

## CHAPTER 3 ORIGINS OF PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

### 3.1 Introduction

Andrew Fuller was a part of a larger Particular Baptist theological tradition which was influential in determining his understanding of pastoral ministry. This chapter provides a brief overview of origins of the Particular Baptists from their Puritan-Separatist roots and includes a description of the socio-political and theological forces that shaped Fuller's understanding of the ministerial office. Some factors that affected the decline and subsequent numerical rise of the Particular Baptists in the latter part of the eighteenth century will also be briefly discussed.

### 3.2 Particular Baptist beginnings

Two traditions of Anglophone Baptists emerged in the seventeenth century. They were designated either "General" or "Particular" Baptists according to their views of the atonement of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Their belief that the true church is both comprised of those who profess Christ as their Saviour and that water baptism, usually by full immersion, distinguished them as Baptists. Even though this departure from their immediate forbears over the issue of infant baptism resulted in the pejorative labels of "Antipaedo Baptists" or "Anabaptists" by some in the broader reformation tradition,<sup>2</sup> their conviction in this regard was positively motivated by a desire for biblical fidelity. As Roger Hayden observes, "It was the Bible that brought these Christians to

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<sup>1</sup> John Ryland, *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope, illustrated; in the Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Button & Son, 1818), 3.

<sup>2</sup> David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters from the Revolution to the Year 1838. Vol.1*, (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2000), 1: 134. Daniel Defoe uses both these terms to describe Baptists. See Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), 71.

radical faith.”<sup>3</sup> Yet despite their general agreement on believer’s baptism, the two communities had different origins as well as different theological emphases.<sup>4</sup>

The General Baptists, named for their belief that Christ died for all men and that anyone who put his/her faith in Christ would be saved, have their roots in the Amsterdam ministries of John Smyth (*ca.*1570-1612) and Thomas Helwys (died *ca.* 1615).<sup>5</sup> John Smyth was a Separatist, originally an Anglican, who left England for Amsterdam, Holland, due to the persecution of James I (r.1603-1625) around 1607. He came to accept believer’s baptism as biblical truth in 1609. Initially, he baptized himself and his congregation, but after criticism that his self-baptism was unbiblical, he was baptized again by the Waterlander Mennonite Church.<sup>6</sup> By this time he had also rejected Calvinism and adopted the views of Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) who taught Christ had died for all people not just the elect. Whereas Smyth most likely died before being fully absorbed into the Mennonite Waterlander Church,<sup>7</sup> Thomas Helwys and a small group from Smyth’s original congregation, moved back to England where they eventually set up the first Baptist Church on English soil and would become the first congregation in the General Baptist denomination.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Roger Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage: A Christian Training Programme Course* (Oxfordshire: The Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1990), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Some historians like Thomas Crosby (1685-1752), the son-in-law of Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), at times seem to wish to minimize the differences for the sake of unity prior to the union in 1813. Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists, From the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George 1, Vol. 3* (London: Crosby), I, 271-272. On the formation of the Baptist Union in 1813 see Ernest A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History*. (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1959), 147.

<sup>5</sup> B. R. White, *A History of the English Baptists, Volume 1, The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 7.

<sup>6</sup> John Smyth and about thirty-one others sought membership in February 1610 but they were not accepted immediately.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity: Volume One Beginnings in Britain* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 68-69.

<sup>8</sup> M. Dorothea Jordan, “John Smyth and Thomas Helwys: The Two First English Preachers of Religious Liberty. Resemblances and Contrasts.” *The Baptist Quarterly* 12 (April-July, 1947), 189, 195.

The second representative group of Baptists, and the focus of the following study, is the Particular Baptists. The Particular Baptists differed from their General Baptist counterparts primarily through their Calvinism and were so named because of their belief in a “particular” or “limited” atonement. The doctrine of Particular Redemption states that “the saving purpose of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was for the salvation of the elect alone.”<sup>9</sup> They became the more dominant of the two groups in the eighteenth century as many General Baptists adopted Unitarianism.<sup>10</sup> In fact Thomas Nettles argues that the theology of these Calvinistic Baptists continued to be highly influential among Baptists up to the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup>

The Particular Baptists of England arose during the reign of Charles I (1625-1644/49) descending from the Puritan- Separatist tradition.<sup>12</sup> In their case, the mainly Paedo-Baptist ecclesiology of the Independents evolved into the foundational Baptist tenet of Believer’s Baptism.<sup>13</sup> That they retained the Calvinistic theology of the Reformed tradition is clearly seen in their early confessions. In 1616, a congregation in London was established that became known as the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey church, so named for their first three Pastors who were Puritans turned

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<sup>9</sup> Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptist (1771-1892) from John Gill to C.H. Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2006), 166. See also, Fuller, *Gospel Worthy*, (Works, II, 373-375); cf. John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity* (Paris, AK: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1984), 461-467. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 255.

