeignedly makes the Bible the Rule of his Faith, must say, that God does by his *Word* plainly and plentifully make it the Duty of unconverted Sinners, who hear the Gospel, to believe in Christ.¹²

Furthermore, Maurice writes that a minister of Christ should “say with all Freedom according to the Scriptures, that God in his Word makes it the Duty of poor ruin’d, lost and undone Sinners…to believe in so great a Redeemer.”¹³

Another prominent Congregational Calvinistic minister of the time, Isaac Watts (1674-1748), supported Maurice’s conclusions. In 1740, Watts published *The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind: Or, An Attempt to Vindicate the Scriptural Account of these great Events upon the plain Principles of Reason, etc.*¹⁴ Much like Maurice, Watts maintained

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¹² Matthias Maurice, *A Modern Question Modestly Answer’d* (London: James Buckland, 1737), 4, Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3321122404).

¹³ Ibid., 26. Mattias Maurice was the successor of Richard Davis (one of Gill’s early pastors) at the Independent Chapel at Rothwell (Hayden, 108). It is interesting to note that in his youth, Maurice held to a high Calvinistic system (Alan P. F. Sell and David W. Bebbington, *Protestant Nonconformist Texts: The Eighteenth Century* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006], 189, Google eBook).

¹⁴ Isaac Watts. *The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind: Or, An Attempt to Vindicate the Scriptural Account of these great Events upon the plain Principles of Reason, etc.*, 2nd ed. (London: James Brackstone, 1742), Google eBook.
that there is “a general Sufficiency of Pardon, Grace and Happiness, provided for all Mankind by Jesus Christ.”

Watts argues that the sufficiency of Christ’s death for all men requires that ministers should “offer [Christ] to all Persons, according to their general Commission, Mark 16:15 ‘Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature, etc.’” This moderate form of Calvinism was also expressed in Watts’s hymnody, which was particularly influential in the Particular Baptist churches in fostering a moderate form of Calvinism, as shall be discussed in the following chapters.

Gill did not enter the pamphlet war of the 1730s and 40s; Brine, however, addressed the “Modern Question” in several of his publications. In 1743 Brine published *A Refutation of Arminian Principles* (1743), which he wrote specifically in response to Maurice’s publication. That same year he also published *The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ, asserted, etc.* (1743) in answer to Watts’s *Ruin and Recovery*. In both of these works, Brine demonstrates the rigorous logic of the “Age of

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15 Ibid., 253.
16 Ibid., 254.
17 Gill’s leaning toward Brine’s position on the subject was generally understood at the time. See John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D.D.* (London: Bennett, 1838, reprint, Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1992), 47-48. Andrew Fuller was not as convinced of Gill’s position on the subject, although he did concede that the tone of Gill’s writings seemed to confirm his rejection of duty-faith. See Andrew Fuller, “Reply to Mr. Button,” in *The Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller in Eight Volumes*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Anderson and Meehan, 1820), 177n, Google eBook.


19 John Brine, *The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ, asserted: or, The Necessity, Reality, and Perfection, of his Satisfaction are pleaded for: The Objections of the Socinians and Arminians are answered: The Moral Law proved to be in full Force: And the unconditional Nature of the new Covenant is demonstrated: in Answer to a Book, called, The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, etc.* (London: Aaron Ward, 1743), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3322731060).
Reason” as well as the three principles of Enlightenment Christianity: biblicism, rationalism, and optimism.

Brine’s biblicism and rationality are clear from his method of argumentation. In answer to Maurice’s claims that Scripture advocates for undifferentiated calls for repentance leading to faith, Brine re-examines Maurice’s proof-texts from the Book of Acts. Brine writes, ‘[Maurice] produces a Multitude of Texts to prove the Point he contends for, but in many of them Repentance and Faith are not so much as mentioned…’\(^{20}\) Instead, Brine asserts, these verses simply describe the apostles’ general teaching of the truths of Christ, and do not represent calls to repentance or faith.\(^{21}\) According to this scriptural precedent, Brine concluded that the gospel should be preached to all people, but offering Christ to sinners was a different matter entirely.\(^{22}\)


\(^{21}\) Brine supports his argument against undifferentiated calls by stating that, in Acts 2:37 and Acts 13:26 (where faith and repentance are linked), “the Persons addressed were the happy Subjects of a Conviction of their Misery by Nature, and therefore not to be considered in a State of Unregeneracy…” (Brine, Refutation, 11). In his multi-volume history of the English Baptist churches, Joseph Ivimey writes of Brine’s non-invitational preaching: “Even in sermons where the subjects, it might have been expected, would have led him to address the unconverted, on the necessity of repentance and faith, there is not a syllable addressed to them on any topic” (Ivimey, 272).

\(^{22}\) Gill’s denial of free offers of the gospel is unquestionable. In a sermon opposing the teachings of John Wesley, Gill writes: “The gospel is indeed ordered to be preached to every creature to whom it is sent and comes…And that there are universal offers of grace and salvation made to all men I utterly deny; nay, I deny that they are made to any; no, not even to God’s elect; grace and salvation are provided for them in the everlasting covenant, procured for them by Christ, published and revealed in the gospel, and applied by the Spirit…” (John Gill, “The Doctrine of Predestination Stated, and Set in the Scripture Light; in opposition to Mr. Wesley’s Predestination calmly Considered, with a reply to the Exception of the said Writer to The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints,” in A Collection of Sermons and Tracts, vol. 3 [London: George Keith, 1778], 269-270, Google eBook). In his preface to Richard Davis’s hymnbook, Gill writes: “I have one thing more to observe, that whereas the phrase of offering Christ and Grace, is sometimes used in these Hymns, which may be offensive to some persons; and with the worthy Author [Davis] was led to the use of, partly thro custom, it not having been at the writing of them objected to, and partly thro his affectionate concern and zeal for gaining upon souls, and encouraging them to come to Christ; I can affirm upon good and sufficient Testimony, that Mr. Davis, before his death, changed his mind
This distinction between “offering” and “preaching” highlights the rationality of the Christian Enlightenment: the belief that all truth is consistent and non-contradictory. Whereas Maurice believed that it was the duty of a minister to offer Christ to everyone who would hear, Brine and his followers were more careful in their assertions. According to Brine, the offer of salvation in Christ is given only to the elect in Christ, that is, those who have been brought to repentance through the work of the Holy Spirit. 23 The “offer” that God gives to his people, Brine explains, is not an offer (in the human sense) that may be rejected or accepted at will. It is the declaration of the reality of salvation that has already been accomplished, hence Brine’s title of his pamphlet, Certain Efficacy. The offer of salvation in Christ may be received, Brine asserts, if (and only if) salvation in Christ is first efficaciously given. 24

Enlightenment Calvinistic thinkers, such as Brine and Gill, abhorred contradiction not because they believed in rationality per se (as an impersonal “universal truth”), but because any hint of contradiction was a direct assault on the unchangeable and consistent character of God. They believed that there is no contradiction in God’s revealed truth, that is, Scripture, because God cannot be contradicted. Therefore, any teachings of men

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23 Brine clarifies, “when I say, that an Offer or Proposal of Christ for Acceptance is made in the Gospel to Sinners sensible of their Misery, and who are seeking after Salvation, I do not intend a BARE Offer, though I apprehend an Offer is included; but a gracious Declaration, that God has provided Christ as a Saviour for such Persons, as they are, that he is given to them, and that it is a Duty incumbent on them to thankfully receive him as God’s free Gift” (Brine, Certain Efficacy, 93).

24 Brine, Refutation, 22.
that could not be harmonized with the teachings of Scripture were rejected.

Indiscriminate calls violated the Calvinistic doctrines—which they regarded as Scriptural teachings—of irresistible grace (that God’s call cannot be refused) and the perseverance of the saints (that none for whom Christ died will be lost). \(^{25}\) Because the argument for universal salvation could not be rationalized without denying these two teachings of Scripture, Brine concludes, “This Argument therefore in Favour of universal Grace, and a conditional Salvation provided for all Mankind, how much soever it is boasted of, fails [to be proven] for every Man without Exception.” \(^{26}\)

In addition to biblicism and rationalism, the reasoning behind these conclusions is also grounded in the optimism of the Christian Enlightenment. This principle seems at first to be incongruous with Brine’s Calvinism. Due to their denial of universal atonement, Brine and other Calvinistic ministers of the era were often criticized for being pessimistic toward the transforming power of the Gospel. Brine was even charged with being unconcerned for the salvation of sinners. Ironically, Brine’s optimism becomes clear when considered in light of his pessimism about the sinful nature of man. Brine was convinced of the “total depravity” of man, that is, the teaching that every aspect of a

\(^{25}\) According to the reasoning of Enlightenment Calvinistic thinkers, if it is indeed the duty of all people to believe in Christ, an idea that had strong Arminian overtones, then Christ must have died for all people. The Bible, however, makes it clear that not all will be saved; if Christ died for all, and yet some are still unsaved, then Christ’s death would have been in vain for those who perished. Brine rejected duty-faith and undifferentiated evangelism because, according to his Calvinistic beliefs, he denied that Christ died for all men. According to Brine, indiscriminate offers of the gospel were regarded as irresponsible and unbiblical. These calls were irresponsible because they might give listeners a false sense of assurance; these calls were unbiblical because Scripture reveals that not all who hear will be saved.

\(^{26}\) John Brine, *Certain Efficacy*, 93.
human being, including the will, heart, and mind, is sinful. This utter sinfulness prevents an individual from coming to God on his/her own.27

For Brine, and other Particular Baptists of this time, this pessimism was only half the story. Due to his belief in the power of God, Brine was optimistic that, according to God’s will, some of his hearers would understand the Gospel as the Holy Spirit worked faith in their hearts and minds. Brine’s preaching, then, may be understood as even more optimistic than his Arminian counterparts’: despite the hopeless state of sinful man, Brine did not lose hope in the loving power of God to transform hearts and minds through the preaching of the Scripture. In response to Maurice’s conclusion that Calvinistic theologians do not want sinners to hear the Gospel, Brine asserts, “it is as remote from the Judgment of the Calvinist, as it is from the Opinion of the Arminian…”28 Brine emphasizes that ministers are to preach the Word optimistically, as Paul did to the men of Athens.29 He likens this preaching to informing sinners that they stand condemned by the Law, for their Sins, that Salvation from Wrath and Hell, is only in Christ, and that unless they believe in him, and are made conformable to him, they will perish for ever without Remedy.30

27 See Brine, Refutation, 11. Brine cites Paul’s words in Acts 28:26-27 to illustrate his point: “Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed...” (KJV). This view of the state of mankind is rightly called “pessimistic.” All Scripture references are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

28 Ibid., 20.

29 In Acts 17: 30-31, the Apostle Paul informed the people at Athens that “the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

30 Brine, Refutation, 21.
Brine adds a rhetorical question to highlight his point: “Is this doing nothing with a View to Salvation of Sinners?”

Gill’s and Brine’s teaching concerning duty-faith and offers of the gospel made a considerable impact on the ministers of the Particular Baptist churches. John Ryland, Jr., notes that

through the influence of Mr. Brine and Dr. Gill, who both took the negative side of the question [i.e. do men have a duty to repent and believe?]…this opinion spread pretty much among the ministers of the Baptist denomination.31

The theological system of Gill and Brine became known generally as “high” Calvinism, or simply “orthodoxy.”32 Gill’s extensive treatment of theological subjects in his many published works, as well as the published works of Brine, became the standard of Particular Baptist orthodoxy throughout the mid- and late-eighteenth century.

Gill on Singing

In the practical sphere of the worship service, John Gill drew on his Enlightenment Calvinism to define and delineate the proper form and manner of singing for Particular Baptists. Gill’s writings concerning music are few, but precise and well-articulated.33 His thorough investigation of the topic, as well as his carefully-formulated

31 John Ryland, Jr., Life of Andrew Fuller (London: 1818), 5, as quoted in Oliver, History, 11.

32 This label initially had positive connotations among Particular Baptists. See J. Gadsby, Memoir, 33. In his memoir of Gill’s life, Rippon concludes, “from his latter writings, that he was more decidedly on the high side of the question” (Rippon, Brief Memoir, 47-48). For the purpose of this study, I shall use the terms “high Calvinism” and “high orthodoxy” interchangeably.

33 In 1729 he published a Declaration of Faith creed for his Goat Yard Chapel at Horsleydown, in which he declared that singing was an ordinance of God; this creed was republished in 1757 as A Declaration of Faith and Practice of the Church in Carter Lane, Southwark. In 1734, Gill published a sermon entitled, A Discourse on Singing Psalms As a Part of Divine Worship. In 1748, Gill wrote a preface to the seventh edition of Richard Davis’s Hymns Composed on Several Subjects, and on Divers Occasions. Finally in 1770, he summarized his thoughts on the subject in his A Body of Practical Divinity.
conclusions, exerted a powerful influence on the music-making practices of the Particular Baptist churches. First and foremost, Gill defended congregational singing from the Bible, thus affirming the fundamental principle of Enlightenment Calvinism. Gill also utilized his skill as a logician to arrive at practical solutions for the difficulties that congregational singing involved. Finally, the optimism of Gill’s Enlightenment thinking is evident in his discussion of the functions of singing in the worship service.

Considering the prevalence of singing in Christian communities today, Gill’s defense of this practice may not seem extraordinary to the modern reader. Congregational singing, however, was a relatively new and controversial practice for the English Baptists of the Enlightenment. In 1673, Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), a Particular Baptist minister, introduced hymn-singing to his church at Horselydown, Southwark.34 General Baptists. However, were wary of congregational singing. The debate culminated in the 1690s in a series of pamphlet wars that has been dubbed by Baptist historians as the “Singing Controversy” between General and Particular Baptists in England.35

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34 See Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody, Containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns* (London: John Hancock, 1691), Early English Books Online (Wing [2nd ed.] k93).

35 See Robert H. Young, “The History of Baptist Hymnody in England from 1612 to 1800” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1959), 10-47, ProQuest (UMI Number 5904408) and James Brooks, “Benjamin Keach and the Baptist singing controversy: Mediating scripture, confessional heritage, and Christian unity” (Ph.D. diss, Florida State University, 2006), ProQuest (UMI Number 3216473). For a detailed account of this controversy see J. Jackson Goadby, *Bye-Paths in Baptists History: A Collection of*
As discussed above, the foundational characteristic of Gill’s Enlightenment mentality was his ardent biblicism; his discussion of biblical worship through song is no exception. Gill’s reputation as the standard for Particular Baptist orthodoxy ensured that his ideas about biblical worship carried much weight in Particular Baptist circles. His earliest (and most extensive) treatment of this subject is a sermon entitled, *A Discourse on Singing of Psalms as a Part of Divine Worship* (1734), which he gave as a lecture on Christmas Day in 1733 to a group of young men who gathered for prayer on Sunday mornings. Gill concludes, “since we have prophecy, precept, and precedent, for the practice of singing in New Testament churches, none should scruple the performance of it.” Gill’s conviction concerning the biblicality of congregational song was so strong that he concluded his church’s’ confessional statement with the affirmation, “We believe, That singing of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs vocally is an ordinance of the Gospel to be performed by believers…” Gill was very much aware that neither his *Discourse* nor his *Body of Practical Divinity* dealt exhaustively with the topic of Christian song; instead his main goal was to provide his readers with biblical evidence in order “to prove

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36 In this sermon, Gill proves through a series of biblical proof-texts that worship expressed through vocal (not just inward) singing is, 1) a moral *precept* of God that must be obeyed by all people throughout all ages, 2) the subject of multiple Old Testament *prophesies* concerning the gospel churches, and 3) exemplified in New Testament *precedents*. See Gill, *Discourse*. In his memoir of John Gill, Rippon gives the date of this lecture as 1732, but the 1734 publication of the sermon lists the date as 1733 (Rippon, *Brief Memoir*, 38).

37 Gill, *Discourse*, 38.

that gospel churches, or the churches of Christ, under the gospel dispensation, ought to
sing the praises of God vocally."\(^{39}\)

The second principle of the Christian Enlightenment, rationality, also played a
major role in Gill’s theology of song. Gill’s concern with the biblicality of worship
naturally led him to lean toward exclusive Psalmody during the early years of his
ministry; by the late 1740s, however, his opinion of hymns had changed. In his Discourse
of 1734, Gill recommended exclusive psalmody as the most biblical form of
congregational song. \(^{40}\) During the fourteen years that followed, however, he apparently
softened his position so much as to advocate for the use of hymns in the worship service.
In 1748, Gill was asked to write a preface for a new edition of Richard Davis’s
hymnbook, Hymns Composed on Several Subjects. Instead of refusing, Gill accepted the
opportunity, affirming his previous comments about the superiority of the psalms, but
emphasizing the merits of newly-composed hymns. \(^{41}\) His 1770 Body of Practical
Divinity reveals an even greater transformation in his theology of song. In this later
work, which summarizes the arguments of his earlier Discourse, Gill omits the

\(^{39}\) Gill, Discourse, 31-32.

\(^{40}\) In reference to the Apostle Paul’s commandment to sings “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,”
Gill writes, “I take hymns to be but another name for the book of psalms” (Gill, Discourse, 21). See also
Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Gill explains his position by stating, “I must confess, that I cannot
but judge them, in a good measure, unnecessary, since we are so well provided with a book of psalms and
scriptural songs, indited by the Spirit of God, and suitable on all occasions” (ibid., 20-21). Gill continues
his discussion of the Psalms by describing them as “a large fund of experience, a rich mine of gospel grace
and truth, [which] is abundantly suited to every case, state and condition, [in which] the church of Christ, or
a particular believer, is in at any time” (ibid., 25).

\(^{41}\) Gill writes, “And tho’ I have some years ago declared my sentiments, that the psalms of David
are most fit and proper to be sung in the churches of Christ; yet I never denied, nor do I deny, that Hymns
and spiritual Songs, composed by good men, tho’ without the inspiration of God, may be made use of, and
be useful, provided that they are agreeable to the sacred writings, and the analogy of faith; and especially
such as are written in an evangelic Strain, as the following Hymns are” (Gill, Preface, iv-v).
disparaging comments about hymnody and instead points to the historical commentary of Tertullian and Eusebius to support the practice of hymnody in public worship. Gill reasoned that the use of newly-composed hymns in the ancient Christian church, along with the scriptural precedents mentioned above, provided ample justification for newly-composed hymnody in the eighteenth-century church.

In his *Body of Practical Divinity*, Gill displays the optimism of his age by identifying song as a vehicle for the redemptive and refining power of the Lord. He asserts that unbelievers may actually come to a “saving knowledge” of God through evangelical songs. In his *Discourse*, Gill adds a personal reflection: “I have known [singing] to be [an ordinance of conversion], and so have others besides me; and a good reason this is why it should be continued publicly in our churches, and unbelievers be admitted to an attendance on it.”

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43 Gill refers to the conversion of St. Augustine of Hippo as an example of God’s regenerating work through song in the early Christian churches. Gill writes, “This has been an ordinance for conversion…and it has been made very useful to souls under their first awakenings. [Augustine] speaks of it from his own experience: he says, ‘How much have I wept at thy hymns and songs, being exceedingly moved at the voices of thy church sweetly sounding. These voices pierced into my ears; thy truth melted into my heart, and from thence pious affections were raised, and the tears ran, and it was well within me’” (Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, Book 9, quoted in Gill, *Body*, vol. 3, 385).

44 Gill, *Discourse*, 61.
teaching tool for the sanctification of the believers. Gill writes, “For one end of the duty is, not only to speak to ourselves in it, but to ‘teach’ and ‘admonish’ others.”

Gill points to the prominence of singing during the English Reformation of the sixteenth century, a time of religious reorganization and spiritual awakening, as proof of the transforming power of song in the Christian churches.

Gill’s optimism concerning the functions of congregational song is a result of his high Calvinistic understanding of God’s character and God’s interactions with mankind. The optimism Gill called the Church to, however, is grounded in God, not in man. Gill believed that God created mankind’s ability to perceive and understand basic spiritual truths; that God enabled his creation to offer up acceptable worship; and that God enlightened the minds of “carnal” men to receive salvation. Gill’s optimism, then, was not the humanistic optimism generally associated with the Enlightenment, but an assurance of God’s omnipotence, goodness, and faithfulness to his creation—particularly to his people.

Gill’s status as the leading authority on Particular Baptist orthodoxy in the Enlightenment era ensured that his opinion of congregational singing would be adopted throughout the denomination, opening the door for the subsequent flourishing of

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46 Gill writes that singing “was of great use in forwarding the reformation from popery” (ibid., 385). Gill cites the second volume of Gilbert Burnet’s *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (1681), in which Burnet discusses a Parliamentary act of 1548 that confirmed the new Liturgy of the Church of England (Gill, *Body*, vol. 3, 385). This government act authorized the singing of the Psalms in versified English. Burnet notes that the Psalms were “much sung by all who loved the Reformation, and were in many Places used in Churches” and that singing them was, “a sign by which Mens affections to that Work were every where measured” (Gilbert Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. 2 [London: T.H. for Richard Chiswell, 1681], 94, Google eBook).
Particular Baptist hymnody. Gill’s recommendation of hymns, in turn, encouraged the efforts of Particular Baptist ministers to write hymns for the use of their own congregations. This period produced some of the most prolific hymn writers in the history of Baptist hymnody: Robert Robinson (1735-1790), Anne Steele (1716-1778), Benjamin Beddome (1717-1795), John Fawcett (1740-1817), Richard Burnham (1749-1810), Samuel Stennett (1727-1795), Benjamin Francis (1734-1799), Samuel Medley (1738-1799), and Joseph Swain (1761-1796).\textsuperscript{47} Many other Particular Baptist ministers and lay people took up the charge as well, but on a much smaller scale, by writing occasional hymns as the need arose or as they felt moved. For this reason, the period between 1760 and 1800 has been called the “Golden Age” of Baptist hymnody.\textsuperscript{48} Gill’s convincing argument concerning the biblical basis for singing, as well as his thoughts on the helpfulness of freely-composed, scripturally sound hymns, established hymnody as one of the defining characteristics of orthodox worship for the Particular Baptist churches.

**Conclusion**

The Calvinistic theology of the late eighteenth-century held fast to three principles of the Enlightenment, which “translated” into Christian thought as biblicism, optimism, and rationality. These three principles are particularly prominent in the teachings of John Gill and John Brine, whose influence spread widely throughout the

\textsuperscript{47} All of the men listed were ministers in the Particular Baptist Church. See B.A. Ramsbottom, *Sing Aloud in Jesus’ Name* (Harpenden, Hertfordshire [England]: Gospel Standard Trust, 2005) and Julian, 969. The one exception is Anne Steele, who was the daughter of a Particular Baptist minister (Julian, 112). Gadsby included hymns from all of these eighteenth-century hymn writers in his hymnbook.

\textsuperscript{48} For a detailed study of this “Golden Age” of Baptist Hymnody, see Young, 73-90.
English Particular Baptist churches of the eighteenth century. The teachings of these men became so commonly held among Particular Baptists of this period, that this form of Calvinism came to be known as “high Calvinism” or simply “orthodoxy.”