<sup>10</sup> Ryland, *Work of Faith, Labour of Love*, 3; R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760-1820* (Wheaton, Ill.: Richard Owen Roberts Publishers, 1989), 15; Peter Naylor, *Picking Up a Pin For the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century*, London: Grace Publications, 1994), 49; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: The Baptist Union Publications Department, 1947), 127.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life* (Louisiana: Cor Teum Tibi, 2002), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 56. Oliver, R.W., “Emergence of a Strict and Particular Baptist Community Among the English Calvinistic Baptists 1770-1850” (D.Phil. Thesis, CNA [London Bible College], 1986), 9. Haykin notes that this generally accepted thesis has been challenged most notably by E. A. Payne (M. A. G. Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys, Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage*, (Leeds, Reformation Trust Today, 1996), 18. See, for example, Ernest A. Payne, “Who were the Baptists?” *The Baptist Quarterly* 16 (October 1956), 339-342.

<sup>13</sup> H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Life and Faith of Baptists*. (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1946), 12-14.

Separatist.<sup>14</sup> From this group a man named John Spilsbury (1593-*ca.* 1668)<sup>15</sup> emerged to lead the first Particular Baptist church that was founded in 1638. He was a cobbler in London by trade and a member of the church of Henry Jessey (1601-1663) prior to his secession to begin this early Baptist work.<sup>16</sup> As the Particular Baptists continued to grow, he became an influential leader among them sometimes functioning as a polemicist in defense of Baptist distinctives.<sup>17</sup> In 1643 he published a book on baptism entitled *A Treatise Concerning the Lawful Subject of Baptism* to combat criticism that Believer's Baptism was scripturally illegitimate.<sup>18</sup> At the very least he was a signatory of the important *First London Confession of Faith*, but he may have contributed more than just his name.<sup>19</sup> The extent of his contribution to the *First London Confession*<sup>20</sup> is unclear; however Underwood feels he played a significant role in its actual formulation.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Jacob (1563-1624), John Lathrop (1584-1653), Henry Jessey (1601-1663).

<sup>15</sup> Also spelled "Spilsbery," see, B.R. White, "Samuel Eaton (d.1639) Particular Baptist Pioneer" *The Baptist Quarterly* 24 (January 1971), 12. "Spilsberie," see, B. R. White ed., *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660 Part III* (London: The Baptist Historical Society), 131.

<sup>16</sup> James M. Renihan, "John Spilsbury (1593-c. 1662/1668)" in M. A. G. Haykin, ed., *The British Particular Baptists 1638-1910*, (Springfield Missouri: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 1: 22-23.

<sup>17</sup> B. R. White, ed., *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660. Part 1. South Wales and the Midlands* (Didcot, Oxfordshire: Published by The Baptist Historical Society), 42. Here we see an example where he commended a tract published by Daniel King called, *A Way to Sion* (1650) which was also commended by other known Particular Baptists leaders Thomas Patient and William Kiffin. See B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century (A History of the English Baptists, Volume 1*, London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 71. The Abingdon Association sent a letter to Kiffin and others, including Spilsbury. B.R. White ed., *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660* (London: The Baptist Historical Society), 131. Also they regularly held the meetings at his house. "It is also agreed that the particular churches be desired to returne their answeres respectively to the messengers at London meeting weekly at brother Spilsberie's house in Cole-Harbour in Thames Street upon the 3rd day of the weeke at two of the clocke; and that it be done with as much speed as may be" (White, *Associational Records*, 175). And also, "John Spilsbury was known as a Calvinistic Baptist before signing the Confession of 1644; he signed its revisions in 1646, 1651; Heartbleedings in 1650; the letter to Ireland in 16543 Confessions, 322-6; the letter to Cromwell opposing his acceptance of the crown in 1657, Confessions, 335-8; the Humble Apology of 1660, Confessions. White, *Associational Records*, 343-52. It was in his home that the London messengers held their weekly meetings in May 1657. See the record of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. White, *Associational Records*, 208.

<sup>18</sup> White, *English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 71.

<sup>19</sup> William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith. Rev Edition* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969), 154-6.

<sup>20</sup> The First London Confession is discussed in more detail below.

<sup>21</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 60.

By 1644 there were seven congregations in London and forty-seven in the rest of England.<sup>22</sup> By 1660 there were one hundred and thirty-one Particular Baptist churches with the majority located in the Midlands, London, and the southern counties.<sup>23</sup> The impressive growth of the Baptists in this period parallels the development of associations of individual churches in a district or region that cooperated to further their mutual objectives.<sup>24</sup> These associations provided accountability for orthodoxy and a means for providing necessities for ministers of poorer churches.<sup>25</sup> This resulting “strength in numbers” cooperation facilitated evangelism and the spread of Baptist principles.

### 3.3 Particular Baptist Decline

The establishment of a parliamentary government not only contributed to the climate of social and political unrest, but it also provided a new sense of optimism for religious freedom. During this period of rapid Baptist growth, the Particular Baptists were often incorrectly associated with the radical Anabaptism of continental Europe which resulted in charges of heresy and political dissent.<sup>26</sup> As a result, they felt compelled to produce a statement of faith vindicating themselves from this false connection with the continental Anabaptists and the Arminianism of the General Baptists. *The First London Confession* is clearly Calvinistic in theology. This is especially clear in the articles outlining its Christology, and these twelve sections have been

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<sup>22</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 85.

<sup>23</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 85.

<sup>24</sup> White, *Baptists Seventeenth Century*, 65.

<sup>25</sup> Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys, Keach* 39-40.

<sup>26</sup> They were often charged with Pelagianism, named after Pelagius, a late fourth century British monk who taught that “...their native powers are such that men are capable of doing everything God requires of them for their salvation.” Reymond, *Systematic Theology*, 468. It also denied the concept of original sin. They were also labeled as “Arminians.” Ernest A. Payne, “Who were the Baptists?” *The Baptist Quarterly* 16 (October 1956), 339-342. Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 144.

interpreted by some as an indirect denial of Arminianism.<sup>27</sup> Also many of its articles come directly from the Independent Separatist Confession of 1596.<sup>28</sup> But despite these similarities with their Calvinistic brethren, the Baptist Confession stresses that full immersion in water is the proper mode of baptism.<sup>29</sup>

In 1661, influenced by the Established Church's perception that all sects were inherently dangerous to the state, Charles II (r. 1660-85) released a declaration proscribing all illegal and subversive meetings under facade of worship.<sup>30</sup> The Clarendon Code (1661-1665) was subsequently enacted to re-establish Episcopal power and to achieve a uniformity of creed. It was comprised of several acts aimed mostly at Presbyterians, but of course it affected all Dissenters, including the Baptists. The first Act of Parliament was called, The Corporation Act (1661) which stated that members of civic groups must take oaths of loyalty to the crown or they would be removed from office. Those wishing to hold an office were required to take the sacrament of the Church of England at least one year prior to their election.<sup>31</sup> The Act of Uniformity in 1662 required all clergy to agree to the precepts of *The Book of Common Prayer* and if they refused their benefice was revoked.<sup>32</sup> The Conventicle Act (1664) punished people for attending a Nonconformist church service.<sup>33</sup> Finally, The Five Mile Act (1665) prohibited dissenting clergy from coming within five miles of a place where they had previously ministered.<sup>34</sup> Because of these various Acts, all Dissenters, including the Baptists, were denied

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<sup>27</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 146.

<sup>28</sup> White, *English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 61. They borrowed twenty-six of fifty-three of the articles from the Independent confession.

<sup>29</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 167. See, for example, article XL.

<sup>30</sup> Basil Williams, *The Whig Supremacy (1714-1760)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 66.

<sup>31</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 95.

<sup>32</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 95. *The Book of Common Prayer* is the prayer book of the Church of England. It has been through several revisions over the last few centuries, but it includes the order to be followed in church services.

<sup>33</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 95.

<sup>34</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 96.

full legal rights in the state and experienced persecution. It was not uncommon for Baptists to have their meeting houses demolished by angry mobs.<sup>35</sup>

A measure of relief came in 1672 with a Declaration of Indulgence suspending ecclesiastical legal penalties and allowing the licensing of Dissenting meeting places.<sup>36</sup> These privileges would be withdrawn a year later with the *Test Act* (1673) which prevented Dissenters from entering civil and military office.

In 1677, the Particular Baptists, who shared Calvinism in common with the Independents and Presbyterians, sought to demonstrate their essential theological union with these other Nonconformists, to help present a unified and powerful dissenting voice in response to state persecution.<sup>37</sup> The Particular Baptists in London made one of the most significant of all Anglophone confessions, *The Westminster Confession*,<sup>38</sup> the basis of their own in *The Second London Confession*, albeit with their own distinctions included.<sup>39</sup> Lumpkin notes that there were also some significant differences from the *First London Confession* (1644, 1689) especially in articles describing the Scriptures, the Sabbath, and marriage, while its teaching on Calvinism became even more pronounced.<sup>40</sup> Other changes included statements that the Lord's Supper is not restricted to baptized people, the discarding of the term "sacrament," and an added provision justifying lay preaching.<sup>41</sup> Two months after an Act of Toleration (May 1689) a general meeting was held by Particular Baptists in London. Baptists from one hundred and seven churches in

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<sup>35</sup> W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Charles Griffen & Co. Ltd., 1923), 107.