The Evangelical Revival of the mid-eighteenth century, however, threatened to erase the Calvinistic distinctions that many in the Particular Baptist churches held dear as some Calvinistic Independent ministers, such as Isaac Watts and Maurice Matthias, began to make universal calls for salvation. From Brine’s perspective, such universal calls contradicted the teachings of Scripture: accordingly, Brine maintained a strict opposition to duty-faith in order to ensure that Particular Baptist theology would not be assimilated into the Arminian theology of the revivalists. This point and its theological corollaries were vital for the preservation of eighteenth-century Particular Baptist orthodoxy as the denomination moved into the nineteenth century. Unlike the doctrine of duty-faith, the issue of singing *per se* did not divide the Calvinistic Baptists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because singing was accepted by the Particular Baptists churches as the duty of all men, hymnody itself became a battleground for the declaration and dissemination of opposing evangelistic models within the Particular Baptist churches. Hymnbooks became the vehicle through which the leaders of moderate Calvinism would assert and spread their new evangelistic fervor.
Chapter 3: Baptist Hymnody and the Decline of High Orthodoxy

The spread of the Evangelical Revival and decline of high Calvinism throughout the English Particular Baptist churches may be traced to three transforming sources: Andrew Fuller, the Bristol Academy, and John Rippon. The influence of John Gill and Brine over the theological standards of the Particular Baptist churches began to decline as the eighteenth century came to a close, particularly after the publication of Andrew Fuller’s (1754-1815) tract, The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation in 1785. In this work, Fuller argues (in direct opposition to Gill and Brine) that the gospel must be preached to all men.¹ The subject of Fuller’s publication was clearly not new, but his mastery of Enlightenment-style scholarship and argument brought the subject to the forefront of Particular Baptist theological thought. Fuller’s tract echoed the evangelistic sentiments that were already gaining momentum at Bristol Baptist Academy. These evangelical teachings found musical expression in A Collection of Hymns adapted to Public Worship (1769), commonly known as the Bristol Collection, which is distinguished as the first

¹ Andrew Fuller, The Gospel of Christ Worthy of All Acceptation: or the Obligations of Men Fully to Credit, and Cordially to Approve, Whatever God Makes Known, Wherein is Considered the Nature of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of Those Where the Gospel Comes in that Manner (Northampton: T. Dicey, [1785]), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3323268362).
Baptist hymnbook compiled from a variety of sources. Two years after Fuller’s work was published, John Rippon (1751-1836) incorporated these new teachings into his own hymnbook, *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors* (1787), which became the Baptist hymnbook of the nineteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, only a minority of Particular Baptist churches still held to the high orthodoxy of Brine and Gill.

**Andrew Fuller**

Andrew Fuller was the pastor of a Particular Baptist church in Kettering. During his youth, he embraced the non-offer approach of Gill and Brine. As a young man, however, he sought to expand his theological knowledge by reading the works of the Puritans, particularly John Owen, and evangelical preachers such as Jonathan Edwards. These writers, along with his own conversion experience and his thorough study of Scripture, convinced Fuller that the gospel must be offered (not just preached) to all men. In *The Gospel Worthy*, Fuller openly rejects the non-invitational preaching of Gill and Brine, stating that the Bible teaches that it is the duty of all men who hear the gospel to believe in Christ. In Article 15 of his *Confession of Faith*, which he gave at his

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2 See Eric Sharpe, “Bristol Baptist College and the Church’s Hymnody,” *Baptist Quarterly* 28, no.1 (January 1979): 8 (Accessed February 20, 2012), http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/28-1_007.pdf. Prior to the Bristol Collection, Baptist ministers, such as Benjamin Beddome, had published small collections of their own hymns for the use of the local congregation. See Ramsbottom, *Sing Aloud in Jesus’ Name*, 32-34. The Bristol Collection, however, was published for use of the Particular Baptist churches in general.

3 Morden, 23-51.

4 The influence of Jonathan Edwards’ distinction between the natural and moral ability of man is evident in this line of reasoning. Morden explains that, “Edwards allowed Fuller to hold together strict Calvinism (no one would come without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit) and evangelistic preaching (all had the *natural* powers to come, even though because of *moral* or criminal inability they would not, apart from the Spirit’s work). Because their inability was not natural, therefore it was their duty to believe and consequently Fuller’s duty to preach” (Morden, 49).
installment as pastor of the First Baptist Church at Kettering, October 7, 1783, Fuller clearly states his position regarding evangelistic calls:

I believe, it is the duty of every minister of Christ plainly and faithfully to preach the gospel to all who will hear it; and, as I believe...that it is their duty to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in him for salvation, though they do not; I therefore believe free and solemn addresses, invitations, calls and warnings to them, to be not only consistent, but directly adapted, as means in the hands of the Spirit of God, to bring them to Christ. I consider it as part of my duty, which I could not omit without being guilty of the blood of souls.  

Evangelistic calls to all men, Fuller claims, are therefore not only biblically sanctioned; they are commanded.  

In his biography of Andrew Fuller, Peter J. Morden discusses the profound impact of the Evangelical Revival on the development of Fuller’s soteriology. In a religious culture that prided itself in rationalism and orthodox high Calvinism, Fuller’s enthusiasm for evangelism was regarded with suspicion. John Wesley biographer H.D. Rack explains that enthusiasm’s “basic theological meaning in the eighteenth century was a claim to extraordinary revelations or powers from the Holy Spirit; and more vaguely and abusively, any kind of religious excitement.” Gill’s writings on the subject support Rack’s claims. In his Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity, Gill asserts that spiritual

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6 Fuller, Gospel, 163-184. A.C. Underwood describes Fuller as “a self taught man, with no gifts of style and little technical learning, [yet] he had real power as a thinker, and with a terrier[-]like tenacity, he kept hold of what he deemed the error of his opponent and shot it to death.” Underwood deems Fuller “the soundest and most creatively useful theologian the Particular Baptists ever had” (Underwood, 166).

7 Morden, 20.

joy “is unspeakable; not to be fully expressed by those who experience it; it is better experienced than expressed.”

Despite the apparent “emotionalism” of the Evangelical Revival, the movement as a whole was more indebted to Enlightenment thinking than to pre-romantic sentiments. Historian David Bebbington has argued that Evangelicalism, both in its Arminian and Calvinistic manifestations, was rooted in the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Evangelicalism held to the three core values of the Christian Enlightenment, that is, the three principles of the Enlightenment as translated through the Christian tradition. First, the movement was grounded in biblical scholarship: evangelicals believed that all true questions could be answered, in one way or another, thorough a thorough search of the Scripture. Second, evangelicals adhered to the humanistic optimism of the age, believing that every man or woman had the natural ability to come to Christ and be saved. This optimism, both in God’s love and in man’s duty to answer the general call to salvation, was the primary motivation for the Revival’s interest in undifferentiated evangelism. Finally, this optimistic and biblically-centered search for truth incorporated the assumption that all truth is inherently consistent (and rational) due to its source in the

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9 Gill, Body, 123.

10 “Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment were closely aligned” (Bebbington, Holiness, 35).

11 Andrew Fuller’s reliance on Scripture is evident in his reaction to Abraham Taylor’s 1742 tract entitled, The Modern Question. Morden writes, “Taylor was able to show, in a way that Fuller was unable to answer, that New Testament figures repeatedly challenged the ‘ungodly’ to spiritual repentance and faith. The impact this had on Fuller was clearly great… ‘The more I read and thought,’ he said, ‘the more I doubted the justice of my former views.’…The point is not so much that Taylor influenced Fuller, but that the passages Taylor cited did” (Morden, 36-37).

12 Evangelicals were “undifferentiated” in their evangelism in contrast to high Calvinistic Baptists.
unchanging, non-contradictory God. Simply put, “conversion,” Bebbington writes, “was Christian Enlightenment.”

In its essence, the Evangelical Revival was an expression of the same Enlightenment thinking that led Gill and Brine and others of the orthodox tradition to hold so strongly to their high Calvinistic beliefs. As Bebbington has shown, the seemingly divergent traditions of high Calvinism and Evangelicalism (both in its Calvinistic and Arminian forms), may be understood as two “streams” of the same basic Enlightenment mindset. High Calvinism and Evangelicalism both emphasize the Christian Enlightenment principles of Biblicism, optimism, and rationalism. Bebbington makes a similar point in his discussion of shared characteristics between the evangelical Calvinism of Fuller and Methodism during the mid-eighteenth century. He writes:

> It would be wrong to neglect the vast area of common ground between the Wesleyan [Revivalist] and Calvinist traditions. Both were Evangelical, the one created by the Evangelical Revival [the Wesleyan tradition], the other transformed by it.

Before Evangelical Calvinism was transformed by the Revival, however, it was born of the Enlightenment. The Evangelical Calvinism of Andrew Fuller, therefore, was just as indebted to the Enlightenment as was the scholastic high Calvinism of Gill and Brine.

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13 In his description of John Wesley, Bebbington writes, “John Wesley himself was an Enlightenment thinker. It is true that he had a credulous side. As Henry Rack and others have shown, he identified with much of the superstitious dimensions of popular culture. Yet he held attitudes typical of the age of reason. He was an empiricist, believing in the investigation of religious experience. He appealed to the evidence drawn from this research to confute the metaphysics of the past. His method conformed to Newtonian norms, for it was strictly scientific…John Wesley participated fully in the high culture of his age. Far from being a throwback to an obscurantist past, he was a man of (as he put it) “reason and religion”” (Bebbington, Holiness, 57).

14 Bebbington, Holiness, 35.

15 Ibid., 53.
These three strains of Baptist thought—the high Calvinistic, the Evangelical Calvinistic, and even the Evangelical Arminian—were actually three separate strains of Enlightenment thinking.

Regardless of Fuller’s hearty adherence to Calvinism, for many Particular Baptists his free-offer teachings sounded dangerously similar to the Arminian theology of the Wesleys. Even worse, perhaps, was Fuller’s shocking challenge to the system of high Calvinism, and in turn, the legacy of Gill’s high orthodoxy. Morden explains that

Although Fuller had a high opinion of Gill and Brine (perhaps higher in public than in private), he was adamant that they should not be set up as infallible ‘standards of orthodoxy.’ Rather, he urged, people should be free to examine the scriptures and think for themselves….For Fuller, adherence to a system or a human author was far less important than a commitment to the Bible and a spirit of free enquiry. Scriptures were none the less true for having been quoted by Arminians.\(^\text{16}\)

Fuller’s willingness to question several of the key points of high Calvinism made his teaching immediately suspect among the older generation of English Calvinistic Baptists. Within the Particular Baptist churches, Fuller’s view was often deemed “low Calvinism” or simply, “Fullerism,” and was considered by many during the late eighteenth century to be a watered-down form of Calvinism.\(^\text{17}\) Although Fuller’s argument was initially rejected by the older generation of Particular Baptist ministers, for the younger generation, the publication was indicative of a growing dissatisfaction with high Calvinism. Ken R. Manley writes, “When this book did appear, and it was as much

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\(^{16}\) Morden, 58-59. In a response to a William Button’s appeal to Gill, Fuller writes, “What was Dr. Gill’s meaning I cannot tell, nor is it worth while to dispute about it, as the opinion of the greatest uninspired writer is not decisive” (Andrew Fuller, \textit{Works}, vol. 1, 211).

\(^{17}\) Hayden, 122-123. Fuller’s argument was not new, but prior to Fuller’s publication, the “high” position was the dominant view of Particular Baptist ministers. See Oliver, \textit{History}, 89-111.
a symptom as a cause, the foundation of the denomination’s new vigour…was well
laid.” This foundation was laid most forcibly by the educators at the Bristol Baptist
Academy. By the time Fuller published The Gospel Worthy, evangelical Calvinism was
already gaining ground among the “Bristol men.”

**Bristol Baptist Academy**

During the mid-eighteenth century, Bristol Baptist Academy was the only
institution specifically founded for the purpose of educating Baptist ministers. Under
the direction of Hugh Evans (1713-1781) and his son, Caleb Evans (1737-1791), the
Academy provided an environment for enlightened inquiring of the Bible, church history,
classic literature, ancient Hebrew and Greek, and theology in general. In an address to
the students of the Academy, dated April 12, 1770, Caleb Evans describes his
Enlightenment philosophy of education:

[In addition to cultivating a zealous love for Christ] Let me next exhort you to the
vigorous pursuit of your other studies in general. There is scarcely any branch of
knowledge but may be useful to a Minister: Whatever hath the tendency to
enlarge our ideas of the divine perfections, to give us a clearer view of the

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18 Ken R. Manley, ‘Redeeming Love Proclaim’: John Rippon and the Baptists (Waynesboro, GA:

19 Manley, 18.

20 Bristol Baptist Academy was established in the will of Edward Terrill (1635-1686), a ruling
elder of the Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol. The will, dated June 3, 1679, stated that an endowment
be made to allow the pastor of the Broadmead church to devote three afternoon per week to the instruction
of young men interested in ministry. The aims of the endowment were not fully realized until 1720 when
Bernard Foskett (1685-1758) was named President of the Academy. Hugh and Caleb Evans were both
students under Foskett, Hugh Evans assisting the President from 1739 until Foskett’s death in 1758. Hugh
Evans succeeded as President in 1758, with his son Caleb assisting him. In 1770, the Bristol Education
Society was formed for the financial support of the Academy students. Caleb assumed the position of
President at the death of his father in 1781. See John Rippon, A Brief Essay towards an History of the
Baptist Academy at Bristol; read before the Bristol Education Society, at their anniversary meeting, in
Broadmead, August 26th, 1795 (London: Dilly and Button, 1796), 41-42, Eighteenth Century Collections
Online (Gale Document Number CW3308396739).
meaning of Scripture and the evidences of its authenticity, or to enable us to speak and write our thoughts with propriety, perspicuity, and energy, is certainly well worth the attention of every candidate for the ministry.\textsuperscript{21}

According to the Enlightenment principle of the consistency of all truth, Bristol tutors encouraged students to read a variety of theological writings and weigh the truth claims of each. This included questioning the “sacred” orthodoxy of Gill’s writings and reassessing the claims of high Calvinism. Young ministers at the Academy studied the traditional orthodoxy of Gill along with the moderate Calvinism of the Puritans and the preachers of the Evangelical Revival. This often led to toleration, and even integration, of the “truths” of Arminianism.

One of the most influential tutors and proponents of evangelical Calvinism at Bristol Academy during this time was Caleb Evans.\textsuperscript{22} In 1770, Evans reorganized the financial structure of the Academy by forming the Bristol Education Society. According to Evans, the Society funded the students at the Academy in order to provide the dissenting congregations, specifically the Particular Baptist churches, “with a succession of able and evangelical ministers” and to promote “the encouragement of missionaries to

\textsuperscript{21} Caleb Evans, “An Address to the Students in the Academy at Bristol,” in John Rippon, The Baptist Annual Register for 1790, 1791, 1792 and part of 1793. Including sketches of the state of religion among different denominations of good men at home and abroad. (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, [1793]), 346, Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CB3327487598).

\textsuperscript{22} Professors at the Academy exerted a tremendous influence on the daily lives of the students. Although the Bristol Academy was an institution of learning, President Hugh Evans encouraged a familial atmosphere in which the students lived with him in his home. See Manley, Redeeming Love, 18. Caleb Evans, in particular, was regarded almost as a wise older brother by many of the students. In recollections of his time under the tutelage of Caleb Evans, John Rippon writes, “O, how often has he in prayer, and in advice, melted over us! We all of us felt a sincere affection for him, and in some of us it seemed to be a mixture of the filial and fraternal” (Rippon, Brief Memoir, 41-42). Michael A. G. Haykin remarks that this educational model promoted a kind of marriage of, “doctrine and devotion, between theory and practice.” Rippon later wrote about his relationship with the President, Hugh Evans, “Every one who sat at his feet recognized in him a friend and a father” (Michael A.G. Haykin, One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, his friends and his times [Darlington, England: Evangelical, 1994] 50-51).
preach the gospel wherever providence opens a door.” Evans’s bold statement was in direct contrast to the high Calvinism of the great majority of the denomination at that time.

In keeping with his philosophy of education, Caleb Evans encouraged his students to read not only Gill and Brine, but also the reviverist writings of Jonathan Edwards. Evans admitted to having great “reverence and esteem” for the writings of Gill and Brine, and he names Gill as “the touchstone of orthodoxy, with many.” Evans reserved his highest praise, however, for Edwards, whom he identifies as “the most rational, scriptural divine, and the liveliest Christian, the world has ever [been] blessed with.” It is no coincidence that during this time the Academy produced a number of men who would later be instrumental in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society: John Sutcliff (1752-1814), Samuel Pearce (1766-1799), William Staughton (1770-1829), and John Rippon. K.R. Manley notes that “the importance of Evans’ moderate Calvinism cannot be overemphasized, for he influenced scores of Bristol students…Years before Fuller published his Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation (1785) Bristol men had been influenced towards the same position.”

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24 Rippon, Baptist Annual Register [1793], 254-255.
25 Ibid., 255.
26 Manley, Redeeming Love, 27.
27 Ibid.
Along with his moderate Calvinism, Caleb Evans also contributed to the rising interest in hymnody among the students at Bristol Academy. In 1769, Caleb Evans, with the help of his friend and fellow Bristol graduate John Ash (1724-1779), published *A Collection of Hymns adapted to Public Worship*, more commonly known as The Bristol Collection. The collection included four hundred twelve hymns and, due to its large number of hymns by Watts (nearly a third), it is clear that Ash and Evans envisioned it to be a replacement for Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms*. The compilers also included many hymns by Doddridge and Baptist hymn writers such as Beddome, Francis, Joseph Stennett, and Anne Steele.

Hymnody played an important role in Evans’s own enlightened expression of personal piety, which is evident in the advertisement of the book. Evans speaks of his theory of musical worship with the general term “psalmody,” but within the context of his words, this designation signifies hymnody as well:

> The duty of Psalmody, when properly attended to, is certainly one of the most noble and elevating Parts of divine Worship. And, it must be confessed, we have been very happy for many Years, in the ample Providence, which has been made by various Authors, for the rational and edifying Performance of this Duty.

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28 See Sharpe, 7-16.

29 Watts’s *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) and his *Psalms of David* (1719) were often published together during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and commonly known as *Watts’s Hymns and Psalms*. The Bristol Collection contains 137 hymns by Watts (Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 86-87).

30 Hayden, 118.

31 Evans acknowledges the long history of congregational song within the Particular Baptist churches, with possible allusions to the disagreements that still existed in the General Baptist churches at the time.

This “rational performance,” writes Evans, requires congregants to sing from a book.\footnote{Ibid., iii-iv.} In contrast to lining-out, the practice of singing from a book had been recommended by both Watts and Gill.\footnote{See discussion of Gill’s thoughts on hymnody in Ch. 2. In a section entitled, “Of the manner of singing,” in his The Psalms of David, Watts writes, “It were to be wish’d that all Congregations and private Families would sing as they do in foreign Protestant Countries, without reading Line by Line. Tho’ the Author has done what he could to make the Sense compleat [sic] in every Line or two, yet many Inconveniences will always attend this unhappy Manner of Singing: But where it can not be alter’d, these two things may give some Relief. First, Let as many as can do it bring Psalm-books with them, and look on the Words while they sing, so far as to make the Sense compleat [sic]. Secondly, Let the Clerk read the whole Psalm over aloud before he begins to parcel out the Lines, that the People may have some Notion of what they sing; and not be forced to drag on heavily thro’ eight tedious Syllables without any Meaning, till the next Line come to give the Sense of them” (Watts, Psalms [1719], vi-vii).} The publication of the Bristol Collection undoubtedly encouraged the hymnbook tradition in the Particular Baptist churches. In addition, Evans actively encouraged the dissemination of his hymnbook by giving it to new Bristol students, who would introduce the hymnbook to their own congregations.\footnote{In his article for the Baptist Quarterly, Eric Sharpe writes, “In 1784 Joseph Kinghorn had entered Bristol College and in a letter to his parents that year, he tells them that Dr. Evans had presented him with a copy of this hymn-book (‘being a compilation from others’). Five years later he became pastor of St. Mary’s and in that year (1789) the church which had already used part of a legacy to buy Ash and Evans’s hymn-book for the choir, now bought ‘12 hymn-books for ye poor.’ The implication is that many of the congregation would have bought their own copies, and it is clear that this hymn-book had now supplanted Watts’ Hymns and Spiritual Songs which was formerly used at St. Mary’s” (Sharpe, 8).}

In accordance with their evangelical leanings and openness to Arminian theology, Evans and Ash included works by the Wesleys in their hymn collection. The Bristol hymnologists were unapologetic in their free offers of the gospel, which is clear from the inclusion of an essentially unaltered version of Charles Wesley’s “Blow Ye the
Trumpet.” It is interesting to note that, in the Bristol Collection, the final stanza is even more evangelistic than in the original version in Wesley’s hymnbook (Ex. 3.1).

Ex. 3.1. John Wesley, “Blow ye the trumpet,” in the Bristol Collection and Wesley’s *Hymns for New-Year’s-Day*.

Due to its overtly Arminian references (all-atoning, redemption to all the world), this particular hymn was altered many times in eighteenth-century Calvinistic hymn collections, most notably by August M. Toplady in his *Psalms and hymns for public and

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36 This hymn first appeared in his brother’s (John) publication of New Year’s hymns. John Wesley, *Hymns for New-Year’s-Day* (Bristol: Felix Farley, 1750), 6-7, Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3321478369). It was very popular with the missionary movement (Julian, 151).

37 John Ash and Caleb Evans, 123-124. Wesley, *Hymns for New-Year’s-Day*, 6-7 (italics are the author’s). Ash and Evans identify their source for this hymn as “L.H.C.,” which stands for the Calvinistic Methodist collection commonly known as “Lady Huntington’s Collection.”

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private worship (1776). Toplady changed the phrase “all-atoning Lamb” in verse 2 to read “sin-atoning Lamb” according to his firm belief in particular redemption. Despite their Calvinistic beliefs, Ash and Evans apparently did not see the need to emphasize the doctrine of election in this hymn.

The evangelistic message of the hymn above, along with the compilers’ tolerance for expressions of Arminianism, is evidence of the moderate Calvinism that flourished at the Bristol Academy. This moderate Calvinism stood in direct contrast to the high Calvinism that held sway in the older generation of Particular Baptist ministers. The younger generation, however, embraced the Evangelical Revival and, in Enlightenment fashion, incorporated the ideas of the Revival into a Calvinistic framework just as Gill and Brine had incorporated the methods of Age of Reason into their theological pursuits several decades before. The success of Ash and Evan’s hymnbook, which went through ten editions in less than sixty years, testifies to the growing influence of moderate Calvinism in the Particular Baptist churches.

The Bristol Collection was not uniformly accepted by all the Particular Baptist congregations, however. By the late eighteenth century, Watts’s works had become the core repertory standard of congregational song for dissenting congregations throughout


39 Bebbington observes that by the late nineteenth century, this Enlightenment desire for harmony of all truth within the more evangelical Baptist churches “began to erode the distinctively Calvinistic elements with which it had earlier been associated” (Bebbington, Holiness, 45).

40 Julian, 112.
much of the English-speaking world.** In many ways, Watts’s hymns—which were at once thoroughly scriptural, doctrinally orthodox, and passionately expressed—were integral to dissenting identity in England, even in the “liberal” climate of the Baptist Academy.** In an era of rationality and vigorous scholasticism, Watts’s peculiar talent for throwing “light upon every secret movement of the human heart, whether sin, nature, or grace,” encouraged the revivalist sentiments of the Evangelical revival.** Concerning the place of Watts’s hymns in the hearts of the “Bristol men” at this time, Roger Hayden writes:

> It is difficult to over emphasise the significance of these hymns for sustaining the evangelical Calvinism of Baptists. In these hymns were doctrinal strength and personal warmth which sustained Baptist spirituality in an age of reason and increasing Unitarian tendencies.**

Even the most evangelical of the Baptist churches were reluctant to replace their beloved Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms* with the new Bristol Collection.** What the Particular Baptist churches needed in order to sustain the Revival during the last quarter

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42 Concerning the style of Watts’s compositions, John Julian writes, “Inheriting from the tradition of the metrical Psalms a healthy strength of thought and a habit of broad and jubilant praise, impressed through the paraphrases with the necessity of a rich Scripture groundwork, and supplied with a wide range of subjects by his immediate predecessors, he is in the best pieces gifted with a soft richness of diction, and a free vigorous rhythm (especially in his L[ong]M[eter]); the distinctive characteristic of unaffected piety…being a pervading joyousness and buoyant faith, lightening up even his saddest hymns” (Julian, 350).


45 Manley, Redeeming Love, 87.
of the eighteenth century was a supplement to Watts--one that would help fuel the evangelistic fervor without throwing out the traditional hymns of the dissenting churches. John Rippon, one of Evans’s students, recognized this need.

Rippon’s Hymns

Caleb Evans’s evangelical Calvinism, as well as his high regard for hymn- and psalm-singing, made a lasting impact on Rippon, a student at the Academy from 1769 until 1773. Rippon’s time at the Bristol Academy was foundational to his understanding of moderate Calvinism as well his interest in hymnody. Rippon would eventually succeed John Gill as the pastor of the influential Carter Lane Church. Considering his position as pastor of this notable high Calvinistic church, one might assume that Rippon shared Gill’s non-offer view of evangelism; the reality, however, was just the opposite. Although he shared Gill’s orthodoxy on many points, Rippon was decidedly evangelical in doctrine and practice. He lived out his commitment to evangelicalism by supporting the Baptist Missionary Society, which was founded in 1792 to send missionaries to foreign lands. Rippon also helped establish an organization for domestic evangelism, the Baptist Itinerant Society, in 1797 and served as its first chairman.

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47 William Carey (1761-1836) and Andrew Fuller were both central figures in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society. See Morden, 128-156.

Following in the footsteps of his tutor at Bristol, Rippon turned his attention to hymnody in the late 1780s as a vehicle to both unite the Baptist churches and spread missionary zeal throughout the country. In 1787 Rippon published his own collections of hymns, *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors*. This new hymnbook was much larger and more diverse than Ash and Evans’s collection. Rippon’s *Selection* became the hymnbook of choice for the majority of Particular Baptist churches throughout the nineteenth century.

Rippon’s hymnbook had been readily accepted by the Particular Baptists churches, whereas the Bristol Collection had not, for several reasons. First, unlike the Bristol Collection, Rippon did not rely heavily on the hymns of Isaac Watts because he assumed his congregation would continue to use Watts’s editions. Rippon understood,


50 Rippon’s *Selection* and the Bristol Collection have 110 hymns in common. The first edition of the Bristol Collection contained 412 hymns; the first edition of Rippon’s comprised 588 hymns. These numbers do not seem greatly disparate until one accounts for the number of Watts’s compositions that are included in each hymnbook: 30% of the hymns in the Bristol Collection (39 in total) are selections from Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms*; Rippon included only 39 hymns of Watts’s (less than 7% of the total), and these were less known because they did not appear in Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms* (Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 87-91).

51 Hayden, 119. In 1866 Charles Haddon Spurgeon published a collection of hymns called, *Our Own Hymn Book*, which replaced Rippon’s book in the Carter Lane Church as well as many other churches whose pastors had been taught by Spurgeon. See Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 137; Julian, 113.

52 Despite the competition that his publication would create, however, Rippon did not wish to downplay the value of the Bristol Collection. In fact, according to Rippon’s conception of his collection as a supplement to Watts, Rippon did not foresee his book as competing at all with the success of the Bristol Collection. Concerning the Bristol Collection, Rippon states, “That [hymnbook] published about the Year 1770, by the Rev. Messrs, Ash, and Evans, is a Collection indeed. I will not say all the honorable Things which my Mind dictates concerning it, but I will say, that it is by no Means inferior to any Collection of Hymns I have seen; yet, as Dr. Watts is but seldom used where the Bristol Collection is introduced, mine will not be likely to clash with it” (Rippon, *Selection* [1787], vi). The Bristol Collection was published as an alternative to Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms*, which, it may be argued, was the main reason that it did not gain a permanent place in the worship practices of the Particular Baptists.
and supported, his denomination’s attachment to Watts’s Enlightenment-minded hymns. Accordingly, Rippon published his own collection as an appendix to be used alongside Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms*. Second, Rippon recognized that neither the Bristol Collection nor Watts’s editions met the needs of the denomination because these collections did not include many of the subjects that were dear to the Particular Baptist churches—key points of doctrine that were essential to Particular Baptist identity, such as baptism and election. Accordingly, Rippon included many more hymns concerning baptism, the election and perseverance of the saints, the work of the Holy Spirit, the characters of Christ, and hymns for after the sermon. Due to its comprehensiveness, Rippon’s hymnbook became, in the words of John Wesley, “a body of practical and experimental divinity.” The wide variety of subjects, along with Rippon’s organization of the hymns according to topic, surely appealed to the scholastic mindset that many congregants at Carter Lane, and the churches at large, had become accustomed to under

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53 In the preface to the first edition, Rippon writes, “As this Book is an Appendix to Dr. Watts, I have not selected from his Hymns and Psalms, but I have gone through more than Ninety printed Volumes of Hymn-Books, Hymns, Psalms, etc. attentively perusing all the Collections I could obtain in this Country and in America” (Rippon, *Selection* [1787], vi). Despite Rippon’s apparent abandonment of Watts’s works, this lack does not signal any dislike for the man commonly known as “the Father of English Hymnody.” On the contrary, Rippon cherished Watts’s collection and upheld it as the traditional book of the English Particular Baptist churches. Rippon writes, “The Hymns and Psalms of that Sweet Singer of Israel, Dr. Watts, have justly obtained a distinguished Reputation, among different Denominations of good Men, and rendered his Memory dear to Thousands. They appear to me better adapted to public Worship, than any other Book which I have seen, and it would pain me very much, to find any One suspecting my most cordial Attachment to them…I do, with the greatest Pleasure, rank among their most warmest Admirers” (ibid., ii). Rippon’s concern—and even anxiety—concerning the continued use of Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms* is evident in his repeated justification for his own publication. In an even more explicit manner, Rippon asserts that “this Selection was never intended, either directly or indirectly, to set aside Dr. Watts, in any Congregation upon Earth; on the contrary, it is hoped that he will be more used than ever” (ibid., iii).

54 Rippon, *Selection* (1787), iv.

the preaching of John Gill. Thus, Rippon’s sensitivity to his denomination’s devotion to
Watts ensured both the continued use of Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms* as well as the
acceptance of Rippon’s own *Selection*.

The most important legacy of Rippon’s hymnbook, however, is its function in
teaching and promoting evangelical Calvinism. The evangelical sentiments taught by
Fuller and the graduates of the Bristol Academy were no doubt confusing for members of
the Particular Baptist churches who had grown up in the midst of high orthodoxy. In his
hymnbook, Rippon sought to introduce to his congregants, and the denomination in
general, this “new” teaching in an unthreatening manner. With the publication of his
*Selection*, Rippon did not undermine the traditional hymnody of the Particular Baptist
churches (namely, Watts): on the contrary, he actually reinforced it, but, at the same time,
he urged his congregation to reconsider high orthodoxy’s rejection of free-offers.

Along with the traditional doctrines of the Particular Baptist churches, Rippon
sought to impress on his readers that free-offers of the gospel were scripturally
commanded. Ken R. Manley writes:

> Few ordinary Baptists had read John Gill’s tedious tomes, but most of them sang
from Rippon’s book. This was a responsibility Rippon fully recognized and his
book promoted the orthodox but moderate Calvinism he espoused.\(^{57}\)

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\(^{56}\) In the first edition of the hymnbook, Rippon included a number of hymns for missionary and
association meetings and several invitational hymns. These hymns were evidently much-used, for in the
tenth edition (1800), Rippon added even more evangelical hymns. In a note from the tenth edition, Rippon
writes, “As the few Hymns in the former editions of this Volume, entitled *Scripture Invitations and
Promises* have been found peculiarly acceptable and encouraging, the Section is now considerably
enlarged” (John Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors*, 10\(^{th}\) ed. [[London]: 1800], 114, as

\(^{57}\) Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 85. Manley’s statement contrasts with John Fawcett, Jr., who in the
late 1760s observed that, “The possession of [Gill’s] elaborate performances was, in those days, considered
as almost an essential part of the library of not only ministers, but of private Christians of the Baptist
denomination, who could afford to purchase them” (John Fawcett Jr., *An Account of the Life, Ministry and
In this way, Rippon’s hymnbook became not only a devotional book, but also a theological reference book for the general public. Manley observes that, “Like any good hymnbook Rippon’s helped to define and interpret the Christian faith for its own generation.”

Fuller and the Bristol Academy had convinced many Particular Baptist ministers of the scriptural soundness of evangelicalism; Rippon, in turn, convinced the laity. The spread of Fullerism (and evangelicalism in general) in the English Particular Baptist churches, then, is directly linked to the acceptance of Rippon’s hymnbook throughout the denomination.

Conclusion

By the close of the eighteenth century, the dominant soteriological model of the Particular Baptist churches had changed. John Gill’s carefully constructed theological system could not accommodate the rising interest in missionary work, and consequently, his theological system was abandoned by the majority of Particular Baptist churches. In 1831, a “high” Particular Baptist minister from Liverpool wrote,

You will, I doubt not, agree with me when I say that a great change has taken place, during the last sixty years, in the principles maintained by the Particular

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58 Manley, Redeeming Love, 135.

59 Whitley, 308.

60 Robert W.O Oliver sums up this transitional period when he writes, “The death of Dr. Gill ended one of the most significant and far-reaching pastorates in English Particular Baptist history. It also marked the end of an era…Times were changing and although there were many devotees of Gill, it would not be easy to find a successor. John Gill was a representative of the Old Dissent that had developed out of Puritanism. It valued carefully prepared and structured sermons and placed great value on church order. The Evangelical Revival was changing accepted emphases and even the High Calvinists would be affected” (Oliver, “John Gill,” 48).
Baptist churches…What an alteration must have taken place amongst us, when there are now very few to be found who maintain the same glorious truths for which Dr. Gill was so able an advocate, and the few who do, are no longer cordially received into our pulpits or tolerated in our associations.\(^{61}\)

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, evangelical fervor replaced high orthodoxy as the dominant concern of the denomination.

Although uneducated himself, Fuller managed to articulate the rising dissatisfaction the younger generation of Particular Baptist ministers felt with high Calvinism. Fuller’s *Gospel Worthy* prompted many ministers of the denomination to reassess their thinking on evangelism in Enlightenment fashion. Particular Baptist ministers’ desire for more evangelical hymns, which was first whetted by the Bristol Collection, was realized more fully with the publication of Rippon’s *Selection*, and it was this latter collection that succeeded in transforming the evangelical mind of the Particular Baptist laity. It is against this rising tide of moderate Calvinism that William Gadsby set out to reestablish high orthodoxy among the peoples of Manchester.

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Chapter 4: Gadsby the Orthodox

William Gadsby began his pastorate in 1800 just as the “Modern Question” debate began to die down, but unlike many of his ministerial colleagues, he could not accept the logical implications of Fuller’s theology. As a youth, Gadsby yearned for understanding and consistent, rational thinking about God; he found a theological system that met his expectations in the writings of high Calvinistic thinkers. Early in his ministry, Gadsby set out to recover high orthodoxy in his congregation as well as in those in the surrounding towns and villages in the manufacturing districts. In order to reinforce this high orthodoxy, however, he needed to distance himself from the “evangelical” majority and re-establish a high Calvinistic identity in his own local congregation.

During his early struggles as a “Gillite” in a “Fullerite” denomination, Gadsby learned that congregational song both reflects and actively forms the theology of a congregation. His congregation needed a new hymnbook to teach them (and assist them) in resisting the claims of moderate Calvinism (and Arminianism). Realizing the difficulty of his task, Gadsby took his responsibility seriously, choosing the hymns and organizing them according to his own Enlightenment understanding of high Calvinistic

1 The assertion that Gadsby had any Enlightenment tendencies might seem strange considering his lack of formal education. Gadsby recalls that, “As for what the world calls learning I have but little of it. It was not in my parents’ power to put me to school to learn to write, much less to learn grammar; and though I was taught a little to read, yet, in those days of youth and folly, I in a great measure forgot it, so that, when I was called by divine grace, I was not able to read tolerably one chapter in the Bible” (William Gadsby, as quoted in J. Gadsby, Memoir, 10).
orthodoxy. This chapter focuses on Gadsby’s discovery of Enlightenment high Calvinism, his desire to recover orthodoxy, and the means through which he sought to achieve this transformation: his hymnbook.

**Gadsby and Enlightenment Calvinism**

Following his conversion in 1790, Gadsby began attending a Calvinistic Independent Church in Bedworth. Not long after his initial conversion experience, Gadsby became interested in the rigorous Calvinistic Enlightenment logic that he perceived in members of the Particular Baptist Church. In his *Memoir*, John Gadsby writes about his father’s early encounters with the Particular Baptists:

A Baptist Minister, named Aston, from Coventry, eight miles from Attleborough, used frequently at this time to visit for preaching...One morning, in 1793, Mr. Aston was at breakfast with a friend named Richard Taylor...when Mr. Gadsby called in. Mr. A. and he entered into conversation on baptism, &c., at the close of which, Mr. A. rose up, and suddenly taking Mr. G. by the shoulder said, ‘I should like to put you under the water immediately.’ Mr. G. exclaimed, ‘O, dear! you quite alarm me.’ The result of this conversation, however, was, that Mr. G. left the Independents and became connected with the Baptists, at Coventry.

On December 29, 1793, he joined the Cow Lane Particular Baptist Church at Coventry, and as his son attests, “he was very zealous and active in the cause of God and truth. If there was anything particular going on, he was sure to be there, and if there was any dispute about Arminianism and Calvinism, he was equally sure to be a leader.”

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4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 21-22.
During his time in the Coventry congregation, Gadsby became convinced of the theological tenets of high Calvinism, particularly the sovereignty of God in salvation and the total depravity of man. Following these convictions, Gadsby placed himself in the tradition of historical Particular Baptist orthodoxy, as taught by John Gill and John Brine. During this time, the assistant pastor at the Coventry chapel was an ardent high Calvinistic minister named James Aston. 

James Aston’s relationship to Gadsby was most likely pivotal to Gadsby’s developing theological positions: it was Aston who convinced Gadsby of the Scriptural truth of baptism by immersion; he then baptized Gadsby and later examined him at his ordination. Considering Aston’s position of influence in the Coventry church, the strength of his convictions, and his oversight of Gadsby’s ordination on July 30, 1800, it is likely that Gadsby aligned himself with the high orthodoxy of Gill and Brine while he was under Aston’s ministerial care.

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6 Like Gill and Brine before him, Aston rejected free offers of the gospel. Aston acted as a spiritual mentor to Gadsby during this formative period of his faith, often stepping in for the senior pastor, Mr. Butterworth, whose health was declining in his old age (J. Gadsby, Memoir, 19-20). Gadsby left the chapel at Coventry in 1795 in order to pursue a new trade (and to be closer to his new sweetheart, Elizabeth Marvin), but he proved his loyalty to Aston’s ideals when he aligned himself with the chapel that Aston had recently opened in Hinckley (ibid., 22-23).

7 In addition to these “official” relations, the two men were on friendly terms: Gadsby sought out Aston the night before his ordination, most likely for advice in order to prepare for the rigors of the ordination process. See J. Gadsby, Memoir, 19-21, 28-29; Ramsbottom, Gadsby, 46-47. See also Betteridge, 112-113.

8 Although Aston was a high Calvinistic Baptist, the majority of the congregation, as well as the senior pastor, John Butterworth, were not. See also Dix, Strict and Particular, 42. Aston’s theological opinions were apparently too “high” for the congregation at Coventry. During a time when moderate Calvinism was gaining ground in the Midland Association of Particular Baptist Churches, Aston’s high Calvinism was not welcomed. In 1796, after only two years of preaching at Coventry, Aston left to go to Chester. The 1796 minute book of the Chapel at Cow Lane, Coventry, notes, “This day Mr. Aston left Coventry to set up his standard at Chester after having brought us into a state of anarchy, confusion, strife and enmity, and making such a wound in the church which none but God can heal” (quoted in Betteridge, 113).
Recovering High Orthodoxy

Gadsby was convinced of the high Calvinistic non-offer approach to evangelism from at least as early as early as 1803. The magnitude of the “Modern Question” controversy during Gadsby’s early ministry, as well as the increasing popularity of Fuller’s view, is immediately apparent in Gadsby’s account of his first visit to Manchester in 1803. Gadsby writes,

I met the deacon, who took me to his house, and asked me what I would have for supper. I asked for some gruel, intending to be off to bed as soon as I could. But just as I sat down to eat, he said, ‘Pray, Sir, are you a Fullerite, or a high Calvinist?’ Now this was seasoning to my gruel I had tried to escape, but you see I had it with my first spoonful. I tried to evade an answer at first….He seemed to think, certainly, that I did not understand the question, but he was determined I should. He said, ‘You know there is a division amongst the Baptists—don’t you?’ ‘A division!’ I said, affecting surprise. ‘Don’t you know,’ he resumed, ‘that there are some Baptists here that they call Fullerites, and some that are not?’…‘Well,’ I said, ‘I am not a Fullerite.’ The result was better than I expected, for he seemed pleased with my answer; for he said he was afraid I was.9

Gadsby’s initial reticence to state his anti-Fuller opinions, as well as his surprise in discovering the deacon’s similar views, is indicative of the changing sentiments of many Particular Baptists ministers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Shortly before his move to Manchester in 1805, Gadsby published The Gospel, the Believer’s Rule of Conduct, in which he disputed Fuller’s teaching that Christians are obligated to abide by the Ten Commandments. More important for this study is Gadsby’s public criticism of Fuller’s free-offer theology.10 Gadsby argued that faith is a

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9 J. Gadsby, Memoir, 33-34, 46.

10 Gadsby’s pamphlet was written in response to a letter written by Andrew Fuller (under the penname “Gaius”) entitled “The Moral Law the Rule of Conduct to Believers.” See W. Gadsby, “The Gospel, the Believer’s Rule of Conduct; Being a Few Remarks upon a Letter Written by Gaius, etc.” (c.1805); reprint, in Works, vol. 1, 1-42; Andrew Fuller, “The Moral Law as a Rule of Conduct to
gift of God to the elect, not a duty of the unregenerate as Fuller had maintained in *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*.\(^{11}\) This was a bold move for the young Gadsby, particularly in light of Fuller’s popularity at the time. The extent to which Fuller’s duty-faith teachings dominated the Particular Baptist churches is evident in comments from Gadsby’s son, John. Concerning the publication of Gadsby’s *The Gospel, the Believer’s Rule of Conduct*, John writes:

> It must be noticed that there was a great opposition raised against him by certain influential persons in the Church, he having written against Mr. Fuller...[he] gave great offense to some that could not endure sound doctrine. They began to fight against him, and did all they could to prevent his settling at Manchester.\(^{12}\)

Despite the opposition, Gadsby moved to Manchester in the fall of 1805, determined to root out the Arminianism he felt had crept into the Particular Baptist churches through the teaching of Fuller.\(^{13}\)

For Gadsby, recovering high orthodoxy was not an issue of tradition; it concerned defending the glory of God and admitting the inability of man to save himself. Gadsby writes boldly that “this legalizing gospel [of Fuller], and making all the blessings of the new covenant into legal duties incumbent upon the unconverted, is the method Satan has

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\(^{11}\) Gadsby considered Fuller’s duty-faith teaching, as well as his view on the Law, to be “legalizing” for both believers and non-believers. Gadsby writes, “But next he [Fuller] observes, ‘That instead of believers being freed from obligation to obey [the Moral Law], they are under greater obligation than any men in the world to do so.’ If this be true, then let Gaius talk as fast as he will, in his other works, about what it is the dead sinner’s duty to do, he ventures to assert in this that it is not his duty to do anything...This sentiment makes it all of works at last, and the sinner goes to heaven for doing his duty...” (W. Gadsby, “The Gospel, the Believer’s Rule,” in *Works*, vol. 1, 24-25).

\(^{12}\) J. Gadsby, *Memoir*, 50.

\(^{13}\) Ramsbottom, *Gadsby*, 66.
of late taken to pour contempt upon Jesus Christ and the work of the Spirit.”14 The logic of Enlightenment thinking prevented Gadsby from “offering” Christ to the congregation (or to anyone for that matter) because, like Gill and Brine, he believed that Christ died only for the elect, not for everyone. Indiscriminate gospel invitations, in his opinion, were not biblically sound because faith in Christ was not the duty of all men. Rather than revealing the loving character of God, free offers actually denied God’s power and care for his people. In Enlightenment fashion, Gadsby argues this point by following Fuller’s argument to its logical conclusion, which results in a contradiction of God’s revealed character as the omnipotent God. In a sermon fragment, dated 1816, Gadsby writes:

About sixteen years ago, I heard a young man from Hoxton (Association Baptist) Academy make the following remarks: ‘I now offer you Christ, and Christ stands with open arms ready to receive you. Yea, he begs, and prays, and beseeches you all to come unto him and have life; and yet some of you will not come. Nay it is as if God the Father came and fell upon his knees before you, begging and beseeching you to receive Christ, and come and be reconciled to him; and yet you will not come.’15

Gadsby continues his sermon by explaining that he would have expected these kinds of sentiments from an Arminian; to Gadsby’s dismay, however, the young man from Hoxton was professedly Calvinistic.

Free-offer gospel invitations, Gadsby explains, are insulting to man and, more importantly, to God. This line of thinking reduces God to an impotent onlooker in the matter of salvation: “It represents both Christ and God the Father as poor disappointed


beings,” Gadsby writes, “quite unable to subdue the heart of a poor dying worm.” Open invitations are also insulting to the faith of believers:

And what encouragement can there be in such a gospel as this for any poor, broken-hearted, helpless, self-despairing sinner in the world to trust in the Lord for salvation? Who dare trust the concerns of eternity in the hands of a being who cannot obtain a favour which he desires and seeks in earnest supplication upon his knees? But, thanks be to God, we have not so learned Christ.\textsuperscript{16}

In one of his later sermons, Gadsby further explains that Fuller’s teaching does not take into account the Calvinistic doctrine often referred to as “total depravity.” This doctrine states that every facet of mankind (mind, heart, strength, etc.) is tainted with sin as a result of the Fall; consequently, individuals are unable to love God unless God initiates regeneration in the soul. The unconverted are actually \textit{dead} because of sin, and thus unable to do \textit{anything} concerning salvation.\textsuperscript{17} Gadsby asserts:

I have long since come to a point about what some people call ‘the duty of all men to believe,’ and I say it is a doctrine of devils and calculated to harass and sink the child of God into feelings of hopeless despair…And when at any time you are told to ‘believe,’ and it is your ‘duty to believe,’ and that ‘Jesus Christ died for sinners, and as all mankind are sinners, so they may all believe in him, be saved, and become completely happy, if they like;’ I say, all such statements are a lie…\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} W. Gadsby, \textit{Sermons}, 406.