<sup>36</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 235.

<sup>37</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 236.

<sup>38</sup> The Westminster Confession was created by the Westminster Assembly and published in 1646. It became the official Confession of Scotland and of the English Parliament. It was adopted by both Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

<sup>39</sup> Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach* (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2004), 215.

<sup>40</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 237.

<sup>41</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 238.

England and Wales sent messengers. At this meeting they approved the *Confession of 1677* for use in their churches. A second revised edition was republished in 1689.<sup>42</sup>

With the abolishment of compulsory service at the Church of England after the so-called Glorious Revolution of William III and Mary II (1688)<sup>43</sup> and with the passing of the Toleration Act (1689),<sup>44</sup> Dissenters were permitted to worship with relative freedom in their meeting places, although with unlocked doors. They were still required to take oaths of allegiance to the state and to sign the *Thirty-Nine Articles*<sup>45</sup> excepting the article affirming infant Baptism.<sup>46</sup> However, the optimism of this new-found freedom generated by the hopeful confidence of expected growth, soon gave way to a melancholy reality of regression.<sup>47</sup> Paradoxically, this period became a season of decline for the Baptists for a variety of social, economic, and theological reasons. Socially many Dissenters were still second-class citizens, which initially may have hindered the development of a more educated ministry. In addition, there were still communication and transportation challenges that made close-knit cooperation and interdependency between different Baptist congregations unfeasible as many Particular Baptists remained isolated from one another in remote villages. At this time in England the transportation system was still cumbrous and inefficient.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Roger Hayden, "The Particular Baptist Confession 1689 and Baptists Today" *The Baptist Quarterly* 32 (October 1988), 403.

<sup>43</sup> James issued his Declaration of Indulgence in 1687 in which he sought more freedoms for Catholics. Motivated by an increased repression of Anglicanism, and the birth of the King's son, a potential catholic heir, seven leaders invited William of Orange to England "to maintain liberties." James fled the country and Parliament offered the throne to William and Mary. Whitley, *British Baptists*, 164-5.

<sup>44</sup> The Toleration Act abolished compulsory attendance at Church of England services.

<sup>45</sup> The *Thirty-Nine Articles* are the essential statements of Anglican doctrine. They were issued by an assembly of clergy of the Church of England in 1571. They are contained in the Book of Common Prayer.

<sup>46</sup> Walker, *Excellent Keach*, 204.

<sup>47</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, "'A Habitation of God, Through the Spirit': John Sutcliff (1752-1814) and the Revitalization of the Calvinistic Baptists in the Late Eighteenth Century," *The Baptist Quarterly* 34 (July 1992), 304.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Defoe makes reference to the poor road conditions especially in the Midlands. Defoe, *Tour*, 407, 430.

Ideologically, the eighteenth century represented the “Age of Enlightenment” where, for some, human reason eclipsed divine revelation as the preferred basis for epistemology. After enduring years of religious wars and persecutions, many people had grown tired of theological wrangling.<sup>49</sup> As the influence of Deism and Socinianism arose to challenge theological orthodoxy, many churches, especially those among General Baptists, adopted their heterodox creed. Whereas the pressure of rationalism caused many General Baptists to question an orthodox Christology, it may have influenced Particular Baptists to intensify their convictions concerning the Doctrines of Grace<sup>50</sup> leading to High Calvinism.<sup>51</sup> In an effort to protect doctrinal fidelity, some Particular Baptists adopted a form of Calvinism that adhered too rigidly to the logic of a system, resulting in a denial of any offers of free grace.<sup>52</sup> This seemed to quench evangelistic fervour and is believed by many earlier Baptist historians to be the chief cause of decline among the Particular Baptists.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 117.

<sup>50</sup> “Doctrines of Grace” refers to the so-called “Five Points of Calvinism.” Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Particular Redemption, Effectual Calling, and Final Perseverance of the Saints.

<sup>51</sup> Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the 18th Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 5.

<sup>52</sup> See chapter one footnotes number 12 and number 13.