\textsuperscript{17} In “A Christmas Box for Children,” Gadsby explains this doctrine in a way that is understandable even to a child. In the first dialogue, Gadsby writes of a mother trying to communicate to her child that every facet of the human character is sinful: “You are a guilty sinner, and need a pardon for your sins; you are an unholy sinner, and need purity of heart; you are an unrighteous sinner, and need a righteousness to justify you before God; you are an ignorant, foolish sinner, and need divine wisdom; you are a proud, self-righteous sinner, and need true meekness and humility before the Lord; you are a hard-hearted and unbelieving sinner, and need repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ; you are a filthy sinner, and need washing in the fountain that is opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, sin and uncleanness. In a word, you need every thing that can render you truly righteous, holy, and happy; and without these things, you must be miserable for ever” (W. Gadsby, “A Christmas Box for Children,” in \textit{Works}, vol. 2, 82-83).

\textsuperscript{18} This sermon is recorded as being delivered at Zoar Chapel in London, on May 25, 1843 (about seven months before Gadsby’s death). See W. Gadsby, “The Church Remembered in Her Low Estate,” in \textit{Sermons}, 141.
Men cannot come to God on their own, Gadsby reasoned, so calls for faith were cruel and misleading. Gadsby considered appeals to “the duty of all men to believe” to be a veiled form of “legality” and “works righteousness,” which he associated with Arminianism and its Calvinistic counterpart: Fullerism.\(^{19}\) Salvation, Gadsby reasoned, is a gift of God through faith, not a duty that man renders to God.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Andrew Fuller and the thinkers of the Baptist Evangelical Revival were as much indebted to the Enlightenment as Gill, Brine, and Gadsby were. From Gadsby’s perspective, however, Fuller’s Enlightenment reasoning depended too much on man’s ability to understand his need for God; Fuller was, in Gadsby’s opinion, too optimistic. Fuller’s teachings seemed to him to be equivocations rather than the plain truths of the Bible. In 1831, William Rushton, Jr. (1796-1838), a high Calvinistic Baptist minister in Liverpool, expressed a similar sentiment:

> We have amongst us a number of rational polite ministers; men whose minds are too enlightened, too liberal, to insist much on the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel…\(^{20}\)

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\(^{19}\) In a sermon entitled, “The Soul’s Death unto Sin,” preached on the evening of May 25, 1841 at the Gower Street Chapel in London, Gadsby describes what he means by “legality” in reference to duty-faith evangelicalism. He explains, “Perhaps the poor soul, when brought to this point [the knowledge of total depravity], may be under the painful situation of listening to legalizing preachers; and they will tell him he must repent and believe and love God and do his duty and be decidedly pious, and then God will love him. And very often they will stretch forth their hands, and apparently their heart, wonderfully, and say, ‘Come now, repent now; believe now; now is the time; if you do not embrace this opportunity, perhaps you will never have another; now is the time; it is now or never.’ And the poor creature, raised up with a kind of zeal to imagine that he will try to do his best, is struck dead again; and if he is to be damned that moment, he can neither repent, nor believe, nor do anything that they set him to do. He finds his heart hard as a flint and his mind in such a confused way that he can neither repent or believe, nor have tenderness of conscience, nor love of God. And thus he becomes dead to all help or hope in self, grounded upon these legal efforts and these legal exhortations” (Gadsby, “The Soul’s Death unto Sin,” in Sermons, 67).

\(^{20}\) Rushton, 19.
In his *Memoir*, John Gadsby comments that “Mr. G. always considered, and often stated publicly, that Andrew Fuller was the greatest enemy the church of God ever had, as his sentiments were so much cloaked with the sheep’s clothing.”

Regarding Fuller’s teachings, Rushton agrees with Gadsby:

> There is an uncommon degree of subtlety in his statements, attended with much speciousness: palpable inconsistencies are hid with great ingenuity, and the difference between him and his opponents is so artfully lessened, that it appears to many readers to be of little importance. He evidently wishes not to be considered an opponent of particular redemption; yet he neither agrees with Particular Baptists on the one side, nor asserts boldly, with the General Baptists, that Christ died equally for every man; but he maintains a kind of metaphysical medium which is as far removed from the simplicity that is in Christ, as it is from the gospel which is hid from the wise and prudent.

Like Brine and Gill before him, Gadsby (and other high Calvinistic ministers of the period) considered Fuller’s duty-faith doctrine to contradict the nature of God and the nature of man as revealed in the Bible. The only truly biblical (and rational) conclusion, then, was to reject Fuller’s teaching, along with the free-offer evangelism of the Revival, and uphold the high orthodoxy of the previous generation.

**Constructing an ‘Orthodox’ Hymnbook**

Gadsby firmly believed that it was *not* the duty of all men to believe; his *Selection*, however, demonstrates that he did believe that it was the duty of all mankind to sing to God. Due to the universality of this duty, Gadsby considered song to be a powerful vehicle for teaching both believers and non-believers the truths of God. The hymnbook used by Gadsby’s congregation, therefore, needed to be considered carefully.

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22 Rushton, 19-20.
In his sermons, Gadsby often expressed his ardent desire to preserve high Calvinistic orthodoxy, but prior to the publication of his hymnbook, the worship practices of his church in Manchester were indistinguishable from the “lower” Particular Baptist churches. This hymn tradition, which rested on the works of Watts and Rippon, continually undermined Gadsby’s fight against moderate Calvinism. A minister might teach right doctrine from the pulpit, but the theology of a hymnbook had much more “staying power” due to its materiality, musicality (therefore aiding memory), and its daily use in the lives of congregants. A hymnbook was vital for public as well as personal worship, but because many of the members in the Manchester congregation were extremely poor, a hymnbook might have been the only book that a person ever owned.23 Acquainted with poverty himself, Gadsby understood this economic reality.24

Gadsby’s concern for the doctrinal orthodoxy of a hymnbook is immediately perceptible in the first edition preface of his Selection. In this preface he states that he published the hymnbook because he desired “to have a selection of hymns in one book, free from Arminianism and sound in the faith, that the Church might be edified, and God glorified.”25 None of the collections available to Gadsby satisfied these requirements. By

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23 See Shaw, *High Calvinists*, 111-152. In his study of Victorian cities, Asa Briggs notes that “cotton made modern Manchester…squalor was the by-product, thought to be a necessary by-product, of increasing wealth.” Briggs recounts that a visitor to Manchester at the beginning of the twentieth century wrote, “The town is abominably filthy, the steam engine is pestiferous, the dyehouses noisome and offensive, and the water of the river black as ink or the Stygian Lake” (Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* [New York: Harper and Row, 1965], 85-86).

24 Gadsby was trained as a ribbon and stocking weaver. As a minister his wages were not much higher. His son notes that he often went “begging” to sister churches (J. Gadsby, *Memoirs*, 30, 46, 50). See also Ramsbottom, *Gadsby*, 17, 36.

1814, Gadsby’s desire to provide his congregation with a single, well-ordered, doctrinally orthodox hymnbook had become too strong for him to ignore. The only solution, then, was to compile a completely new hymnbook. Compiling a new hymnbook would make an intentional break with the eighteenth-century worship traditions of the Particular Baptist churches, but the passion of Gadsby’s high Calvinism prevented him from shirking his responsibility to recover Particular Baptist orthodoxy.\(^\text{26}\) With the encouragement of like-minded high Calvinistic ministers, Gadsby set out to collect suitable hymns for his own Selection.\(^\text{27}\)

In his search for a suitable congregational songbook, Gadsby had several options to consider: 1) he might adopt the singing practices of other high Calvinistic churches past and present; 2) he could continue using Watts’s *Hymns and Psalms*, Rippon’s *Selection*, or even the Bristol Collection, following the moderate tendencies of his denomination; or 3) he could venture out on his own and compile a new selection, borrowing, revising, and composing new hymns as he went.\(^\text{28}\) Gadsby eventually chose

\(^{26}\) Concerning Gadsby’s sense of responsibility in leading his community, a reviewer for *The Christian Ambassador* notes, “We desire to refer now to the truly apostolic labours of this singular man [Gadsby]. Whatever may be the practical effect of high Calvinian notions in other respects, they do not, it would seem, foster an indolent spirit. Some of the hardest workers in the Mission field were men who held the ‘five points’ in their right hand. Indeed when [a] man has got through the clouds of doubt and anxiety which ‘particular redemption’ naturally enough creates, into the belief and persuasion that Christ loved him and gave himself for him, and then comes to regard himself as one of the few who were chosen before the foundation of the world, the natural consequence of this conviction is, that it leads its possessor to labour for God with the greatest ardour and to suffer with the greatest patience” (C.C. M’Kechnie, ed., *The Christian Ambassador*, *A Quarterly Review* [May 1866], quoted in John Gadsby, ed., *The Christian’s Monthly News, And British Protestant* 1, no. 2 [August 1866]: 5, Google eBook). For further instances of Gadsby’s activism, see Shaw, *High Calvinists*, 111-152.

\(^{27}\) W. Gadsby, *Selection* (1814), iv.

\(^{28}\) Watts’s *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) and his *Psalms of David* (1719) were often published together during the eighteenth and nineteen centuries, and commonly known as *Watts’s Psalms and Hymns*. See Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 86-87.
the latter option, but his reasons for rejecting the other collections of his time are instructive.

Gadsby might have returned to the singing practices of Gill’s Carter Lane church, which most likely included the use of Keach’s hymns, Richard Davis’s hymnbook, and John Patrick’s or William Barton’s Psalter.29 The sole use of these collections, however, would have felt quite restrictive for Gadsby. A poet himself, Gadsby valued the truth and power of a hymn (he frequently quoted the hymns of Hart, Berridge, and other late eighteenth-century hymn-writers in his sermons). Considering his love for the hymnody of the latter eighteenth century, a period that has been called the “Golden Age” of Baptist hymnody, it is understandable that Gadsby sought to broaden the hymn repertoire of his congregation beyond Gill’s model.30

Rippon’s Selection and Watts’s works had succeeded in establishing the theology of moderate Calvinism for most of the Particular Baptist churches of the early nineteenth century. Gadsby admired many of the works included in these collections; revisions to the texts, however, were necessary to uphold his high orthodox standards. He notes that,

29 See Keach, Spiritual Melody; Richard Davis, Hymns Composed on Several Subjects, And on Divers Occasions: In Five Parts, with a forward by John Gill, 7th ed. (London: J. Ward, 1748), Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (Gale Document Number CW3318615965); William Barton, The Book of Psalms in metre close and proper to the Hebrew: smooth and pleasant for the metre: Plain and easie for the Tunes. With musical Notes, Arguments, Annotations, and Index. Fitted for the ready use, and understanding of all good Christians (London: Matthew Simmons, 1644), Early English Books Online (Wing B2401); John Patrick, Preface to A Century of Select Psalms, and Portions of the Psalms of David, Especially those of praise. Turned into Meter, and fitted to the usual Tunes in Parish Churches. For the use of the Charter-House, London (London: J.M., 1679), iii-iv, Google eBook.

30 For a detailed study of this “Golden Age” of Baptist Hymnody, see Young, 73-90.
The church and people over which the Holy Ghost has made me overseer, had been in the constant habit, ever since I came among them, of using Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, Rippon’s Selection, and Hart’s Composition.31

Gadsby was dissatisfied with Watts’s collections and Rippon’s Selection because “though some of these hymns are big with the important truths of God, there are others, especially among Dr. Watts’s and Rippon’s, which give as legal a sound as if they had been forged at a certain foundry.”32 From Gadsby’s perspective, many of the songs in Rippon’s hymnbook, and even some compositions in Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, taught the softening doctrines of moderate Calvinism rather than the orthodoxy of high Calvinism. Gadsby’s mention of a foundry is a direct reference to John Wesley’s chapel in London, which was often called the Foundry.33 By linking Watts and Rippon (the chosen hymn collections of most of the Particular Baptist churches), to John Wesley (one of the most outspoken Arminian preachers of the Evangelical Revival), Gadsby was, in effect, denouncing the Arminian leanings of Watts, Rippon, and the majority of Particular Baptist congregations around the country. In order to understand Gadsby’s concerns regarding the moderate Calvinism of Rippon and Watts, a closer look at their perceived “Arminianism,” in contrast to Gadsby’s high Calvinism, is in order.

The Arminianism of Watts and Rippon

As discussed in the previous chapter, the hymns of Isaac Watts had been popular with the Particular Baptist churches since their publication in the early eighteenth

31 W. Gadsby, Selection, iii.
32 Ibid., iii-iv.
33 Ramsbottom, Gadsby, 105; Benson, 147.
One reason for this popularity was the orthodox teaching expressed in many of Watts’s verses. Watts’s “orthodoxy,” however, was not of a “high” order. Despite his Calvinism, Watts was an adamant supporter of “free-offer” evangelism. Watts’s moderate Calvinism was a subject of debate among the Particular Baptists of the mid-eighteenth century. Brine, in particular, faulted Watts for being too sympathetic to the Arminian tendencies of the Evangelical Revival. Gill refused to argue against Watts’s view directly, maintaining that universal offers of grace do not exist:

Let the patrons of universal offers defend themselves from this objection; I have nothing to do with it; till it is proved that there are such universal offers, then Dr. Watts’s reasoning on that head will require some attention; but not till then.

Additionally, Gill considered Watts to be “unorthodox” on several important issues: Watts adhered to the Sabellian “heresy” and he rejected the eternal generation of

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35 Ken R. Manley explains, “Baptists found the hymns of Watts eminently suitable: they were doctrinally orthodox, objective in tone, rich in emotion but free from frivolities. The grace of God, the person of Christ and his redemptive action were central themes of his hymns. One result of Watts’s ascendancy was a bias toward ‘homiletical hymnody’ among the Baptists: many of his hymns were either Scripture paraphrases, or freely employed scriptural imagery” (See Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 86).

36 See Ch. 2 for a discussion of Watts’s free-offer theology.

37 See Ch. 2 for details on Watts’s *Ruin and Recovery*. In his biography of Watts, Thomas Milner writes, “in [Brine’s] apprehension, therefore, the divines of Dr. Watts’s class were radically unsound; the iraddresses to sinners were so many attempts to break in upon the unity of the divine plan, their dialect was Arminian, their doctrine was rebellion against God’s decrees” (Thomas Milner, *The Life, Times, and Correspondence of the Rev. Isaac Watts, Part 4* [London: Thomas Richardson, 1845], 619, Google eBook).

Jesus as the Son of God; thus, Gill deemed Watts a “non-Trinitarian.” Gill’s and Brine’s assessment of Watts’s theology as unorthodox surely influenced Gadsby’s own opinion of Watts’s works. Despite these orthodox objections to Watts’s theology, by the late eighteenth century, the warmth, imagery, and biblicism of Watts’s hymns had won over the majority of the Particular Baptist churches (as it had for the whole of the English-speaking dissenting churches). As the high orthodoxy of the Particular Baptists waned, Watts’s moderate Calvinism promoted, rather than hindered, the evangelical revolution of the Baptists.

Gadsby appreciated the soundness of Watts’s hymns—of the five hundred thirteen hymns from various authors in the Original Selection, one hundred nineteen of these are by Watts—but he could not dismiss the Arminian overtones of some of his hymns. Gadsby’s core objections appertain to Watts’s word choices, such as “law,” “obey,” and “duty,” because of the Arminian teachings that were commonly associated with these words. From Gadsby’s perspective, much of Watts’s language was not sufficiently distinct from Arminianism. Watts often encouraged worshippers to “obey the call,” and he described the duties of the Christian as being revealed in the Law (the Ten

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39 Sabellius was a third century theologian who taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were three modes or aspects of God, not three distinct persons, thus he is often called a “non-Trinitarian.” Gill writes, “There is indeed a third person of great fame among us, Dr. Isaac Watts, who has expressed his dissatisfaction with the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son of God, but then he is not to be reckoned a Trinitarian, being so manifestly in the Sabellian scheme” (Gill, “A Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ,” in Sermons and Tracts, vol. 2, 563).

40 Nearly a quarter of all the hymns in Gadsby’s Original Selection are by Watts (this percentage excludes all of Part 2, which consists entirely of Gadsby’s hymns).

41 Louis F. Benson writes that “while the Unitarians were renouncing Watts’ Psalms and Hymns as ‘Trinitarian and Calvinistic,’ the high Calvinistic Baptists were turning from them as not sufficiently differentiated from Arminianism” (Benson, 146).
Commandments). Like Gill and Brine, Gadsby denied that Christ made universal calls for faith. It is no accident, therefore, that Gadsby excludes all of Watts’s hymns that refer to obeying “the call” of Christ.\footnote{Gadsby excludes Watts’s “How honourable is the place” (Hymn A8), “There is a house not made with hands” (Hymn A110), “With holy fear and humble song” (Hymn B44), and “Raise your triumphant songs” (Hymn B104), all of which contain exhortations to obey Christ’s call (See Watts, Hymns [1707]).} Furthermore, the “duties” of a Christian, Gadsby maintained, were not revealed in the Law, but in the gospel. Several of Watts’s hymns discuss the necessity of obedience to the Law in addition to faith, but Gadsby omits these hymns from his collection as well.\footnote{Verse 9 of Watts’s “In vain we lavish out our lives” (Hymn A9) discusses the Christian’s duty to the Law: “There shall his secret Spirit dwell,/And deep engrave his law,/And ev’ry motion of our souls/To swift obedience draw” (Watts, Hymns [1707], 12). Gadsby’s aversion to this “legality” will be discussed in the following chapters.}

One of the clearest examples of Gadsby’s objections to Watts’s Arminian leanings may be observed in his revision of “Rise, rise my soul and leave the ground.” This hymn appears in Gadsby’s Selection as the second hymn in the collection, and thus, it is a bold declaration of Gadsby’s high Calvinistic sentiments. Gadsby abhorred exhortations to “be saved,” which were often heard in the sermons of evangelical preachers, because he believed that man’s works had no part in salvation. Watts’s urging to raise up the soul must have sounded dangerously close to Arminianism. Gadsby felt that individuals were unable to raise up their own souls, and that such teaching would only lead to despair. Gadsby, therefore, rewrote the first stanza of this hymn to emphasize God’s work in the heart of a sinner, rather than man’s work (Ex. 4.1):
Ex. 4.1 Comparison of Watts’s original text “Rise, rise my soul” to Gadsby’s altered text.⁴⁴

Watts’s original text
Rise, rise my soul above the ground,
Stretch all thy thoughts abroad,
And rouse up ev’ry tuneful sound,
To praise th’eternal God.

Gadsby’s altered text
Lord, raise my soul above the ground,
And draw my thoughts to thee;
Teach me, with sweet and solemn sound,
To praise the eternal Three.

Gadsby changed Watts’s self-imperative to a humble supplication to the Lord. In Watts’s original text, the individual is active in his/her own spiritual awakening; Gadsby revises the text so the individual is essentially passive. Gadsby considered even the initial plea to be a passive act because the sinner can only beseech the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ Gadsby’s sensitivity to “legalism” and determination to preserve high orthodoxy prevented him from whole-heartedly embracing the theological connotations of this particular hymn.

With the publication of his own collection, Gadsby was distancing himself from Watts’s collection, and more importantly, from Rippon’s Selection. As discussed in the previous chapter, both of these collections were sympathetic to Fuller’s free-offer evangelicalism, but Rippon’s Selection had gained prominence as the compilation hymnbook for Particular Baptist worship. Gadsby’s fervor in preaching against

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⁴⁴ Watts, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 149; W. Gadsby, Selection (1814), 2.

⁴⁵ Gadsby emphasized that it is God who initiates salvation in “A Christmas Box for Children,” which consists of three dialogues between a parent and a child. In the first of these dialogues, a mother explains that, “when a poor sinner is quickened by the Holy Ghost, he begins to feel his guilt, ruin, and misery, and to cry to God for mercy…Be assured of this, that unless the Lord teach you what a poor, needy creature you are, and give you repentance towards God, even repentance unto life, and faith in Jesus Christ, your portion must be to dwell in everlasting burnings” (W. Gadsby, Works, vol. 2, 82-83).
Arminianism and Fullerism led him to amend (or exclude) many hymns of the hymns in Rippon’s *Selection*. Gadsby’s revision of Charles Wesley’s hymn “Blow ye the trumpet” demonstrates Gadsby’s sensitivity to free-offer teachings. As discussed above, Ash and Evans augmented the free evangelism of the hymn; Rippon, on the other hand, chose to include Toplady’s revised version of the hymn. Gadsby follows Toplady’s Calvinistic approach to Wesley’s text, but he adjusts the text even further (Ex. 4.2):

<table>
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<th>Toplady’s alteration:</th>
<th>Gadsby’s alteration:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Blow ye the Trumpet, blow The gladly solemn Sound, Let all the Nations know To Earth’s remotest Bound. The Year of Jubilee is come; Return, ye ransom’d Sinners, home!</td>
<td>1) Blow ye the trumpet, blow The gladly-solemn sound! Let all the nations know, To earth’s remotest bound, The year of Jubilee is come: Return, ye ransom’d sinners home!</td>
<td>1) Blow ye the trumpet, blow The gladly-solemn sound! Let poor-insolvents know, To earth’s remotest bound, The year of Jubilee is come: Return, ye ransom’d sinners home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Extol the LAMB of GOD, The all-atoning Lamb! Redemption in his Blood Throughout the World proclaim: The Year of Jubilee, etc</td>
<td>2) Extol the Lamb of God, The sin-atoning LAMB; Redemption by his Blood Through all the lands proclaim: The year of Jubilee, etc.</td>
<td>2) Exalt the Lamb of God, The sin-atoning Lamb; Redemption by his blood To burdened souls proclaim: The year of Jubilee, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ex. 4.2 Wesley’s “Blow ye the trumpet” as altered by Toplady and Gadsby.

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46 Despite Gadsby’s abhorrence of Wesley’s Arminianism, his son attests to Gadsby’s high regard for Wesley’s hymns. John Gadsby writes, “Mr. G had ‘charity’ for all men, though none for erroneous doctrines. He believed firmly that there were many sincere Christians amongst the Wesleyans, who were held in bondage by their class-leaders, yet who nevertheless died rejoicing in Jesus Christ, though they had, perhaps, never in their lives heard a word about the ‘five points.’…And as to the founder of Wesleyanism, we more than once heard Mr. Gadsby say, after quoting that beautiful hymn, ‘Jesus thy blood and righteousness,’ …that if John Wesley really felt that, he was as safe in heaven as Paul was” (J. Gadsby, ed., “Review of The ‘Christian Ambassador;’ May 1866,” 5).

47 Toplady changed “all-atoning” to “sin-atoning” Lamb.

48 J. Wesley, *Hymns for New-Year’s-Day*, 6-7; Toplady, *Psalms and hymns*, 292-293; W. Gadsby, *Selection*, Hymn 59. In the 1814 edition of the hymnbook, Gadsby gives the source as “Toplady’s Selection.” The change from “extol” to “exalt” seems to have been introduced by John Rippon in his *Selection* (1787).
This particular hymn serves to highlight the “highness” of Gadsby’s Calvinism as well as his dissatisfaction with Rippon’s Selection. Toplady adjusted the text to reflect the Calvinistic teaching of limited atonement, but despite Toplady’s passionate arguments with John Wesley, Gadsby apparently felt that Toplady had not gone far enough in his editorial changes to Wesley’s text. Toplady’s version clearly encouraged free-offer evangelism to “all nations” and “all the lands,” while still maintaining limited atonement.49

Gadsby, on the other hand, agreed with Brine and Gill that the gospel is provided for God’s people, not offered. High Calvinistic ministers reasoned that evidence of the gospel declaration in a sinner’s life was a deep, desperate conviction of sin. By including the text above (Ex. 4.2) in his Selection, Gadsby affirmed that the gospel has been declared to men by God, and that it must be proclaimed by the ministers of God. If the gospel is declared (not offered) by God, as Gadsby reasoned, then to whom has it been declared? The text above answers this question: the gospel has been declared by God to those who feel the need for salvation, that is, “poor” and “burdened souls.” Gadsby’s meticulous rationalism prevented him from cajoling people with phrases such as “Christ died for you,” but this same rationalism did not prevent his identifying to whom the gospel message was sent.50 Gadsby believed that his task, then, was not to preach

49 The moderate form of Calvinism expressed in Toplady’s version is undoubtedly one of the reasons this version was readily accepted by Rippon.

50 Gadsby’s development of this type of evangelism, which I shall call “experimental” evangelism (in contrast to the “invitational” evangelism of the Evangelical Revival) is the subject of a subsequent chapter.
salvation for all, like the moderate Calvinistic ministers of his day, but to trace out the Holy Spirit’s work in the heart of a “poor, burdened soul.”

Gadsby’s reliance on Stevens’s *New Selection*

Gadsby was not the only high Calvinistic minister of his time to “cut and paste” the hymns of Watts and Rippon due to theological differences. In 1809, John Stevens (1776-1847), a Particular Baptist minister in Boston, Lincolnshire, and later London, compiled his own collection of hymns. In the preface to his hymnbook, Stevens declares his own intentions to break with the traditions of Particular Baptist hymnody:

If we believe the holy doctrines of distinguishing absolute grace, our hymns in worship ought not to be crouded [sic] with ideas, utterly repugnant to those wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. To me, it appears that, many of the hymns in common use, are better adapted to the sentiments of Arminians, and Baxterians; than to the doctrines of sovereign distinguishing grace. And why should a people who do really love those doctrines of the Holy Spirit of Christ, be set to sing things opposite, as though they had entirely forgotten their principles!

Stevens included hymns from a variety of sources (including Watts and Rippon, as well as his own verses), and they are strongly Calvinistic in tone. Stevens’s *A New Selection of Hymns* was evidently popular among the high Calvinistic believers in England: by 1812 it had already gone through two editions.

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51 Dix adds, “The question was not, ‘should the gospel be preached to sinners?’, but ‘how was it to be preached?’ Was exhorting sinners to repent and believe, consistent with the Calvinist doctrine of total inability [total depravity], which affirmed that man is unable to repent and believe apart from the working of the Spirit of God? High-Calvinists believed all such exhortations were wrong, because they implied an ability in the sinner to respond…The ministers and others taking the [other] side of the question [that is, moderate Calvinists] believed the gospel should be freely preached to all” (Dix, *Strict and Particular*, 32).

52 John Stevens, *A New Selection of Hymns, Including also Several Original Hymns, Never before offered to the Public* (Boston, UK: J. Hellaby, [1816]), iv.

53 Julian, 1093.
Gadsby might have considered using Stevens’s hymnbook at his church in Manchester, but despite the high Calvinistic sentiments of the hymns, Stevens and Gadsby did not agree on every theological point. The first discrepancy between their respective beliefs concerned the place of the Law in a Christian’s life. Due to Gadsby’s rejection of the Ten Commandments as binding for a Christian, Stevens considered him to be a doctrinal “antinomian” (i.e., one who rejects God’s law). Gadsby and Stevens engaged in a pamphlet war on this subject between 1809 and 1811. The second main difference in their theologies involved the role of knowledge in salvation. Stevens emphasized the importance of mental assent of the truth, and later he affirmed Sandemanian teachings. Robert Sandeman’s teachings were in stark contrast to Gadsby’s belief in the necessity of “experiencing” Christ. These disparities, as well as the theological common ground between Gadsby and Stevens, are evident in a comparison of their respective hymnbooks.


57 Gadsby and Stevens disagreed on another crucial theological point that is seen less clearly in their hymnbooks. Stevens was an outspoken proponent of a doctrine known as pre-existarianism, which Gadsby considered heresy. Pre-existarianism is a doctrine that states that Christ’s human soul existed
The organization of Gadsby’s collection suggests that Gadsby may have relied on Stevens’s collection for more than just repertory. In his *New Selection*, Stevens informs his audience that the hymns are “distinctly arranged, under different heads of doctrine, experience, and worship.”

Gadsby’s hymnbook closely follows the pattern established by Stevens. This close relationship is apparent through a comparison of Stevens’s headings and Gadsby’s Table of Contents (Table 4.1).

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Before the foundation of the world. John Gill and Andrew Fuller rejected this teaching because it tended to depreciate Christ’s divinity. Stevens accepted this teaching into his own theology sometime between 1808-1811. Dix, *Strict and Particular*, 174-175.

58 Stevens, *New Selection*, vi.
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<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Comparison of organizational schemes of Stevens’s and Gadsby’s hymnbooks (differences are italicized).  

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The differences between Gadsby’s and Stevens’s organizational schemes are minimal: on several theological points, however, Gadsby took pains to distinguish his collection from Stevens.’s. The theological differences discussed above are apparent in Gadsby’s additions and omissions to the hymn collection. Stevens includes headings of “knowledge” and “liberty,” which Gadsby does not. Gadsby’s omission of these hymns is understandable considering his ardent fight against the theories of Sandemanian theology. In fact, Gadsby does not include any of the hymns listed under Stevens’s heading of “knowledge.” Gadsby also avoids listing “Liberty” as a fruit of the Spirit, and instead, he chooses to include the headings “Fear” and “Zeal.” Gadsby undoubtedly affirmed Christian “liberty,” but this particular word was often used by Stevens (and others) to attack Gadsby’s theological position on the law. “Fear” and “Zeal” on the other hand, provide a fitting synonym for Gadsby’s own definition of “liberty,” which he describes as a combination of fear and zeal in his publication The Perfect Law of Liberty (c. 1810). Gadsby also includes the headings “Inconstancy,” “Rest for the Weary,” and

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60 The similarities between Gadsby’s headings and Stevens’s are even more apparent when Gadsby’s Table of Contents is compared to Rippon’s “General Contents.” See Rippon, Selection, xxx.

61 Stevens lists the following hymns under the heading “knowledge”: Hymn 212 “To know my Jesus” (Burnham), Hymn 213 “Dear Saviour make me” (Rippon’s Selection), Hymn 214 “O give me Saviour” (unknown), Hymn 215 “To know that Christ is” (unknown), Hymn 216 “All the converted train” (unknown) and Hymn 217 “Thy way O God is” (Fawcett). Gadsby includes Burnham’s hymn in his Supplement as Hymn 771.


63 Gadsby writes of Christian liberty: “We faithfully declare, God being our witness, that the liberty for which we contend is not a licentious liberty; nor do we contend for it because we delight in sin. No, beloved: we have more dignified views of the holiness of Jehovah…We are bound to declare that those who are not better taught than to believe that to be free from the law of works and under the law of Christ is
“Watchfulness,” subjects that Stevens does not address directly. This difference reflects Gadsby’s emphasis on Christian experience and tribulations, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

To say that Gadsby merely borrowed from Stevens is an understatement; rather, Gadsby relied on Stevens’s hymnbook as the model for his own. Gadsby writes in the preface to the first edition that he attempted to determine the authorship of each hymn, but when he could not be sure of the author, he listed the hymn as “unknown” or he simply cited his source. Of the five hundred thirteen hymns in Part I of Gadsby’s Selection, sixty-two of these are attributed directly to Stevens’s New Selection. It is likely that Gadsby included other hymns from Stevens’s collection as well, but he was able to obtain the authors’ names for most of these hymns, so the link back to Stevens was not recorded. A survey of both collections reveals that Gadsby’s hymnbook has one hundred ninety-one hymns in common with Stevens’s; therefore, Gadsby may have relied on Stevens for up to thirty-seven percent of the material in his own compilation. Considering Gadsby’s opinion of Stevens’s theology, however, it is not surprising that he chose not to use Stevens’s collection in his own church, but perhaps the early success of

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64 W. Gadsby, Selection (1814), iv.

65 Ibid. Stevens did not include the names of the authors in his publication.

66 This percentage reflects only the first five hundred thirteen hymns (Part 1), which is the total number of hymns by various authors in the first edition of Gadsby’s hymnbook.
Stevens’s publication encouraged Gadsby that he, too, might provide his congregation with a hymnbook of high orthodoxy.

Conclusion

From Gadsby’s perspective, the free-offer evangelicalism of the Revival was directly contrary to the truths of Scripture as expounded by seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century orthodox theologians. Gadsby’s fight for theological orthodoxy was, in fact, a return to the high Calvinistic teachings of the previous generation of English Particular Baptists. In this view, Fuller and the teachers of moderate Calvinism were the apostates of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Particular Baptist churches. 67 Gadsby envisioned himself not as a separatist, but as a restorer of the Calvinism on which the early Particular Baptist churches were founded. Gadsby may rightly be called a nineteenth-century Baptist “puritan”: he sought to call back the Particular Baptist churches to the doctrines of their forefathers.

Despite Gadsby’s calls for a return to the doctrines of Gill and Brine, the rigorous scholasticism of Enlightenment Calvinism had become wearisome to many ministers of the Particular Baptist churches. High Calvinism offered little encouragement toward participation in the Evangelical Revival that was sweeping through both the Established Church and the Dissenting churches of England. In light of the free evangelicalism of the Revival, the high orthodoxy of Enlightenment Calvinism was often interpreted as devoid

67 In reference to a critique of his father’s legacy, John Gadsby writes: “the writer [of the critique] forgot to say that [moderate Calvinistic Baptists] are the true seceders, as the doctrines preached by ‘the followers of William Gadsby’ are those which were universally held by the Baptists in the first instance; but, the [Baptist] ‘Association’ has so degenerated that no man can tell from their preaching whether they are Wesleyans or Calvinists; while ‘the followers of William Gadsby’ have been enabled to stand firmly on the original ground” (J. Gadsby, ed. “Illustrations and Extracts,” 8).
of feeling. It was this dissatisfaction with eighteenth-century high Calvinism that led both Andrew Fuller and William Gadsby to adopt their differing theological viewpoints: Fuller to moderate Calvinism and Gadsby to experimental high Calvinism, that is, romantic orthodoxy.
Chapter 5: Toward A Romantic Orthodoxy

As outlined above, Enlightenment Christianity includes biblicism, rationalism, and optimism; romanticism may be understood as a reassessment, but not an abandonment of these values. Like its forerunner, Christian romanticism incorporated biblicism and rationalism, but with a new sense of pessimism (sometimes described as realism) that was not emphasized in the Enlightenment. Instead of viewing faith as the way of enlightenment and greater understanding, Calvinistic romantics regarded conversion and sanctification as a difficult journey of struggle and despair, often leading to a less intellectual comprehension of God’s mysterious ways. In this way, Calvinistic romantics focused on the necessity of spiritual refinement through fire, the goal of which was not understanding, but greater hope in the sovereignty of God. Romantic thinkers also welcomed expressions of truth through emotion, intuition, mystery, and imagination. This latter tendency is often called “experimentalism” or “experientialism.”¹ Calvinistic

¹ In his study of the overlap between Methodism and romanticism in English literature, Frederick C. Gill notes that both movements emphasize three doctrines: the doctrine of feeling, the doctrine of personality (that is, emphasis of the individual), and the doctrine of familiar language rather than heightened language (F. Gill, 24-38). Gill’s observations fit nicely into a description of Romanticism as experiential, that is thoroughly individual and emotional, and pessimistic (or realistic) in terms of language expression.
romanticism during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, then, may be described as biblical, rational, experiential, and pessimistic.\(^2\)

The Biblicism and rationalism that pervaded the Enlightenment were grounded in the conviction that the truths of Scripture are accessible to the human mind; for romantic theologians, the Bible was still the foundation of all truth, but man’s ability to neatly classify and understand this truth was questioned. The Enlightenment mind sought consistent, organized truth: Brine and Gill dissected Scripture, compounding truth on truth to reach logical conclusions concerning the nature of God and the nature of man. Thus, thinkers of the Christian Enlightenment may be described as essentially optimistic in their approach to the Bible and rationality in general. By the late eighteenth century, however, this optimism began to wane as philosophers and theologians began to look beyond rationalism and science to discern truth.

The new—and terrifying—possibility that came to prominence during the late eighteenth century was that logic alone was not enough to discover truth. Regarding the first proposition of Enlightenment thinking, that all genuine questions can be answered, Berlin writes that this principle serves as “the backbone of the main Western tradition, and it is this that romanticism cracked.”\(^3\) Romantic theologians readily acknowledged that God’s truth was consistent, but conceded that even simple truths might be endlessly complex. Church historian Bernard Reardon writes:

\(^2\) It is important to note that this romantic pessimism relates to man’s understanding and experience of present circumstances; Calvinistic romantics were still optimistic about the goodness of God’s providential plan.

\(^3\) Berlin, 21.
We might then say that the essence of romanticism—if determination of its ‘essence’ be possible at all—lies in the inexpugnable feeling… [of] an infinite ‘beyond,’ and that he who has once glimpsed the infinity that permeates as well as transcends all finitude can never again rest content with the paltry this-and-that, the rationalized simplicities of everyday life. 

Systemization of truth, then, was an ideal, not a reality. To the romantic, truth could not be contained in a theological scheme.

John Gill emphasized the consistency of God’s truth and man’s ability to grasp it; romantic thinkers were much more pessimistic about the capacity of the human mind to understand and organize truth than their enlightened counterparts. While Enlightenment thinkers assumed that all genuine questions could be answered consistently by scientific means, romanticists doubted whether answers were necessary (or even desirable). In short, romantic theologians taught that there was more to God’s truth than the doctrines of systematic theology.

Romantic theologians did not abandon the biblicism or rationalism of the Enlightenment; they simply widened their view of “human reason” to include emotional (and even mystical) truth experiences. In contrast to an Enlightenment mentality, which

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4 Reardon, 3.

5 John Gill writes that a minister “ought to take heed that what he preaches is consistent with itself; that it has no yea and nay, no contradictions in it, and does not destroy itself; and so bring reproach upon him, and he become useless to his hearers…consistence, harmony, and connection of things with each other, are the beauty and glory of a man’s ministry” (John Gill, “Sermon XXXVII: The Duty of a Pastor to his People (1734),” in A Collection of Sermons and Tracts, vol. 2 [London: George Keith, 1773], 10, Google eBook).

6 There is no doubt that Gill, Brine, and other Calvinistic Enlightenment theologians would concede this point in principle, but the tendency was to maintain that man could understand, at least partially, the things of God. Romanticists, on the other hand, highlighted the fact that God’s truth could not be systematically explained.
set its hopes on objective truth, the romantic theologian expanded the truth palette to include forms of subjective truth. Reardon explains,

‘Rational theology’ was not, as such, a thing to be repudiated….‘Reason’ in the form of the sciences had come to stay as a main component in the structure of human knowledge. But the concept of reason needed to be enlarged and refined, made more flexible and sensitive. 7

In Protestant circles, romantic theologians still embraced the Reformation cry of “sola scriptura,” but they recognized that the objective truths of Scripture might be understood through more subjective means. 8 In addition to the capacities of the intellect, romantic theologians regarded emotion, imagination, and intuition as legitimate avenues through which God might communicate his truth to humanity. 9

This widening view of humanity’s ability to experience truth is often referred to as “experimentalism,” “experientialism,” or even an expression of “pietism.” 10 For this

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7 Reardon, vii-viii. Reardon continues, “Science, that is to say, had to be adapted to a wider and more various subject-matter requiring more overtly experimental methods. Hence concern for religion did not imply a refusal to submit it to rational scrutiny. Rather, as itself a vital mode of human experience, [religion] fell within the scope of a philosophy which recognized that the life of humanity, emotional as well as rational, affords the only possible approach for comprehensive intelligence of the world” (ibid., viii).


9 David Bebbington writes “according to Romantics in general, the highest knowledge comes not through the understanding at all, but through intuition, or perhaps the imagination, which takes an active part in its acquisition” (Bebbington, Holiness, 14).

10 For the purposes of this study, I shall reserve the term “Pietism” for the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century movement within German Lutheranism, while the term “pietism” shall be used to describe pietistic tendencies, such as experientialism. For an excellent study of German Pietism, as well as its historical manifestations in England and its roots in the Reformed tradition, see Dale W. Brown, Understanding Pietism, rev. ed. (Nappanee, IN: Evangel, 1997), 11-28. In his discussion of the rise of German Pietism, Brown notes that Pietism “was a reaction to the theological methods and creedal rigidity of what Pietists felt to be a ‘dead’ Orthodoxy” within Lutheranism; thereby creating a divide between
study, the term “experimental” shall be used to describe this type of teaching because it was the term that was commonly used in the early nineteenth century. Experimental religion was nothing new to Protestantism: it was also at the core of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and was an explicit goal of many of the seventeenth-century Puritans.\textsuperscript{11} Nineteenth-century experimentalism may be understood both as a continuation of Reformation and Puritan piety as well as a result of Enlightenment preoccupation with scientific experiment. In the nineteenth century, the term “experimental religion” took on another layer of meaning: in addition to personal piety, the experimentalism of the nineteenth century involved actively testing the teachings of Scripture (and the doctrines of the churches) against the realities of life and the human heart.\textsuperscript{12} A.W. Pink defined experimental preaching as that which “concerns the actual application of salvation to the individual and traces out the operations of the Spirit in the effectuation thereof, having for its main object the stirring of the

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\textsuperscript{11} See F. Ernest Stoeffler, \textit{The Rise of Evangelical Pietism} (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1965), 6-9. Concerning the pietism of the English Puritans, Stoeffler writes, “What early evangelical Pietism actually endeavored to do was to preserve the experiential element of Protestantism which was so obvious in Luther as well as in Calvin. Its theology was wholly centered in the written Word, that Word having to be inwardly appropriated through the Spirit in the fellowship of the Church. Thus the tension between the subjective and the objective was resolved very much as it was in the theology of the reformers” (Stoeffler, 10). Stoeffler identifies pietism as having four basic emphases: the experiential, perfectionistic, biblical, and oppositional, but he admits that these characteristics have penetrated all of Protestantism to some degree (ibid., 23). For the purposes of this work, I shall focus on the experiential aspect of pietism as it relates to Gadsby’s theology.

\textsuperscript{12} For a further discussion of nineteenth-century experimentalism, see Oliver, \textit{History}, 12-15, 130-131, 189-192.
affections.” For experimentalist preachers of Gadsby’s day, this meant encouraging listeners to both know and test the doctrines of grace and other scriptural teachings in their lives: did they feel their depravity, did they long to know the Lord more, were they overwhelmed with the pain and grief that Jesus bore?

The experimentalist valuation of both objective and subjective forms of truth also made room for a certain amount of mysticism, even among orthodox theologians such as Gadsby. Truth in itself, as a reflection of God, was logical, but an individual’s experience and understanding of these truths might be wildly erratic, emotional, and intuitive due to fallen nature. Thus, the enthusiastic positivism of the Enlightenment gave way to the realization that truth, even when expressed in the inerrant words of Scripture, might appear to be incongruous. The “mystery of the Christian life” became a legitimate explanation for tensions between doctrine and experience. The disparity between God’s truth and man’s interaction with these truths resulted in apparent contradictions in Christian doctrine and life, but instead of rejecting these discrepancies, the romantic mind reveled in mystery and paradox. Isaiah Berlin notes that romanticism is

in short, unity and multiplicity. It is fidelity to the particular… and also [to the] mysterious tantalising vagueness of outline. It is beauty and ugliness. It is art for art’s sake, and art as an instrument of social salvation. It is strength and weakness, individualism and collectivism, purity and corruption, revolution and reaction, peace and war, love of life and love of death.14

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14 Berlin, 18.
In the Calvinistic Independent and Baptist traditions of the nineteenth century, these tensions were, in fact, emphasized as further evidence of the depravity of man, unconditional election, and ultimately mankind’s dependence on God (not works of self) for salvation. These tensions between rationalism and experientialism, consistency and incongruity, optimism and pessimism, biblical and extra-biblical are crucial to an understanding of Gadsby’s romantic orthodoxy.  

**Early Romantic High Calvinism: William Huntington**

During the early years of his faith, Gadsby was influenced by various strains of Calvinism, not all of which stood in the Enlightenment tradition. In the years immediately preceding his commitment to the Particular Baptist Church (between 1790 and 1793), Gadsby attended a Calvinistic Independent Church in Bedworth. At this time the teachings of Independent preacher William Huntington (1745-1813), who was known for his itinerancy, were spreading through the towns and country sides around Birmingham, just twenty miles from Bedworth. Huntington was a High Calvinistic minister (in that he rejected free offers of the gospel), but unlike Brine and Gill, he emphasized experimental preaching, personal testimonies of spiritual experiences, and

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15 Berlin adds that for the romantics, mankind’s search for truth and meaning must include all aspects of human capability: “If you asked yourself what were men after, what did men really want, you would see that what they wanted was not at all what Voltaire supposed they wanted. Voltaire thought they wanted happiness, contentment, peace, but this is not true. What men wanted was for all their faculties to play in the richest and more violent possible fashion. What men wanted was to create, what men wanted was to make, and if this making led to clashes, if it led to wars, if it led to struggles, then this was part of the human lot. A man who had been put in a Voltairean garden, pared and pruned, who had been brought up by some wise philosophe in knowledge of physics and chemistry and mathematics, and in knowledge of all the sciences, which the Encyclopaedists had recommended—such a man would be a form of death in life” (Berlin, 42).


17 See Oliver, 120, 176.
taught that a Christian was free from the constraints of the Moral Law (the Ten Commandments). Due to his teachings concerning the believer’s freedom from the law, Huntington and his followers were often deemed “antinomians.” Huntington’s romantic sensibilities developed from an enlightened foundation—he emphasized rational thinking and supported his view with biblical passages—but instead of appealing to the intellect with logical exegesis, Huntington preached a “heart religion” that relied on experimental understanding, emotional reasoning, metaphors, and paradoxes, all within a more pessimistic framework than the previous generation of high Calvinistic theologians.

Huntington’s understanding of Christianity was grounded in biblical knowledge, but he saw the raising of the spiritual affections as the most important—even the defining characteristic—of the Christian life. Huntington taught his congregation the enlightened view of a “sweet consistency” of Scripture and he described the doctrines of Christ as a necklace made of a “consistent and harmonious chain of truth.”

Unlike his high Calvinistic predecessors, however, Huntington was adamant that sound doctrine and biblical knowledge were not enough for true religion. Huntington writes that the truth of Christ must be felt in the heart of the individual if he or she is to escape the tortures of hell:

People, who have no hope but in the written letter of Scripture, will find that the flood of wrath and the final conflagration will leave them without an anchor in

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that storm; and I am persuaded that the believer's rule of life must be found in his heart also, if ever he lives with God in heaven.\textsuperscript{19}

Huntington maintained vehemently that the believer’s rule of life, that is, the guiding principle for the Christian, was active faith in Jesus Christ and his gospel, not a mere intellectual faith in the words of Scripture.\textsuperscript{20} True faith must be experienced with powers of the mind and the heart.