<sup>53</sup> Ryland, *Work of Faith, Labour of Love*, 5-8. It should be noted that this assumption has been recently challenged by Clive Jarvis in his doctoral thesis where he maintains that between 1715 and 1773 there “was tangible growth amongst English Baptist Churches, a fact which required a reassessment of the true impact of hyper-Calvinism, and in particular to question the extent to which it truly gripped English Particular Baptists.” Clive Robert Jarvis, “Growth in English Baptist Churches: With Special Reference to the Northamptonshire Particular Baptist Association (1770-1830)” (PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2002), 248. Of course in Particular Baptist theology numerical growth, which is quantifiable, is not as significant an indicator of decline as the more qualitative issues of holiness, love, a burden for the lost, etc. In this way decline can be measured in terms of evangelistic vitality, or desire, which of course would eventually lead to numerical decline. Contemporaries like John Ryland (Ryland, *Work of Faith, Labour of Love*, 5-8, Andrew Fuller (Andrew Gunton Fuller, *Memoir (Works*, I, 37). “Surely the system of religion [false Calvinism] which he, with too many others, has imbibed, enervates every part of vital godliness.”, and John Rippon (Ken R. Manley, *Redeeming Love Proclaim: John Rippon and the Baptists* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 2-3.) were convinced that the form of evangelism that Gill embodied lacked in evangelistic rigor and vitality. So High Calvinism, even if there was no numerical decline, could still negatively affect evangelistic enthusiasm eventually resulting in decline.

Between 1689 and 1715 the number of churches fell from 300 to 220, with a further decline to 150 by 1750.<sup>54</sup> Even though the Evangelical Revival began around 1730,<sup>55</sup> it was not until the 1770s that the effects of the Evangelical Revival took hold among the Particular Baptists.<sup>56</sup> Initially they were suspicious of the “enthusiasm” of the Methodists, their Paedobaptism, their connection to the state church, as well as their Arminianism.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.4 Particular Baptist Growth

During the years 1770-1815 the Baptists were expanding steadily.<sup>58</sup> As a newer generation of Particular Baptists emerged, they adopted a more evangelical form of Calvinism with a strong desire to spread the Gospel, not only throughout England, but to the whole world. Significantly, Dr. Kenneth Manley believes that the evangelical revival also affected worship styles among Dissent, especially in preaching and hymn singing, as doctrinal rigidity was relaxed in favour of more evangelistic concerns.<sup>59</sup> We have already noted how the life and writings of Andrew Fuller are usually given much of the credit for the adoption of this more moderate Calvinism especially among the Baptists.<sup>60</sup>

In the west of England Edward Terrill (1635-1686), an Elder of the Broadmead Church in Bristol, bequeathed a portion of his estate to the church to fund a school to train gifted leaders.

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<sup>54</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, his Friends and his Times* (Durham: Evangelical Press, 1994), 25.

<sup>55</sup> David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730's to the 1980's* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 21.

<sup>56</sup> Underwood, *English Baptists*, 160.

<sup>57</sup> Enthusiasm was a negative term describing, supposedly, those who experienced special revelation and/or empowerments of the Holy Spirit. It also contained the idea of extreme subjective religious excitement which was not appreciated by all in the so-called Age of Reason. Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists: Comprising the Principal Events of the History of Protestant Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1688 till 1760; and of the London Baptist Churches, During that Period. Volume III* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1823), 290.

<sup>58</sup> W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Charles Griffen & Company Limited, 1923), 245.

<sup>59</sup> Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> See chapter 1.

He was particularly concerned that they learn Hebrew and Greek as he believed this training would better equip them to minister the Gospel.<sup>61</sup> Although Baptists were divided on the need for an educated ministry, as they are today, many believed that it was necessary to ensure their prosperity. It is significant that the money was bequeathed to the care of the church, for this ensured a continued and close relationship between *academia* and *ecclesia*. Bristol Academy became a significant influence among Particular Baptists as it produced a continuous stream of gifted, evangelical men intent on propagating the Gospel. Since its inception in 1679, Bristol Baptist College has also produced many exceptional Baptist leaders. Roger Hayden believes that outside London, evangelical, or moderate Calvinism, was centered in Bristol, where over 177 students were trained for the Baptist ministry between 1720 and 1790.<sup>62</sup>

Bernard Foskett (1685-1758), a minister at Broadmead Baptist Church from 1728 to 1758, trained over eighty ministers in Wales and England.<sup>63</sup> Among them were outstanding leaders such as Benjamin Beddome at Bourton-on-the-Water (1717-1795),<sup>64</sup> John Ash at Pershore (1724-1779),<sup>65</sup> and Benjamin Francis at Nailsworth (1734-1799).<sup>66</sup> Welshman Hugh

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<sup>61</sup> Norman S. Moon, *Education for Ministry: Bristol Baptist College 1679- 1979* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1979), 1.