Huntington also believed that true faith is the result of trial and spiritual suffering. Huntington wrote a poem, entitled “A Divine Poem on a Spiritual Birth,” which describes the depth of emotion that must be present in true conversion. Huntington identifies depression, shame, doubt, fear, desperation, and hopelessness as pivotal for the soul on the brink of salvation (Ex. 5.1):

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{19} Huntington, “The Rule and The Riddle; or, An Everlasting Task for Blind Watchmen and Old Women, Part I,” in \textit{Works}, vol. 8, 62; emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 57-58.
\end{quotation}
Huntington presents a labored view of the process of conversion, one that involves pain and despair in stark contrast to Brine’s “easy and plain” description of conversion. Huntington writes that his own conversion experience commenced when he was “tempted by the devil” and suffered through the pain and guilt of his sin. Similarly, Huntington believed that trials were necessary for the sanctification of believers. “We are perfect in no lesson so much,” Huntington writes, “as those into which God whippeth us.” Huntington believed that assurance of one’s salvation came not from Bible reading

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22 See Ch. 2 and Brine, Christian Religion, 45.


24 William Huntington, quoted in “Gleanings,” The Gospel Standard 1 (1835): 96, CD-ROM. Concerning the sufferings of sanctification, Huntington explains, “grace must reign, and faith prevail. You know the old man [the sinful nature] is crucified, and the cross will stick close to him; and it is through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body. If there were no cross upon the old man’s back [that is, if there were no suffering], he would, at times, be ready to outrun the new man [the righteous nature].
and church-going, but from intense, personal communication with the Holy Spirit through prayer and meditation on Scripture. Truth was discerned from within the soul, as the Holy Spirit brought the heart and mind of the believer through the fires of spiritual refinement.

Huntington was also a dynamic speaker and prolific writer who, due to his outspokenness and pointed remarks, tended to create either devoted followers or disapproving onlookers, particularly within the Particular Baptist churches. Many Particular Baptists, including Andrew Fuller and John Rippon, disapproved of Huntington’s insistence on this stereotyped conversion experience and his refusal to publicly evangelize, as well as his harsh words; above all, they feared that Huntington’s teaching concerning the Law would lead to licentiousness. John Ryland, Jr., Particular Baptist minister at the College Lane Church, Northampton, refers to Huntington as “a minister, famous for smiting his fellow servants with an envenomed tongue,” who was not “received by the ministers of his own denomination, any more than ours.”

The ostracism that Huntington faced from many Particular Baptists, however, may be understood, in part, as a reaction against his aggressive advocacy for a romantic, rather than enlightened, view of Christianity. Unlike many of his fellow Particular Baptists,

Wisdom keeps a whip for that horse, and a bridle for that ass; the one mortifies him; and the other checks him, lest he should be too restive for his rider” (Huntington, “Letter 31, To the Reverend B.N.” in Works, 293).

25 See Oliver, 132-145.

Gadsby embraced Huntington’s romantic high Calvinism as he sought to restore high orthodoxy in the towns and villages surrounding Manchester.

Gadsby and Romantic Orthodoxy

During Gadsby’s ministry at Manchester, he perceived that some high Calvinistic ministers, whom he called “dry” ministers, had “Calvinistic heads, and Arminian hearts”: they affirmed the teachings of Calvinism, but they had never truly felt their total depravity, nor struggled with the implications of unconditional election, nor sensed the enormity (and terror) of God’s sovereignty.27 Gadsby’s son John writes:

> He always insisted upon the great difference that there is between merely having the doctrines of grace in the head, and having the power of those doctrines in the heart, and would sometimes say that “a man might believe in the doctrines of grace and yet be outstripped by the devil, for the devils believe, and tremble, and that’s more than many of these head-knowledge professors do.”28

From Gadsby’s perspective, these ministers taught orthodox doctrine, but not the vitality that should accompany it. In a letter to a friend, Gadsby writes, “Men may be high in, and teach, the doctrines of the gospel doctrinally, and yet only be in the letter, and not in the Spirit.”29

To combat both the growing preference for Fullerism and the tendency toward “dead-letter Calvinism,” Gadsby reminded his congregants that true high Calvinism was

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28 J. Gadsby, Memoir, 102.

anything but dead and boring. He reasoned that the teachings of total depravity, unconditional election, and even limited atonement, should ignite deep love and humble gratitude in the heart of the believer, such that a believer can say with heart-wrenching joy “Christ died for a worm like me.” The knowledge of God’s complete sovereignty over every aspect of human existence should incite unbridled praise, adoration, and reverent fear. In short, Gadsby longed for a more romantic orthodoxy. The lack of adequate teaching concerning the proper response to orthodox doctrines, in Gadsby’s opinion, had contributed to the demise of high orthodoxy and the rise of moderate Calvinism throughout his denomination. Understandably, many Particular Baptists throughout England had exchanged dry high Calvinism for the energy and excitement of the Evangelical revival. Through a romantic approach to preaching, Gadsby sought to restore the heart of high Calvinism in the English Particular Baptist churches: he would infuse feeling into the intellectualism of his sect.

Gadsby looked to the Reformers, the Puritans, and to experimentalist preachers of his day as models for his own experimentalism. In his Memoir, John Gadsby notes that his father established a substantial library with works of “sound divinity,” which accounts for the wide range of quotes and excerpts that appear in the early editions of The Gospel

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30 William Gadsby writes, “Dry doctrines build up hypocrites…but power [the Holy Spirit] is a sword that reacheth to the very soul. It lays bare the conscience, reveals the secrets of the heart…and spreads the soul naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (W. Gadsby and J. Gadsby, eds., “Editor’s Review of Mercies of Covenant God,” 93).

In the early editions of the magazine (during which time Gadsby himself acted as an editor with his son, John), quotations from Martin Luther and biographical details of the life of John Calvin appear frequently. The *Standard* also included theological “gleanings” from seventeenth century pietistic Puritans including Robert Leighton, Thomas Watson, Samuel Rutherford, and Robert Traill. In his survey of Lancashire nonconformity, Robert Halley remarks that Gadsby was certainly familiar with John Bunyan’s pietistic writings as well. Gadsby also included quotes from experimentalists closer to his own day, such as John Newton, George Burder, William Romaine, and William Huntington. In fact, Gadsby’s particular type of experimentalism is sometimes called “modified Huntingtonianism” due to the apparent influence of the teachings of Huntington.

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34 “Gleanings” from Robert Leighton are included in *The Gospel Standard* 3 (1837): 96. A quote from Thomas Watson appears in *The Gospel Standard* 3 (1837): 168. Quotes from Samuel Rutherford and Robert Traill are included in *The Gospel Standard* 3 (1837): 192. In his “History of the *Gospel Standard*,” John Gadsby explains that at the time the magazine was established, “Dr. Owen’s works were lying dormant; Bishop Hall’s were known to few; and even Newton’s seemed almost forgotten” (John Gadsby, “History of the *Gospel Standard*,” *The Gospel Standard* (August 1871): 339).

35 See Halley, 485.


37 See Oliver, *History*, 198.
Gadsby’s high regard for the writings of William Huntington deserves special notice. Gadsby called Huntington’s works “exceedingly prizable” and once exclaimed,

What a blessing have Huntington’s writings been to the family of God, and thousands to the end of time will rise up, and call him blessed, who would scarcely have known there had been such a man, had not his pen been as much inspired to write, as his tongue to preach.\(^{38}\)

Like Huntington, Gadsby also valued personal testimonies as proof of experimental faith, and accordingly, he included “experimental accounts” of God’s regenerating and sanctifying work in the early issues of the *Standard*. In reference to his emphasis on sharing personal testimonies, Gadsby writes

There is a power in a gracious experience, which can be felt, but not described. It carries with it a divine impress, and bears stamped upon it a heavenly character. It is a two-edged sword that cuts two ways at once—entering at the same stroke into the conscience of living souls, and cutting to pieces the hypocrisy of rotten hearts.\(^{39}\)

Gadsby summed up his experimental values when he wrote, “give me the man that knows by practice and experience; never mind theory. Head-knowledge is nothing without experience.”\(^{40}\) Gadsby understood true Christian experience as being twofold: it involved both the head and the heart.\(^{41}\) The goal of experimentalism was to feel the truth, not just

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\(^{38}\) W. Gadsby and J. Gadsby, eds., “Editor’s Review of *Mercies of Covenant God*,” 92. In another issue of the *Gospel Standard* Gadsby writes, “We think every child of God who can afford ought to have Huntington’s works in his possession, as, in our estimation, they are, with some exceptions, exceedingly prizable. We hope Bennett [the publisher of the edition of Huntington’s works] has not mutilated them, for this, though now fashionable, is certainly not censurable” (“Editor’s Review [Untitled],” *Gospel Standard* 3 [December 1837]: 293).


\(^{40}\) J. Gadsby, *Memoir*, 71.

\(^{41}\) As A.W. Pink relates, “it is one thing to have clear intellectual conceptions of God's truth, it is quite another matter to have a personal, real heart acquaintance with it.” Arthur W. Pink, “Experimental Salvation,” Swengal, PA: Bible Truth Depot, [19--], accessed August 29, 2012, http://pbministries.org/books/pink/Miscellaneous/experimental_salvation.htm. Joel R. Beeke writes,
know it. Intellectual understanding was crucial to faith, but it was not sufficient for faith: the raising of the spiritual affections through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit was the only sure evidence of salvation. It was Gadsby’s hope that (through the work of the Holy Spirit) experimentalism would check high Calvinism’s proclivity toward intellectual pride and spiritual coldness, which had been a regrettable result of the genius of Gill and Brine’s Enlightenment high Calvinism.

Conclusion

Gadsby’s transformation from an enlightened orthodoxy to a more romantic orthodoxy, that is, the addition of experimentalism into his high Calvinism, is apparent in his own personal testimony. In a review of Joses Badock’s *The Verbal War between Grace and Works; or, a Calvinist and a Wesleyan*, Gadsby and his son John write,

> In our younger days, when we were ready to catch at any thing and every thing that vindicated the doctrines of free grace, we should have spoken very highly of this work, as those doctrines are therein defended in a very able way. But we confess we cannot now read a work with much profit unless it contains something more than a mere defence [sic] of the doctrines, however ably that defence [sic] may be written. We want to feel the unction of the doctrines, for nothing short of it will satisfy us. The doctrines are nothing but terror to us, unless we have hope that we are interested in them.  

Gadsby’s experimentalism flowed out of the empirical mindset of the Enlightenment, but he was primarily interested in “romantic” results: the emotional and


psychological responses to the intellectual ideas of Christianity. “Reason,” writes Gadsby, “gives way to revelation.” Gadsby’s *Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* was the vehicle through which his romantic orthodoxy was proclaimed and disseminated throughout England. Because he considered singing to the Lord to be the duty of all men, Gadsby turned to congregational hymnody to communicate his experimentalism.

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Chapter 6: An “Experimental” Hymnbook

Gadsby’s vision for an orthodox hymnbook extended well beyond “head” theology—he desired the hymns to communicate directly with the hearts of his listeners, both believers and nonbelievers. For this reason, in 1836 Gadsby increased the number of experimental hymns by adding a supplement to his original collection. The vivid narratives of the texts served a two-fold purpose: they led believers through a spiritual journey of assurance, while simultaneously fostering a distinct form of evangelism that urged nonbelievers to enter into the drama of conversion. With the publication of his collection, Gadsby sought to recover the heart of high orthodoxy in the English Particular Baptist churches.

According to his emphasis on experimentalism, Gadsby desired the texts of his hymnbook to communicate with the very soul of a person (whether saved or not), and to reflect the feelings and experiences of the believer (as well as those “at the door” of salvation.)\(^1\) In the preface to his *Nazarene’s Songs*, which comprise the hymns of Part 2, Gadsby reveals his aspirations for his texts. Gadsby writes that he hoped people might

\(^1\) Gadsby undoubtedly believed that discernment of spiritual truth is the work of the Holy Spirit (and ultimately not the responsibility of the hymn writer), but by relating the emotions of human experience, a hymn text might facilitate the Spirit’s movement.
identify with his personal experiences as related in the hymns, and be encouraged to trust
the Lord with their own trials:

I believe these hymns will be found to contain certain sound doctrine, and true
Christian experience; and as such, if my dear Lord should condescend to grant his
blessing to attend them, they may be useful to some poor souls, who have been
led into the same track which the Lord has led the author...Bless his precious
name, he has brought me through many scenes hard to flesh and blood, but right
to faith...\(^2\)

In short, he wanted the experimental hymns of his collection to reflect the living,
passionate (and often agonized) love between God and his people. Gadsby hoped that his
hymnbook would be the vehicle through which the Holy Spirit might transform the hearts
and minds of the congregants to be truly orthodox believers.\(^3\) For believers, this meant
cultivating a desire for God through spiritual exercises in order to gain assurance of
salvation. For elect nonbelievers, these hymns were an opportunity for Gadsby to
communicate evangelistically while still maintaining his high Calvinism. Finally, by
publishing a book of experimental hymnody, Gadsby knew that his congregations would
begin to memorize (and internalize) the teachings they contained, and that the hymnbook
would become a cultural artifact, helping to preserve romantic orthodoxy for the
generations to come.

Experiencing the “unction of the Holy Spirit” had been important to Gadsby since
the time of his conversion; as time went by, however, he felt a renewed urgency to


\(^3\) In the preface to his *Selection*, Gadsby writes that this transformation is possible only “as the
blessed Spirit influences the mind, and favours [the elect] with the unction of his grace.” W. Gadsby,*Selection* (1814), iii.
Calvinism, as discussed above. In the 1814 preface to his hymnbook, Gadsby does not specifically mention experimentalism, although he does allude to the importance of engaging the heart, and not just the ear, in worship. In Gadsby’s Original Selection (Parts 1 and 2) contains a balanced assortment of experimental and non-experimental hymns; for the Supplement, however, Gadsby turned his attention solely to experimental hymnody. In his 1838 preface for the three-part edition, Gadsby states that the hymns of the Supplement “have principally been selected from Hart and Berridge” because they were “the sweetest and greatest experimental writers that have left any hymns on record.” A year later, he stated his interest in experimentalism again in a review of John Stenson’s The Baptists’ Hymn Book. Gadsby writes that this particular Baptist hymnal “is in perfect keeping with another selection, called ‘Hymns of Praise,’ the tendency of which is, to stuff the head with doctrine knowledge, and leave the heart untouched.” Gadsby continues, “Instead of entering into the varied experience of the children of God, there is little or no experience contained in [Stenson’s hymnbook]…it says, certainly, that there is an experience, that there is tribulation; but it enters not into that experience, nor does it describe real spiritual tribulation.”

4 In his preface to the 1814 edition, Gadsby writes: “It is one thing to have the ear charmed, and another to have the heart engaged, in this most delightful part of God’s worship, in his church below” (W. Gadsby, Selection (1814), iii).

5 W. Gadsby, Selection (1838), 4. In addition to including hymns from revivalist Calvinistic poets such as Joseph Hart (1712-1768) and John Berridge (1716-1793), Gadsby also looked to experimentalist poets of his own day, such as Daniel Herbert (1751-1833) and John Kent (1766-1843).

6 William Gadsby, “Review of The Baptists’ Hymn Book,” The Gospel Standard Magazine 5, no. 43 (July 1839): 168. Stenson was the pastor at the Strict Baptist Carmel Chapel, Westbourne Street in London. From a perusal of his hymnbook, he seems to have high Calvinistic leanings, but in Gadsby’s opinion, his collection of hymns did not encourage experimental encounters with the Holy Spirit. See John
Experimental Hymn: A Definition

Gadsby’s comments concerning the lack of experimentalism in Stenson’s hymnbook begs the question: “What, then, is an experimental hymn?” An experimental hymn, like experimental preaching, testifies to the Holy Spirit’s past work in a believer’s life and “aims to apply divine truth to the whole range of the believer's experience.”

Unlike exegetical hymnody, which presents a logical discussion of doctrinal truths, experimental hymnody teaches through a personal narrative. This recounting of experience instills not only assurance from the past, but also teaches hope for the future—that God will continue to be faithful according to the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

A comparison of two hymns, both of which are in Gadsby’s Selection, illustrates the difference between a non-experimental and experimental hymn. The contrast between the hymns is highlighted by the fact that they are adjacent to one another in Gadsby’s collection. This first hymn, John Stevens’s “The Lamb is exalted” is a non-experimental text and may be summarized adequately as “repentance is a gift from God to undeserving sinners.”

All four stanzas state this one principle in an unsentimental tone (Ex. 6.1):
The Lamb is exalted repentance to give,
That sin may be hated, while sinners believe;
Contrition is granted, and God justified,
The sinner is humbled, and self is denied.

Repentance flows freely through Calvary’s blood,
Produced by the Spirit and goodness of God.
The living possess it, through faith, hope, and love,
And own it a blessing sent down from above.

All born of the Spirit are brought to repent;
Free grace can make adamant hearts to relent.
Repentance is granted, God’s justice to prove;
Remission is given, and both from his love.

The vilest of sinners forgiveness have found,
For Jesus was humbled that grace might abound;
Whoever repents of his sin against God,
Shall surely be pardoned through Calvary’s blood.

Ex. 6.1. John Stevens’s “The Lamb is exalted.”

Stevens’s hymn teaches the doctrines of human depravity and free grace, but it does so in a straightforward, rather detached manner. John Fawcett’s “With melting heart and weeping eyes,” by contrast, teaches these doctrines through a convincing personal testimony (Ex. 6.2):

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9 John Stevens, “The Lamb is exalted,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 239.
Both hymns above speak of the need for a spiritual “awakening,” which only God can give, as the impetus for repentance, but where the first example merely states the need, the second example invites the singer to sympathize with this need. The texts are both homiletic in nature, but the method of instruction is different. Stevens’s is a reasoned exegesis—inherently passive in nature; Fawcett’s hymn is a dramatic narrative that encourages the singer to participate in the emotional journey expressed in the text.

Experimental hymns, then, are essentially dramatic in nature and lead the singer through an emotional and spiritual journey. In general, experimental hymns may be identified by six general characteristics: 1) they are (more often than not) in the first person, whether singular or plural; 2) they express a desire to know, see, and be with Jesus forever in eternity; 3) they focus on tribulations of the believer, including doubt, 

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10 John Fawcett, “With melting heart and weeping eyes,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 238.
despair, and struggles with sin (emphasizing that these struggles are evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work); 4) they enter into the drama of Christ’s suffering on the cross through vivid storytelling; 5) they teach that paradoxes of Christian faith are inevitable, and even desirable, such as simultaneous joy and weeping; and finally, 6) they lead the singer through a narrative that begins with despair and concludes consistently with hope in Christ.  

John Berridge’s hymn, “Jesus I long for thee” exhibits the five characteristics described above, and considering Gadsby’s acknowledgement of Berridge’s experimentalism, it is an appropriate choice to begin a study of the dramatic nature of experimental hymnody. The first stanza of the hymn demonstrates the first three characteristics of an experimental hymn: Berridge establishes the grammatical person as first person singular, describes his longing to be with Jesus in Canaan (the Promised

11 The sixth characteristic of an experimental hymn (concluding with hope) was very important to Gadsby, as is evident in his changes to Toplady’s “Encompassed with clouds of distress.” In the early editions of the hymnbook, he credits Stevens’s Selection as his source for this text, but Gadsby’s version differs from Stevens’s. The last stanza of Toplady’s hymn, as it appears in Stevens’s hymnbook leaves the singer with feelings of desperation:

Yet, Lord, if thy love has design’d
No covenant blessing for me,
Ah, tell me, how is it I find
Some sweetness in waiting for thee?
Almighty to rescue thou art,
Thy grace is my only resource;
If e’er thou art Lord of my heart,

Gadsby changes the last three lines of the hymn to encourage and give hope to the humble believer:

Thy grace is immortal and free;
Lord, succour and comfort my heart,
Land), and admits that he is in a state of sorrow and despair due to the spiritual (and even physical) warfare here in earth.  

Jesus, I long for thee,  
And sigh for Canaan’s shore,  
Thy lovely face to see,  
And all my warfare o’re  
Here billows break upon my breast  
And brooding sorrow steal my rest.

The third stanza continues elucidating the speaker’s regret over his indwelling sin and his doubts concerning his salvation:

I pant, I groan, I grieve  
For my untoward heart;  
How full of doubts I live,  
Though full of grace thou art!  
What poor returns I make to thee  
For all the mercy shown to me!

The final verse displays the last three characteristics of experimental hymnody:  

the drama of Christ’s suffering, the paradoxes of the Christian life, and concludes with

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12 Due to the first-person narrative voice as well as the personal nature of these hymns, some singers felt compelled to alter the language of the hymns in order to reflect more accurately their feelings. Gadsby’s inclusion of a letter from “Timothy” in the Gospel Standard suggests that he understood this complex situation. Regarding William Cowper’s hymn “There is a fountain filled with blood,” Timothy writes: “Sometimes, when some such words as these have been given out; ‘And there have I, as vile as he, Wash’d all my sins away;’ I have shrunk back, and said, ‘I dare not sing it;’…It is rarely indeed that I am so far favoured with a faith’s view of my interest in the atonement of Christ as to adopt the language which many hymns contain; but I never consider myself ‘out of order’ when I alter a few words, and am enabled to offer up the same in prayer, so long as my heart is made to feel what I am expressing…and my lips have been engaged in pouring out the feelings of my soul—‘And there may I, as vile as he, Wash all my sins away.’ This is orderly, and many dear weaklings can sing this, when they dare not say, ‘And there have I,’ etc.”” (Timothy [pseud.], “All Things in Order,” The Gospel Standard, or, Feeble Christian’s Support 3 [1837]: 180-181, CD-ROM). Gadsby used the past tense for Cowper’s hymn; See William Cowper, “There is a fountain filled with blood,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 160.

13 John Berridge, “Jesus, I long for thee,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 672. This is the second hymn of Gadsby’s Supplement.
hope that springs from Christ’s final spiritual victory over death. This stanza persists in
the struggles of the previous verses, but here the tone changes: the speaker moves from
his regretful weeping over his own sins to the “sweet” sorrow of Christ’s death on the
cross.

And must I ever smart,
A child of sorrow here?
Yet, Lord, be near my heart,
To soothe each rising tear;
Then at thy bleeding cross I’ll stay,
And sweetly weep my life away.