<sup>62</sup> Hayden, Roger, "Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century British Baptists with Particular Reference to Bernard Foskett, Hugh and Caleb Evans and the Bristol Baptist Academy, 1690-1791" (PhD Thesis, University of Keele, 1991), Abstract. Evangelical Calvinism is a term often used to describe a form of Calvinism that is vitally interested in evangelism.

<sup>63</sup> Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. "Foskett, Bernard" by Roger Hayden, 399-400. Hayden, *Baptist History and Heritage*, 88.

<sup>64</sup> Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. "Beddome, Benjamin," by Karen E. Smith, 74.

<sup>65</sup> For Biographical information see Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. "Ash, John," by Roger Hayden, 34. At his funeral address Caleb Evans described his preaching as, "plain, practical, powerful, and thoroughly evangelical." G. H. Taylor, "The Reverend John Ash, LL.D. 1724-1779" *The Baptist Quarterly* 20 (January, 1963), 13. For further information on Ash's background, the church at Pershore, Ash's friendship with Caleb Evans and his descendents (including Joseph Ash) see G. F. Nuttall, "John Ash and the Pershore Church" *The Baptist Quarterly* 22 (January 1968), 271-276.

<sup>66</sup> Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. "Francis, Benjamin," by D. Densil Morgan, 404. Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 8.

Evans (1713-1781) was invited by the Broadmead Church to continue as senior pastor and principal of the College after the death of Foskett in 1758.<sup>67</sup> The church also appointed his son to assist him in the work. Caleb Evans (1737-1791) co-pastored with his father and ministered together with him at the church and school for the next twenty-three years.<sup>68</sup> When Hugh died in 1781 Caleb assumed responsibility for both aspects of the ministry.

In response to the need for more Baptist ministers, the Bristol Education Society was formed in 1770 which allowed other churches to contribute funds to help pay the expenses for potential Baptist ministers.<sup>69</sup> The work of the college remained closely connected to the church, for the aims of the society were, to supply able evangelical ministers, to help gifted men develop their gifts, to involve the churches in the selection of potential ministers, and to encourage evangelistic work in the churches.<sup>70</sup> These teachers taught a liberal education at a very high standard, but their goal was not just to create excellent scholars, but to produce effective ministers. They wanted to produce “able, evangelical, lively, zealous ministers of the Gospel.”<sup>71</sup>

From its beginning the school was a proponent of moderate Calvinism that encouraged the free offer of grace and the preaching of the Gospel.<sup>72</sup> Caleb Evans was urging students to preach a Gospel of Christ where He would save all that came to God by him.<sup>73</sup> As one might expect many of its students imbibed this evangelistic concern and propagated it. Through his publication, *The Baptist Annual Register*, men like John Rippon (1751-1836) disseminated vital

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<sup>67</sup> Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. “Evans, Hugh” by Roger Hayden, 368-369.

<sup>68</sup> Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. “Evans, Caleb” by Roger Hayden, 366-367.

<sup>69</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 11-12.

<sup>70</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 11-12.

<sup>71</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 11.

<sup>72</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 18.

<sup>73</sup> Brown, *Baptists Eighteenth Century*, 115.

information on the state of the various churches which had a unifying effect among the Baptists.<sup>74</sup> His stories about the BMS fuelled growing interest and support for missions among the Baptists. Also, through his collection of Hymns in *Selections* he provided a standard for hymnology among the Particular Baptists which helped propagate certain Baptist theological emphases.<sup>75</sup> Bristol Baptist Academy also produced noteworthy ministers like Thomas Dunscombe (1748-1811) who significantly contributed to Baptist growth in Oxfordshire<sup>76</sup> and John Sutcliff (1752-1814), who, following Jonathan Edwards, initiated the “Prayer Call of 1784.”<sup>77</sup> Samuel Pearce (1766-1799) was a strong proponent of missions and was extremely disappointed when he was unable to go to the mission field himself. William Staughton (1770-1829)<sup>78</sup> was present at Kettering at the founding of the BMS. He entered Bristol Academy in 1791 from Cannon Street Church in Birmingham, where he was baptized by Samuel Pearce. He was chosen to succeed Ryland at College Lane, Northampton, but declined. Instead he moved to America and became known for his passionate interest in Christian missions and Christian education. He was a regular correspondent of Carey and ardent supporter of missions. He also founded the Philadelphia Baptist Education Society.<sup>79</sup> William Steadman (1764-1837) was actively involved as an itinerant preacher. He was also a great proponent of missions, the president of an academy, an evangelist, and a leader among Baptist associations.<sup>80</sup> He entered the

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<sup>74</sup> Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume II* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. “Rippon, John” by K. R. Manley, 941. “From 1790 to 1802 Rippon edited the *Baptist Annual Register*, the first periodical among Particular Baptists. Through this influential medium Rippon both reflected and stimulated the new evangelical vitality in the churches of both England and America.”

<sup>75</sup> In regard to the influence of Rippon’s *Selection*, Manley writes, “Any good hymn- book helps to interpret and define the Christian faith for its own generation.” K. R. Manley, “The Making of an Evangelical Baptist Leader” *The Baptist Quarterly* 26 (April, 1976), 256.

<sup>76</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 15

<sup>77</sup> See chapter 1.

<sup>78</sup> Roger Hayden, “What are the Qualifications of a Gospel Minister?” *Baptist Quarterly* 19 (October 1962), 352.

<sup>79</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 26.

<sup>80</sup> Sharon James, “William Steadman (1764-1837)” in Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *The British Particular Baptists 1638-1910* (Springfield, Missouri: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), II, 163. When he first read of the BMS he wrote in

Bristol Academy in 1788 and would go on to become the president of Horton Academy in 1806.<sup>81</sup> Joseph Kinghorn (1766-1832) spent his entire ministry at St. Mary's Baptist Church, Norwich, after graduating from Bristol.<sup>82</sup> He was a key leader among the Baptists and a keen supporter of the BMS. This evangelical Calvinistic concern was continued in the leadership of John Ryland who succeeded Caleb Evans. During his thirty-two years as principal of the college, twenty-six of his students became missionaries in the BMS.<sup>83</sup>

### 3.5 Conclusion

Between the years 1780-1830 a discernible shift occurred in the mindset of Particular Baptists.<sup>84</sup> A renewed interest in evangelism by key leaders, supported by important institutions like the BMS and Bristol College, played a significant role in the growth of the Particular Baptists in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Factors influencing the nature of this change include not only a theological shift in the area of the free offer, but also an increase in itinerant preaching,<sup>85</sup> the formation of Sunday Schools, and an increased participation in associational life and foreign missions.<sup>86</sup> But the question to be answered is how was their pastoral theology itself affected?

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his journal, "It revived me, and did my heart good to think that God had put it into the heart of any to attempt that good work; and I cannot but look upon this as one of the many favorable indications of the approach of the universal spread of the Gospel and of the latter day glory." Walter Fancutt, "William Steadman's Hampshire Years" *The Baptist Quarterly* 16 (October 1956), 366-367.

<sup>81</sup> James, *Steadman*, 169.

<sup>82</sup> Dean Olive, "Joseph Kinghorn (1766-1832)" in M. A. G. Haykin, ed., *The British Particular Baptists 1638-1910, Volume III* (Springfield Missouri: Particular Baptist Press, 2003), 85.

<sup>83</sup> Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 35.

<sup>84</sup> W. R. Ward, "The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church, 1780-1830" *The Baptist Quarterly* (October 1973), 167.

<sup>85</sup> "From the first appearance of this new emphasis upon itinerant preaching the leadership and impetus came from those who were ordained ministers. Among those raised in the older Dissenting tradition of the settled pastorate and its associated responsibilities the concern for itinerancy was slow to develop, but in this as in many other aspects of evangelism the 1790s proved to be the crucial decade and by 1800 many Baptist ministers were endeavouring to combine effectively both pastoral and evangelistic roles." Deryck W. Lovegrove, "Particular Baptist Itinerant Preachers During the Late 18<sup>th</sup> and Early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *The Baptist Quarterly*, 28 (July 1979), 128.

<sup>86</sup> Ward, *Baptist Transformation*, 167.

Accompanying this theological shift in the area of the free offer was there a significant renewal in their understanding of the ministry? To begin to answer these questions the pastoral theology of the Particular Baptists, and in particular their theology prior to the revival, must be carefully analyzed in light of Fuller's pastoral theological emphasis. But before these questions are tackled the ordination service itself must be examined. Why was it so important to these Baptists? The next chapter will describe the importance as well as the dynamics of Particular Baptist ordination sermons in the long eighteenth century.

## CHAPTER 4 DYNAMICS OF PARTICULAR BAPTISTS ORDINATION SERMONS

### 4.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to review the dynamics of the ordination sermon to consider their value and to describe the nature and importance of the main sermonic addresses.

These ordination services, and particularly the charge, were a very significant expression of Baptist pastoral ministry and so the actual procedure and content must first be understood.