Berridge’s hymn does not end on the typical “spiritual high” of many praise hymns;
instead he leaves the believer weeping at the foot of the cross. The mood of the hymn,
however, is ironically hopeful: the act of weeping, although painful, is sweet. Despite the
persistent groaning of the heart, the believer is comforted at the cross because of the love
it represents. 14 Reference to the cross occurs rather late in the hymn, but it is no less
central to the hymn. Christ’s suffering is, in fact, the very balm for which the speaker
longs in the first stanza. Once the speaker remembers Christ’s sacrifice, he receives
peace in the midst of trials—one of the paradoxes of the Christian life—and the hymn

14 Berridge makes reference to a teaching that Martin Luther called “the great exchange”: Christ
took on the penalty of sin, and in exchange, gave believers His righteousness. Fred W. Meuser notes that
Luther found evidence of this “great exchange” in almost every biblical text. Meuser explains that in this
exchange, “Christ exchanges all his beauty, purity, and strength for our ugliness, evil, and weakness; in his
passion our guilt in exchange for his forgiveness; and in his resurrection our death—our ultimate defeat—in
exchange for our life” (Fred W. Meuser, “Luther as preacher of the Word of God,” in The Cambridge
Companion to Martin Luther, ed. Donald K. McKim [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 145,
Google eBook).
concludes in a very different emotional state from which it opened. What began as a text of sighing and pain ends with spiritual comfort and hope.\(^{15}\)

**The Journey of Assurance: Creating a Culture of Spiritual Desire**

Gadsby considered this agony of the soul, as expressed in the hymn above, to be evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in an individual’s life, and therefore, necessary for salvation and continued growth in grace.\(^{16}\) He believed that the Christian life was marked by an initial spiritual crisis, which was then resolved through the application of Scripture truth by the Holy Spirit, resulting in conversion. Similarly, true spiritual growth subsequent to conversion was characterized by recurrent seasons of tribulation, ending in a fresh application of God’s grace. The cycle of crisis did not end in despair; it actually resulted in hope because spiritual afflictions were indicative of the Holy Spirit’s regenerative work (and therefore, proof of Divine election).\(^{17}\) As Gadsby explains in one of his later sermons,

> We do not merely enter the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation, but we really enter feelingly and spiritually into the kingdom of his manifested grace in the soul through tribulation; and as we are brought to have tribulation upon

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\(^{15}\) A.W. Pink describes the spiritual journey of experimentalism: “It begins with their natural estate, as those who were shapen \[sic\] in iniquity and conceived in sin. It shows how, as fallen creatures, we are sin’s slaves and Satan’s serfs. It describes the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart, its pride and self-righteousness… It delineates the workings of the Spirit when He convicts of sin, and the effects this produces in the subject of it. It takes up the heart exercises of an awakened soul, and seeks to counsel, admonish, and comfort” (Pink, “Experimental Preaching” [April 1937]: 22).

\(^{16}\) For an account of Gadsby’s early spiritual crises, see J. Gadsby, *Memoir*, 14-19.

\(^{17}\) In one of his later sermons, Gadsby writes, “Have you ever appeared to be sunk and lost in nature’s ruin, both God and conscience seeming to be against you, and that all the prayer you have consists of nothing but sighs and groans on account of what you feel? If you have been here, it is a blessed token, though you may not know it at the time, that the Holy Ghost is fulfilling his covenant engagement, in making intercession in your heart with groanings that cannot be uttered” (W. Gadsby, “The Church Remembered in Her Low Estate,” in *Sermons*, 141).
tribulation, the Lord appears, and blesses our souls with the unction of his truth, and we begin to walk blessedly in it.\textsuperscript{18}

Gadsby understood this cycle of spiritual crisis to be the means through which God sanctified his people—a crucial aspect of the true Christian life. If a professing believer did not regularly mourn indwelling sin, meditate on the sufferings of Jesus, shun the “trappings of this world,” and groan with anticipation for future glory, Gadsby taught that the individual should seriously question the validity of his salvation.\textsuperscript{19}

Gadsby’s careful development of this crisis theology had the corollary effect of creating a congregation that longed for the drama of spiritual experience. In fact, he taught his people to fear spiritual hardness and “dead-letter Calvinism.” In this way, Gadsby cultivated a culture of holy desire. He encouraged his listeners to search their consciences, question their motives, lament their shortcomings, and even seek a state of spiritual despair as a way to test their salvation.\textsuperscript{20} He taught believers to “never be satisfied without the blood of sprinkling, and the revelation of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{21} In a letter to a friend, dated June 1834, Gadsby writes,

\begin{quote}

\textsuperscript{18} W. Gadsby declared in one sermon, “I believe an unfeeling religion is the devil’s own religion, and is not the religion of the Son of God” (W. Gadsby, “The Sentence of Death,” in \textit{Sermons}, 57).

\textsuperscript{19} Gadsby instructs the congregation from 1 Peter 2:9: “Ye are a chosen generation, ye are a royal priesthood, ye are a holy nation, ye are a [peculiar] people.’ Now turn for a moment and examine individually whether such a sentence belongs to you or not…But when the poor sinner, under the Divine teachings of God the Spirit, is brought feelingly and experimentally to enter into this ‘ye,’—this direct ‘ye,’ O what indescribable blessings then follow!” (W. Gadsby, “The Peculiar People,” in \textit{Sermons}, 85-86).

Gadsby’s teaching on this point is similar to the Apostle Paul’s exhortation in 2 Corinthians 13:5: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

\textsuperscript{20} W. Gadsby and J. Gadsby, eds., “Editor’s Review of Mercies of Covenant God,” 93.
\end{quote}
Truth in the judgment, easily obtained, unconnected with hot fires and deep waters, and unapplied to the heart by the Holy Ghost, is what I call a brain religion, and often produces a religious brain fever; and so makes a man wild, but brings no solidity of soul, nor any glory to God.

God’s open, manifestive choice of his people is in the furnace. It is the good pleasure of our God to bring his highly-favoured family through the fire, and in it he teaches them to call upon his name; and there it is he manifestly calls them his people, blesses them with the spirit of adoption, and enables them to say, “The Lord is my God.”

Since God’s people must be refined “by fire,” Gadsby and his followers resolved to actively seek out the fire in order to test their election and the genuineness of their faith.23

One method of seeking this “fire” experience was through an experimental hymn, which functioned as a spiritual exercise—a kind of spiritual litmus test. If a professed believer was not brought to his knees under the burden of sin as expressed in these hymns or simultaneously amazed and horrified by the vivid imagery of Jesus on the cross, the individual was, according to Gadsby’s teaching, in danger of eternal damnation. The fear of being spiritually dead—what may be called “anxiety of assurance”—provoked Gadsby’s listeners to actively test themselves by entering into the narratives of experimental hymns and praying that God would move their hearts accordingly.

Berridge’s “Jesus, I long for thee,” for example, leads the believer through the six characteristics of experimental hymnody, which mirror the emotional and spiritual stages of assurance. First the singer personally identifies himself with the speaker of Berridge’s

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23 Gadsby’s fire metaphor is similar to Martin Luther’s cross metaphor. In the first issue of the Gospel Standard, Gadsby includes this quote from Martin Luther: “Grief and sorrow teacheth how to mark the word. What knoweth he that is without tribulation and temptation? No man understandeth the Scriptures, except he be acquainted with the cross” (Martin Luther, quoted in “Gleanings,” The Gospel Standard Magazine” 1 (1835): 24, CD-ROM).
hymn (the first characteristic of experimental hymnody) and then, according to the second feature of experimental hymnody, asks himself, “Do I long for Jesus?” In the third stage the sinner is led to say, “I pant, groan, and grieve / For my untoward heart” and to confess his indwelling sin. In the fourth and fifth stages, the singer is reminded that, despite his sin, Jesus has shown mercy to those who call on him and that the Christian life is full of “sweet” paradoxes: even though he still feels like a sinner, he has been declared righteous in Christ. Finally, as discussed above, Berridge’s hymn leaves the individual with hope, assuring him that even his preference to stay weeping at the foot of the cross is evidence of his election to salvation. Berridge’s hymn, along with experimental hymnody in general, traces out the journey of assurance.

Through his hymnbook, Gadsby cultivated holy desire and provided a means through which his congregation might assure themselves that they indeed were chosen of God. Experimental hymnody helped Gadsby’s congregation to actively respond to his frequent exhortations to “handle and taste and feel of the Word of life” by giving them an opportunity for self-examination, spiritual interaction with God, and ultimately, assurance. In summary, that which Gadsby demanded as evidence of true Christian faith (i.e., a “feeling religion”) he also provided the tools to pursue.

**Experimental Evangelism through Hymnody**

In addition to mirroring the journey of assurance in the life of a believer, experimental hymnody was also an opportunity for high Calvinistic evangelism.

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24 The subsequent line reads, “What poor returns I make to thee/For all the mercy shown to me” (John Berridge, “Jesus, I long for thee,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 672).

According to Gadsby’s “crisis” soteriological model, Gadsby believed that spiritual tribulations were symptomatic of a soul on the verge of salvation: any despair of sin or hopelessness of self signaled the Holy Spirit’s work in a person’s life. This perceived work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a nonbeliever was understood as evidence of God’s election to eternal life. Non-elect, by contrast, would never feel the spiritual burden of their sin nor long for salvation from the God. Once this work of the Holy Spirit had been ascertained, any believer was free under the theological tenets of high Calvinism to encourage the seeker that God was, in fact, calling him to salvation. For Gadsby, this freedom of conscience to preach salvation to struggling nonbelievers, combined with his experimentalism, resulted in a unique form of evangelism, which I shall call “experimental evangelism.” Just as experimental preaching “traces out the operations of the Spirit” in the life of a believer, experimental evangelism delineates the Holy Spirit’s work in the conversion of a nonbeliever.26

Experimental evangelism, simply put, informs the seeking nonbeliever what conversion feels like: the despair over indwelling sin, the wonder of Jesus’ death on the cross, the joy of final conversion.27 Gadsby wrote a letter to a friend, dated October 11, 1838, which demonstrated his method of experimental evangelism. He begins the letter by rehearsing his own feelings of despair over his sin:


27 Regarding the feelings of a soul on the brink of salvation, Gadsby writes: “for the poor creature who feels himself to be a loathsome, vile, and ruined sinner, and [who] is brought experimentally to feel what he is before a heart-searching God, and that every iota of the law is against him—for God to give this righteousness to him, to put it upon him and communicate the power of it to his soul, why it will raise and exalt him to such a blessed enjoyment of God’s righteousness that his tongue will sing aloud and speak forth praise to the honour and glory of his blessed name…” (W. Gadsby, “The Tongue Speaking of Righteousness,” in Sermons, 174-175).
It is one part of true wisdom to feel ourselves real fools, and that we are such poor besotted fools that we are unable to alter it to any good purpose; and, feeling that all our foolishness has been sin against a holy, just, and good God, we tremble before him, and are quite broken down in spirit under a deep sense of our vileness before a holy God, and we mourn over our guilt, sin, and filthiness…28

Gadsby then describes a sinner turning to Jesus, and the anxiety of yearning to know if he is truly elect:

And then we cry out to the Lord for mercy, and pant for pardon made manifest by the revelation of Christ in our souls. Thus we thirst and sigh, and groan, and long for salvation; and yet, often fear it will never be ours…29

Finally, Gadsby assures his friend that these feelings are signs of the Holy Spirit’s renewal of both his heart and his mind, assuring him that God will save him.

Well, my dear friend, if the above is your case, the Lord has begun to make you wise; and eternal truth has said, ‘The wise shall inherit glory.’ May you never, my dear friend, give up the point till the Lord is graciously pleased to say unto your soul, ‘I am thy salvation.’…May you go on, my dear friend, breathing after the sweet power, presence, and love of the Lord Jesus Christ, for you shall not cry and wait in vain. He will come and call you his love, his dove, his fair one; and enable you to say, ‘This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.’30

In this way, Gadsby was able to address sinners, teach them what it felt like to experience God’s “irresistible grace,” and encourage them to call on the Lord.

Gadsby’s *Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* was the medium through which Gadsby sought to communicate his experimental evangelism *en masse* with nonbelievers. Gadsby perceived that a collection of hymns emphasizing experimental hymnody was a particularly effective avenue for evangelism for several reasons, three of the most

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29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.
important being 1) it was the duty of every man to sing to God; 2) experimental hymnody allowed him to be proactively evangelistic; 3) in addition to tracing out the journey of assurance, experimental hymnody feelingly describes the conversion experience and invites the nonbeliever to enter in to the drama of spiritual rebirth. These three aspects of experimental hymnody enabled Gadsby to communicate effectively his experimental evangelism with nonbelievers while remaining true to his high orthodoxy.

As discussed in the previous chapters, Gadsby did not believe it was the duty of every man to believe in Christ, in contrast to the free evangelicalism of Fuller and Rippon. For this reason, Gadsby could not, in good conscience, “offer” Christ to nonbelievers; however, he could (and must, according to his position as a minister of Christ) preach Christ to nonbelievers. In addition, Gadsby believed that it was the duty of every man to sing to Christ. John Gill, and Benjamin Keach before him, had succeeded in convincing the previous generations of Particular Baptists that it was indeed mankind’s duty to praise the Lord through song. By combining his duty to preach Christ with mankind’s duty to sing to Christ, Gadsby discovered a method of evangelism that accommodated his high Calvinistic theology. Hymns provided him the opportunity to address the unregenerate and communicate directly with them without resorting to the impassioned pleas that he abhorred, which portrayed God as impotent rather than omnipotent.  

Gadsby’s hymnbook afforded Gadsby an occasion to put words in the mouths of nonbelievers—phrases that nonbelievers could rightfully affirm according to

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31 See Ch. 2 for a discussion duty-faith.
high orthodoxy, such as, “Ye sinners in distress, / The tidings are for you.” Hymns allowed him both to teach the doctrines of grace and reach out to the hearts of nonbelievers.

In this way, experimental hymnody was an avenue for evangelical action within the confines of high Calvinism. In general, high Calvinistic evangelism during the early nineteenth century tended to be unassertive in matters of the heart. Instead of approaching nonbelievers directly on an individual basis, high Calvinistic ministers preached the gospel to a generalized “poor sinner,” trusting that if the individual were elect, the Holy Spirit would bring about repentance in His timing through the preaching of the Word. This reluctance to preach the gospel freely was grounded in doctrinal convictions, as outlined in the previous chapters, and a fear of “creature works.” High Calvinistic theologians believed that salvation was from God alone, and that man had no part in it—whether invitational or responsorial. Gadsby and his son, John, affirmed this opinion in a review of Daniel Whitaker’s sermon “The Nature and design of Gospel Invitations,” which Whitaker preached to an Association of Baptist ministers in London on September 22, 1835. Gadsby and his son write:


33 Daniel Whitaker was a high Calvinist minister at the Red-Cross Street Chapel, London. In his sermon to the Association, which consisted of other high-Calvinist ministers, Whitaker discusses four evangelistic approaches: 1) that of the Arminian, 2) that of the Baxterians (or Fullerites), also known as “moderate Calvinists,” who believed that Christ’s death was sufficient for all, but efficient for the elect only, 3) the “practical evangelism” of some high Calvinistic ministers who inconsistently confirm both high Calvinism and indiscriminate offers, such as John Stevens, and finally 4) proper “high Calvinistic evangelism,” which distinguishes between a “general” gospel invitation and a “particular” gospel invitation. See Daniel Whitaker, *The Nature and Design of Gospel Invitations*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Goode, 1836), http://www.mountzionpbc.org/books/nature%20and%20design%20of%20gospel.htm.
We think that ministers should *invite* very sparingly, and that their office is more to set forth the characters, &c, to whom the invitations are addressed, than to deal largely in direct and positive invitations.\textsuperscript{34}

Gadsby believed that his duty as a minister of Christ was not to invite individuals to Christ, but to describe the people whom the *Holy Spirit* was inviting to Christ. Experimental hymnody was a particularly good medium through which to communicate this type of evangelism because Gadsby could be proactive, rather than passive, in his evangelistic efforts. Gadsby did not wait for sinners to come to him, nor did he merely expound Scripture: he actively approached the hearts of his people through his experimental hymnody.

Experimental hymnody also provided Gadsby a means to feelingly describe the conversion experience and encourage nonbelievers to consider the state of their hearts in an interactive manner. Gadsby was not able to tell every man that Christ died for him, but he was able to lead his congregation through a hymn text that traced out the thoughts and emotions of a soul on the brink of conversion. The compelling personal narrative of experimental hymns invites the individual to interact with the ideas and emotions of the text. Experimental hymns are essentially dramatic in nature in that they guide the

\textsuperscript{34} Gadsby and his son write, “Without, then, excluding *all* invitations on the part of the minister, we would rather incline to the opinion that…the blessed Spirit applies [the word] from time to time to the souls of people, together with the promises, exhortations, warnings, &c. To illustrate our meaning: it is one thing for a minister to stand up and invite a heavy-laden and sin-burdened soul to come to Christ, and another thing for the blessed Spirit to apply an invitation of Christ himself to such a distressed character. The one falls powerless on the ear, and the secret feeling of the distressed sinner is, ‘Of what use are all his invitations? I *cannot* come to Christ.’ Whilst the other enters at once with blessed power and energy into the heart, and at once makes the soul to do what the invitation speaks of” (William Gadsby and John Gadsby, “Editors’ Review of *The Nature and Design of Gospel Invitations. A Sermon preached before an Association of Baptist Ministers in London, on Sept. 22, 1835. By Daniel Whitaker,*” *The Gospel Standard, or, Feeble Christian’s Support* II, no. 3 (March 1836): 69-70, CD-ROM).
participant on a spiritual journey; more specifically, the process through which Gadsby hoped these hymns would lead the singer is the journey of salvation.

Each characteristic of experimental hymnody approximates the steps that Gadsby thought were necessary for regeneration. The first characteristic of experimental hymnody, that they are written from a first-person perspective, allows for personal identification and application of the ideas presented in the text. The second feature of experimental hymnody (expressing a desire to be with Jesus) demands immediate personal application: either an affirmation or a denial of the question, “Do I long to be with Jesus?” The third characteristic encourages the singer to consider the trials of his life and admit his continuous struggle with sin, the appropriate response being the cry, “Yes, I am a wretched sinner!” Gadsby believed that this third step was crucial for true salvation: one cannot hope in Christ until he has despaired of himself.

Experimental hymns do not leave the sinner lamenting without hope, however: the fourth aspect leads the singer’s thoughts away from his own sin to ponder the love of the cross. For example, the speaker of the second part of Joseph Hart’s hymn “Come, all ye chosen saints of God” marvels (Ex. 6.3),

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35 This step is often considered to be the “bad news” of the gospel.
This fourth characteristic of experimental hymnody urges the repentant sinner to exclaim with wonder, “Jesus did this for me?” The fifth distinctive feature of experimental hymnody answers the new believer’s questions about the simultaneous joy and weeping of salvation and assures him that these paradoxes are actually proof of spiritual renewal. Finally, the sixth feature of experimental hymnody, that of leading the individual to hope in Christ, is the culminating step of the journey of salvation.

Experimental hymns, simply put, are reenactments of the drama of conversion.

By equating the spiritual struggles of the believer and the “elect” nonbeliever, Gadsby could apply the “high” doctrines of Particular Baptist orthodoxy, and even make evangelistic calls, to both believers and seeking nonbelievers. With this convergence of conversion and assurance, Gadsby selected hymns that enabled him to stay within his high Calvinistic framework while simultaneously making bold evangelical calls to

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“burdened souls.”37 Gadsby used hymns to teach non-believers (and even back-sliding believers) what they should feel if, in fact, they are chosen of God. Both the believer and the seeker could identify with an experimental hymn, such as Daniel Herbert’s (1751-1833) “Come boldly to the throne of grace.” The general gospel invitation to “bankrupt souls” was true for both present and soon-to-be believers (Ex. 6.4):

37 Even more openly evangelistic is Gadsby’s own hymn, “Come, whosoever will,” Hymn 587:

1) Come, whosoever will,  
Nor vainly strive to mend;  
Sinners are freely welcome still  
To Christ, the sinner’s Friend.

3) The guilty, vile, and base,  
The wretched and forlorn,  
Are welcome to the feast of grace,  
Though goodness they have none.

4) No goodness he expects;  
He came to save the poor;  
Poor helpless souls he ne’er neglects,  
Nor sends them from his door.

5) His tender, loving heart  
The vilest will embrace;  
And freely to them will impart  
The riches of his grace.
Gadsby perceived that the torments of the non-believer were the very same as the doubts of the believer: both believer and “elect” nonbeliever wrestled with their sin, were crushed under its load, and ultimately, needed to look to Christ for salvation. The nonbeliever and believer might be said to be in different stages of salvation, but the general process of spiritual renewal is the same. For believers, these hymns were spiritual exercises that taught the individual to long for greater spiritual experiences, with the goal of assurance; for elect nonbelievers, experimental hymns invited the individual to respond to the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin, leading to conversion.

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38 Daniel Herbert, “Come boldly to the throne of grace,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 675.

39 In his essay concerning experimental preaching, A.W. Pink notes that all the elect are in the “process of being saved.” The process of conviction and repentance is the same for those who are just coming to Christ and for those who already know God. See Arthur W. Pink, “Experimental Preaching” (May 1937): 24, http://www.eternallifeministries.org/pink/STUD-537.pdf.
In general, high Calvinism is often considered to be essentially non-evangelical due to its adherents’ non-offer approach to evangelism.\(^{40}\) In Gadsby’s case, however, this general observation is an oversimplification and is ultimately misleading in regard to Gadsby’s care for the unsaved. Gadsby’s non-invitational teaching does not imply that he was non-evangelical. Robert W. Oliver has justly observed: “To borrow a phrase crafted by J.I. Packer in a different context, [Gadsby’s high Calvinism] contained a great deal of its own antidote. While Gadsby rejected universal invitations, he could use remarkable freedom in presenting the gospel.”\(^{41}\) Gadsby’s experimental evangelism, as described above, differs greatly from the invitational evangelism of John Wesley, Andrew Fuller, John Rippon, and even John Stevens, but it is not less evangelistic in its aim.\(^{42}\) Experimental evangelism was Gadsby’s method of responding to, and participating in, the Evangelical Revival, which had permanently changed the evangelistic landscape of England. Many high Calvinistic ministers resisted the revival due to doctrinal disagreements, but Gadsby’s experimental evangelism, which he

\(^{40}\) Kenneth Dix explains, “The assumption is commonly made that high-Calvinism destroys or stifles all efforts to promote missionary or evangelistic endeavor. In the case of the Strict Baptists of Suffolk, in London, and in many other parts of the country, and in a good measure in the life and witness of Gadsby, this was not true. These men certainly refused to offer the gospel, but they still proclaimed it: they studiously avoided calling on men to believe, but they clearly taught the necessity of faith. They may not have said ‘whosoever will,’ but one of their favourite hymns was ‘Come ye sinners, poor and wretched’” (Kenneth Dix, “Varieties of High-Calvinism among Nineteenth-Century Particular Baptists,” *Baptist Quarterly* 38, no. 2 [April 1999]: 67, http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/38-2_056.pdf). Dix’s choice of the phrase “whosoever will” is a poor example, however, considering Gadsby’s own hymn entitled “Come, whosoever will.”


\(^{42}\) Kenneth Dix notes that Gadsby’s evangelicalism is evident in his commitment to itinerancy and social causes (Dix, “Varieties of High-Calvinism,” 68).
communicated through his hymnbook, allowed him to interact with evangelistic culture, while still affirming the orthodox doctrines of high Calvinism.

In the third volume of *The Gospel Standard*, Gadsby and his son include a story that illustrates how an experimental hymn can be a vehicle for both conversion and assurance. In a letter to the editors, entitled “Restoring Grace” and signed “An Infant,” a subscriber to the magazine relates a story of spiritual rebirth. The writer speaks of his past spiritual condition, but his precise spiritual standing at the beginning of the story (whether he was a nonbeliever or a backsliding believer) is unclear. He writes:

About eight months back, I fell from a state of humble confidence of my interest in the blood and righteousness of my Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost sealing home the same to my soul…that [my faith] was merely imaginary.\(^{43}\)

If his faith were indeed imaginary, as the writer fears, he would rightly be called spiritually unregenerate. The writer continues by describing his spiritual torment, depression, and hopelessness: “From this time I seemed to lose all hope, and I was in a state of mind bordering on distraction…in this state I continued for more than seven weeks.”\(^{44}\) The writer then recounts how the Lord called one of Hart’s experimental hymns to his mind—in effect, explaining how experimental hymns can be a vehicle for evangelism:

It was from these words, which darted into my mind like unto a flash of lightning,

“The moment the sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives,


\(^{44}\) Ibid.
Redemption in full through his blood.”

He then testifies to the Holy Spirit’s work through the experimental nature of the hymn.

Immediately the scales of ignorance and unbelief dropped from my eyes; God the Holy Ghost applied the all-atoning blood, sealing home by the same pardon; and, by precious faith I saw my beloved Lord again.”

With the last word, “again,” the writer reveals that he had experienced a conversion in the past, thereby making his spiritual affliction an example of backsliding, but his account could easily have illustrated an initial conversion experience. The writer’s response to Hart’s hymn is undoubtedly the kind of interaction that Gadsby hoped his hymnal would foster. Whether as an aid toward conversion or assurance, the experimental hymns of Gadsby’s collection were tools for spiritual response.

Publication for the Generations

By publishing a collection of experimental hymns, Gadsby left behind a legacy of experimental high Calvinism that would endure for generations to come. A published volume of experimental hymnody was portable and accessible, making it an extension of experimental preaching. Regarding the advantages of published texts, in particular the spiritual memoir of Particular Baptist minister John Warburton, Gadsby and his son John write,

“We are truly glad that [Warburton] has been led to publish these dealings of the Lord with his spirit, and for this reason. Preaching, though a most blessed ordinance of God, is to a certain extent limited. Local distance, for instance, is an impassable limit, for two congregations cannot hear a man of God at one and the same time. But gracious writings can be in a thousand different places at once.

45 Ibid. This hymn appears in Gadsby’s hymnbook in a slightly different form; see Joseph Hart, “The sinner that truly believes,” in W. Gadsby Selection, Hymn 233.

46 An Infant [pseudo.], “Restoring Grace,” 156.
They can penetrate, too, into circles where [the minister] may never personally come…

Gadsby knew that a hymnbook of high Calvinistic experimental hymnody could be distributed throughout England (and even abroad). He hoped that, through the Holy Spirit, believers might be convinced of the orthodox doctrines of Calvinism as expressed in the hymns. He also desired for believers to be assured of their salvation by interacting with the experimentalism of the hymns and for his collection to be the impetus through which elect nonbelievers began their journey of conversion. Reflecting on his own theological learning through the writings of the Reformers, the Puritans, and other ministers before him, Gadsby knew that published volumes might “feed the church of God when [a minister’s] body is rotting in the grave, and his soul in the bosom of his Redeemer.” His hymnbook was a means of preserving experimental high Calvinism for the generations that would come after him.

Gadsby was also aware that these teachings and expressions of faith are often memorized when sung on a regular basis at local church meetings, and in times of crisis could come to mind for the encouragement of the believer. In this way, the journey of assurance that the hymns express, which is inherently transitory due to the performative nature of hymnody (and music in general), might be recalled in the midst of trials.

Gadsby speaks of this very situation in his sermon “The Love of God,” which he


48 See Ch. 7 for Susan Sarll’s encounter with the doctrine of election through Gadsby’s hymnbook.

preached on July 3, 1836. He writes that even when everything in life seems to go wrong, the believer can rest in God’s love and sovereignty, and remember the second stanza of Watts’s hymn “Keep silence all created things.” Gadsby affirms that

the believer can view all circumstances chained to the throne of God, and with solemnity of heart can sing,

Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on his firm decree;
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.

Gadsby knew that “by being thus fixed in the mind and memory, [hymns] become, as it were, locked up in a storehouse, out of which the Blessed Spirit takes in times of trouble and sorrow such portions as he sees good to apply with divine power to the heart.”

Conclusion

For Gadsby, true orthodoxy included experiencing a living and active relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Although he valued greatly the high Calvinistic teachings of the previous generation of Particular Baptist scholars, Gadsby longed for spiritual feelings to accompany these doctrines, that is, he desired a more romantic orthodoxy. Through his hymn collection, Gadsby taught his listeners to long for deep, personal interactions with the Holy Spirit and to continually seek the drama of spiritual conversion with each meditation of the heart. For believers, experimental hymns


51 Ibid. Isaac Watts, “Keep silence all created things,” in W. Gadsby, Selection, Hymn 4. Gadsby apparently favored this hymn, as he quoted it again in his sermon “The Faithful God,” preached at his chapel in Manchester on January 5, 1840, see W. Gadsby, Sermons, 349.

52 J.C. Philpot, “Editor’s Review of Hymns of the Reformation. By Dr. Martin Luther, and others. From the German, etc.,” Gospel Standard 22, no. 245 (1856): 151, CD-ROM.
facilitated assurance; for nonbelievers, these hymns provided a stimulant for conversion and an avenue for experimental evangelism.

Experimental hymnody was an ideal vehicle through which to express this romantic model of high Calvinistic evangelism: the salvation that he would not offer indiscriminately (due to his high Calvinistic convictions), he could declare to “burdened souls” in an experimental way through song, in part because singing to the Lord was the duty of all men. Both present and soon-to-be believers could be comforted by the words of John Newton’s hymn, “Pensive, doubting, fearful heart,” in which Jesus assures his people (Ex. 6.5):

> Though afflicted, tempest-tossed,<br>Comfortless awhile thou art,<br>Do not think thou canst be lost,<br>Thou art graven on my heart;<br>All thy wastes I will repair;<br>Thou shalt be rebuilt anew;<br>And in thee it shall appear<br>What the God of love can do.

Ex. 6.5. John Newton’s “Pensive, doubting, fearful heart.”

Gadsby led his listeners through this process of spiritual revitalization with each experimental hymn. Gadsby hoped that through the experiential language of the hymns, and the culture of desire that the hymns supported, both nonbeliever and believer would feel his sinful state and (through the Holy Spirit’s work) long for God to save his soul. Gadsby was able to reach out to all people through his experimental hymnbook, which

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along with the *Gospel Standard Magazine*, would become one of the most effective means of disseminating experimental high Calvinism, that is, romantic orthodoxy, throughout England, Australia, and America. Far from being limited by his high Calvinism, Gadsby’s theological convictions led him to cultivate an evangelism model that differed in method, but not in spirit, from the fervent free-offer evangelism of the Evangelical Revival.
Chapter 7: Conclusion and Critique

William Gadsby hoped his hymnbook would facilitate spiritual instruction and transformation of the heart. Evidence of the hymnbook’s reception suggests these aims were largely realized. One example of his successful integration of orthodox doctrine and experimentalism through hymnody is recorded in an article that appeared in 1910 in *The Gospel Standard*. A woman named Susan Sarll writes that she was raised in a church that promoted Arminian theology, and she was taught to hate the doctrine of election. Sarll recounts that in the mid-1840s, when she was about ten years old, she was sent to live with her relatives, who attended a Gadsbyite chapel. She notes, “As I was fond of singing, I bought a Gadsby’s hymnbook to use at chapel; but I hated the book because it was full of high doctrine.”¹ In 1855, during a cross-country trip to visit her grandparents, she remembers,

I opened my little Gadsby upon the eleventh hymn, “Thy mercy my God is the theme of my song”; and when I came to,

“Thy free grace alone, from the first to the last,
Has won my affections and bound my soul fast,”

I saw the doctrine [of election] in a new light, and was astonished…Then I opened my little book again, and saw other hymns that gave me some encouragement; so that a hope sprang up.\(^2\)

Later that same trip she attended a service at another Gadsbyite chapel. She recounts,

Now the minister and the few people that were there were perfect strangers to me. I had my hymnbook, and the 134th was given out, which I shall never forget:

“Hail, sovereign love, that first began
The scheme to rescue fallen man!
Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace.
That found my soul a hiding place!”

I believe they sang all the hymn, and every verse seemed more and more wonderful to me.\(^3\)

The hymn Sarll recalled, Jehoida Brewer’s “Hail, sovereign love, that first began,” is a powerful example of experimental hymnody. This hymn is a first-person narrative that warmly expresses a desire to experience Jesus’s presence through the tribulations and paradoxes of the Christian life; it also emphasizes the sin of the speaker, which was absolved by Jesus’s death. More importantly, it leads the singer through a journey of spiritual conversion: it begins with hardness of heart and pride, moves through fear and distress caused by the knowledge of God’s Law and the futility of “works righteousness,” and finally ends with assurance of life and peace with God through Jesus (Ex. 7.1):\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Ibid., 391; John Stocker, “Thy mercy my God is the theme of my song,” in W. Gadsby, \textit{Selection}, Hymn 11.


\(^4\) See Ch. 6 for the characteristics of experimental hymnody.
1 Hail, sovereign love, that first began
   The scheme to rescue fallen man!
   Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,
   That gave my soul a hiding-place!

2 Against the God who rules the sky
   I fought with hand uplifted high;
   Despised the mention of his grace,
   Too proud to seek a hiding-place.

3 But thus the eternal counsel ran:
   “Almighty love, arrest that man!”
   I felt the arrows of distress,
   And found I had no hiding-place.

4 Indignant Justice stood in view;
   To Sinai’s fiery mount I flew;
   But Justice cried, with frowning face,
   “This mountain is no hiding-place!”

5 Ere long a heavenly voice I heard,
   And Mercy’s angel-form appeared;
   She led me on, with placid pace,
   To Jesus, as my Hiding-place.

6 Should storms of seven-fold thunder roll,
   And shake the globe from pole to pole,
   No flaming bolt could daunt my face,
   For Jesus is my Hiding-place.

7 On him almighty vengeance fell,
   That must have sunk a world to hell;
   He bore it for a chosen race,
   And thus became their Hiding-place.

8 A few more rolling suns, at most,
   Will land me on fair Canaan’s coast,
   Where I shall sing the song of grace,
   And see my glorious Hiding-place.

Ex. 7.1. Jehoida Brewer, “Hail, sovereign love, that first began.”

Sarll continues her story by noting how this particular hymn was the starting point for her true Christian conversion. She writes that Brewer’s hymn was “a summary of my feelings; and I was so melted down that I was glad I sat in a pew by myself, and no one saw me.” After the service, Sarll recounts “when I stepped out of that chapel, I felt I could say, old things had passed away and all things appeared new.” Susan Sarll’s introduction to the Calvinistic doctrine of election by way of Gadsby’s Selection, as well as her identification with (and participation in) the journey of conversion that Brewer’s

5 Sarll, 392.
6 Ibid., 393.
hymn outlines, is precisely the interaction that Gadsby hoped his collection would encourage. Gadsby desired his collection to be “sound in the faith” and to be a vehicle for experimental evangelism.

**Gadsby and Evangelism: A Historical Perspective**

In the theological histories of the Particular Baptist churches, Andrew Fuller and William Gadsby are often pitted against one another as leaders of two opposing strains of Calvinism: Fuller leading the moderates, and Gadsby rallying those of the “high” order. It is interesting to note, however, that Fuller and Gadsby had the same goal—to spread the gospel through preaching and evangelism. Both men realized that a vital understanding of the gospel involved both the intellect and the emotions. Just as Fuller viewed his two main objects as “enlightening the minds and affecting the hearts of the people,” so too Gadsby longed for his listeners to have “the doctrines of grace in the head” and “the power of those doctrines in the heart.”

In addition, both men battled against “dry” high Calvinism. Ralph Frederick Chambers writes:

> Like many other ministers of his times, Fuller was much exercised in his mind concerning the cold, hard Calvinism which was very prevalent in his day—there being much sound doctrine preached, but very little gracious experience of the doctrines; much religion, but very little vital godliness. This caused him to seek for an antidote, even as the same consideration caused William Gadsby to proclaim a gospel which many termed antinomianism. But the exercise of mind led the two men in very different ways.

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Fuller solved the problem by abandoning high Calvinism all together; Gadsby, in contrast, sought to revitalize the system through experimental hymnody.

Although Gadsby’s “antidote” was not the free evangelicalism of Fuller, it was nonetheless essentially “evangelistic.” In his study of Calvinism and the Baptist denomination, Thomas J. Nettles addresses this issue as it relates to John Gill’s legacy. Nettles writes, “one can accuse Gill of ‘non-invitation, non-application’ only by clinging to an unbiblically narrow concept of ‘invitation,’ as if it were a call to physical activity at the end of a preaching service.”

The same can be said for Gadsby’s experimental evangelism: Gadsby’s gospel invitations have been misunderstood as “non-evangelical” because they were not couched in the typical Enlightenment language of the Evangelical Revival (i.e., the logic that one should “believe because Christ died for you”). Gadsby’s commitment to high Calvinism’s rejection of duty-faith prevented him from embracing this logic, but in his passion for the gospel, Gadsby found another way to express his evangelism: experimentalism. A perusal of his hymns and his preaching reveals that Gadsby’s “gospel invitations” were actually romantic appeals to participate in the drama of conversion: to feel the weight of sin and the sentence of the Law, to meditate on Christ’s sufferings, and finally to accept free grace. Gadsby’s method of evangelism was to urge his listeners to “taste and see,” knowing that God’s irresistible grace would draw those for whom Christ had already been offered.

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10 Psalm 34:8.
This paradox between Gadsby’s rejection of free-offer evangelism on one hand, and his intensity in declaring the gospel on the other, has been noted by several Baptist scholars in recent years. Robert W. Oliver notes the “remarkable freedom” with which Gadsby invited sinners to come to Jesus in the texts of his hymns, particularly in his “Come, whosoever will” (Ex. 7.2).⑪

1 Come, whosoever will,  
Nor vainly strive to mend;  
Sinners are freely welcome still  
To Christ, the sinner’s Friend.

2 The gospel-table’s spread  
And richly furnished too,  
With wine and milk, and living bread,  
And dainties not a few.

3 The guilty, vile, and base,  
The wretched and forlorn,  
Are welcome to the feast of grace,  
Though goodness they have none.

4 No goodness he expects;  
He came to save the poor;  
Poor helpless souls he ne’er neglects,  
Nor sends them from his door.

5 His tender, loving heart  
The vilest will embrace;  
And freely to them will impart  
The riches of his grace.

Ex. 7.2. William Gadsby, “Come, whosoever will.”⑫

Gadsby’s hymns, notes Oliver, counterbalance his high Calvinism.⑬ Kenneth Dix has also pointed out that William Gadsby bridged the gap between experimental high Calvinism and the “evangelical” high Calvinism of John Stevens and Septimus Sears.⑭

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⑪ Oliver, History, 191.
⑬ See Oliver, History, 191.
Using Gadsby as an example, Dix writes, “high-Calvinism, therefore, does not necessarily sound the death knell to mission and all evangelistic activity.”

In the romantic spirit of the early nineteenth century, as expressed through the experimentalism of his hymn collection, Gadsby found a way to rejuvenate the orthodox doctrines of high Calvinism, which to him were not “Calvinistic” truths, but “Bible” truths.

**Gospel Standard Identity**

Gadsby’s goal of transforming high Calvinism in northern England, supported by a single orthodox and experimental hymnbook, was certainly realized by the end of his lifetime. By 1844, the year of Gadsby’s death, his son John reported that nearly forty chapels had been founded under his father’s ministry. These chapels were identified as “Gadsbyite” sects of the Particular Baptist church, and were known for their experimental high Calvinism. Baptist historian William Thomas Whitley notes that by 1850, the Gadsbyite churches had succeeded in separating themselves from the rest of the English Particular Baptist churches. In the decade that followed, Gadsby’s followers further

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15 Ibid., 68.


17 See J. Gadsby, *Memoir*, 77, 99. Kenneth Dix points out that John Gadsby’s tone leads the reader to believe that William Gadsby was an evangelist in the manner of George Whitefield or John Wesley, both of whom preached to people who had never heard the gospel. In contrast, most of the churches founded under Gadsby’s care were breakaways from established churches. Dix asserts that the success of Gadsby’s ministry was due to an atmosphere of discontent that already existed in the north. “In some of the Particular Baptist churches, and in some churches of other denominations, a minority were unhappy with the religion of the day, with the changes taking place, and saw in Gadsby’s teaching a return to the old paths” (Dix, *Strict and Particular*, 57-58).

separated themselves from other high Calvinistic Baptist churches. In 1866, the editor of *The Baptist Magazine* commented that

> It is a common remark that, of all denominations of professed Christians, the Baptist is the most divided…there is a great division in the Baptist body…upon the doctrines commonly called Calvinistic… Amongst the High churches again there are several parties,… distinguished by their following certain leaders, such as the followers of the late William Gadsby and their ‘Gospel Standard,’ who form a considerable body in many parts of the country…

This separation, although regrettable in terms of Christian unity, was (in Gadsby’s opinion) necessary for the preservation of orthodox doctrine.²⁰

In the midst of this separation from the rest of the Particular Baptist denominations, Gadsby’s *Selection* helped to unify the Gadsbyites (later known as Gospel Standard Baptists) by providing a tangible object from which to conduct corporate and private worship.²¹ As Gospel Standard historian T. Abbott asserts that “by putting his doctrines, his gospel, into his own plain, easy-to-sing verse, he established these doctrines in the public worship assemblies of the Gadsbyite Gospel Standard churches.”²² In this way, Gadsby’s *Selection* was more than just a teaching or devotional

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²⁰ Concerning this isolationism, John Gadsby writes, “a great professor (we believe a preacher) said to [William Gadsby], ‘Really, Mr. Gadsby, you are one of the strangest preachers I ever knew, and those of your belief are as strange. You will have nothing to do with other professors of religion, nor associate with others preachers but those of your own sect; if you would, you might be the means of doing much more good; but you are quite alone.’ Mr. G. replied, ‘This is one proof of the truth of God’s word, where it says, ‘The people shall dwell alone, and not be counted among the nations’” (J. Gadsby, *Memoir*, 66).

²¹ Prior to 1835, when *The Gospel Standard Magazine* was founded by William and John Gadsby, Gadsby’s hymnbook was the unifying force for those who held Gadsby’s high Calvinistic views. Dix writes, “The factors unifying these churches were a common acceptance of Gadsbyite teaching, together with the use of Gadsby’s *Hymns for Public Worship*, and *The Gospel Standard Magazine*” (Dix, *Strict and Particular*, 59).

²² Matrunola and Abbott, 38.
tool; it became a symbol of experimental high orthodoxy. These congregations believed Gadsby’s hymnbook to be the only acceptable hymnbook for congregational worship. This conviction continues today in the nearly one hundred Gospel Standard chapels in England.\(^{23}\)

Conclusion

William Gadsby’s rejection of moderate Calvinism and its hymnody undoubtedly isolated him theologically from the wider Particular Baptist denomination and further perpetuated the divisions that were already present in the nineteenth-century English Baptist churches.\(^{24}\) The majority of Gadsby’s peers considered his ideas to be closed-minded (even unenlightened), evangelically backward, and stubbornly argumentative.\(^{25}\) In the mid-nineteenth century, many moderate Baptists criticized Gadsby and his followers for breaking away from the larger group of Particular Baptist churches, and for


\(^{24}\) One Baptist writer in the mid-nineteenth century described the divided state of the Baptist churches in England as follows: “In addition to the old and well-known division of the Baptist churches into the two denominations of ‘Particular’ and ‘General,’ there are numerous other subjects upon which our body is divided in doctrine and practice. One of these is the division upon the question of communion, forming ‘strict,’ and ‘open,’ or ‘union’ churches; and here again there is another division, some churches admitting the unbaptized to communion only, and others to full membership. Then there is a great division in the Baptist body upon the subject of doctrine, in most of the towns and villages there being a church or churches entirely separated from their brethren, and from all united Christian work, upon the ground of differences upon the doctrines commonly called Calvinistic. The churches holding what are called High views are in the habit of calling the other churches,—although professedly Particular—General, hold no fellowship with them, and withhold all support from the various missionary and denominational societies” (Lewis, “Baptist Union,” 537-538, quoted in J. Gadsby, ed. “Illustrations and Extracts,” 8).

\(^{25}\) Robert Halley writes, “It is commonly reported that he publicly said harsh things of other ministers. In doing so he did very wrong; but whether in this respect he was not more sinned against than sinning may be questioned, for many others said very hard things of him” (Halley, *Lancashire*, 484).
refusing to fellowship with “Fullerites.”

Since this time, Baptist historians have often labeled Gadsby as a separatist; in terms of the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist orthodoxy of Gill and Brine, however, Gadsby might better be referred to as a “continuationist.”

In fact, Gadsby may rightly be called not just a Puritan, as discussed in Chapter Four, but a romantic “puritan”: he sought to reinvigorate the Enlightenment scholasticism of eighteenth-century high Calvinism with the romantic experimentalism of the nineteenth century.

Gadsby shared John Wesley’s conception of a hymnbook as “a body of practical and experimental divinity,” believing that the doctrines taught in the hymns eventually become the doctrines believed by the congregation.

Teaching alone, however, was not enough for Gadsby. Due to the perceived “deadness” of the high Calvinism of the time, particularly in the face of the ardent passion of evangelicalism, Gadsby sought to communicate not only the doctrines, but also the evangelical heart of high Calvinism, that is, romantic orthodoxy. Because he considered singing to be the duty of all men, a

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26 A contributor for The Baptist Magazine comments that “Amongst the High churches again there are several parties, separated quite as much from each other as from the so-called Generals, and distinguished by their following certain leaders, such as the followers of the late William Gadsby and their ‘Gospel Standard,’ who form a considerable body in many parts of the country…” (Lewis, “Baptist Union,” 537-538). In his discussion of the divisions within the early nineteenth-century Particular Baptist churches, W.T. Whitley writes, “By 1850 [the followers of William Gadsby] had so secluded themselves that they ceased to be a brake upon others, and their emphatic claim that they alone were ‘Particular Baptists’ ceased to be taken seriously” (Whitley, History, 306).

27 John Gadsby called the moderate Calvinistic Baptist the “true seceders,” and his father’s high Calvinistic beliefs “those which were universally held by the Baptists in the first instance” (John Gadsby, ed., “Illustrations and Extracts,” 8).

28 Referring to Gadsby’s followers, Halley writes, “True Puritans and staunch Nonconformists they unquestionably are” (Halley, 483).

29 Wesley, Collection of hymns, for... Methodists, iv.
hymnbook was an ideal vehicle to spread his romantic orthodoxy throughout England (and eventually America and Australia). The dramatic narratives of the texts allowed Gadsby to reach out to the hearts of believers and non-believers without denying his high Calvinistic convictions. Gadsby’s romantic high Calvinism led him to develop a distinct method of evangelism that was made possible through the experimental texts of his hymnbook, and in this way, Gadsby’s collection may be understood as both a response to and a participation in the Evangelical Revival. William Gadsby succeeded in defining (and essentially transforming) high Calvinism for the romantic generation of English Calvinistic Baptists, and he did it by using thoroughly romantic means: congregational song. In the years that followed, J.C. Philpot would take up the reigns of high Calvinistic experimental hymnody and further define a theory of romantic worship among the Gospel Standard Baptists—but that is a story for another study.
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