### 4.2 Their Value

At the ordination of the Rev. W. Belsher in 1797 to the pastorate of the Baptist Church in Worcester, the Rev. G. Osborn explained that, “according to scriptural example, and apostolic practice, we are met [sic] together this day, to help each other by our mutual prayers and advice, to *recognize* the solemn designation of our brother to the work of the ministry.<sup>1</sup> He believed, first of all, that the ordination ceremony was rooted in obedience to Scripture. Second, he recognized that it was a public interaction where the congregation, pastor elect, and the visiting elders were gathered to confirm God’s call of a man to the ministry. But it was more than just a confirmation of call as it represented the time when a minister truly is made a minister, that is, set apart, in the Church of God. Neville Clark says, “As to be a Christian is to be baptized, so to be a minister is to be

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<sup>1</sup> G. Osborn, *The Duty of the Ministers to be Nursing Fathers to the Church; and the Duty of Churches to Regard Ministers as the Gift of Christ: A Charge, Delivered by the Rev. John Ryland, D. D. of Bristol; and a Sermon, Delivered by the Rev. S. Pearce, M.A., of Birmingham; in the Dissenters Meeting-House, Angel-Street, Worcester, at the Ordination of the Rev. W. Belsher, to the Pastorate of the Baptist Church, meeting in Silver-Street, in the same city: Together with an Introductory Address, by the Rev. G. Osborn, and also Mr. Belsher’s Declaration of Religious Sentiments.* (London: Button, 1796), 6. The comments of N. Clark are helpful, “But the assurance of the call of God must never stand alone, and individual conviction must be tested and confirmed by the community.”

ordained,”<sup>2</sup> therefore “the assurance of the call of God must never stand alone, and individual conviction must be tested and confirmed by the community.”<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1705, at the ordination of Rev. David Rees, Joseph Stennett explained that, to “ordain” means “constitute,” “to create,” or “establish” a man in office.<sup>4</sup> There were two offices in the Baptist church – elders and deacons. The elder (Acts 14:23) was also known as “bishop” (1 Timothy 3:1), “overseer” (Acts 20:28), “pastor” (Ephesians 4:11), “guide,” “teacher,” “ruler,” and “governor” (Heb. 13:17).<sup>5</sup> As elders they are given authority by the head of the church, Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> They are called “pastors” because they function as shepherds, metaphorically feeding the flock of Christ with the Word of God.<sup>7</sup> They are called “bishops” or “overseers” because they have responsibility to see that the church is administered orderly according to the divine will of God.<sup>8</sup> An overseer signifies a steward, who is put in charge of the church of whom Christ is the head.<sup>9</sup> They are called “guides” or “leaders,” because they lead the people into spiritual warfare, encouraging them in their duties, and exercise discipline to maintain purity.<sup>10</sup> They are called “teachers” because this represents a chief aspect of their work. They believed that essentially the terms “bishop” and “elder” signified the same thing as did the terms

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<sup>2</sup> N. Clark, “The Meaning and Practice of Ordination” *The Baptist Quarterly* 17 (January 1958), 202.

<sup>3</sup> Clark, *Meaning of Ordination*, 198.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Stennett, *The Works of the late Reverend and Learned Mr. Joseph Stennett. Vol. II. Containing Fifteen Sermons Never Before Publish’d, Sermon III. Preach’d at the Ordination of the Revd. Mr. David Rees and Two Deacons; in a Church of Christ at Limehouse, Feb. 19, 1705-6*, (London, 1731), 81. See Acts 6.

<sup>5</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 81.

<sup>6</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 83.

<sup>7</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 83.

<sup>8</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 84.

<sup>9</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 84.

<sup>10</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 84.

“pastor” and “teacher.”<sup>11</sup> In all of these descriptions it becomes apparent that the preaching ministry of a pastor was central to the successful discharge of the office.

Historian Raymond Brown, speaking of the importance of preaching in the early part of the eighteenth century, says, “In any account of religious life and thought in post-reformation England it is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence of the sermon.”<sup>12</sup> Published sermons were in great demand as they represented a chief means of disseminating religious “intelligence.”<sup>13</sup> Sermons covered a broad spectrum of thought including religion, politics, ethics, and science. But among Particular Baptists, ordination sermons were regarded as uniquely important and were frequently published. Many Particular Baptists believed that their churches’ fortunes were tied directly to the appointment of God-called men to their pulpits.<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, these ordination services were generally well attended and generated interest even beyond Baptist circles. At the ordination of Abraham Booth on 16 Feb 1769 even the “Countess of Huntingdon was among the large number who attended the service.”<sup>15</sup> These ordination services were noteworthy for a variety of reasons.

Particular Baptist esteem for the ordination of their pastors was rooted in their high regard for the Bible and the concomitant obligation to faithfully adhere to its

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<sup>11</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 85-6. More specific details about the purpose, function, and duties of Elders and Deacons are discussed below.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Brown, “Baptist Preaching in Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century England” *The Baptist Quarterly*, 31 (January 1985), 4.

<sup>13</sup> This term was often used in the eighteenth century to describe previously unknown, or not yet disseminated, information.

<sup>14</sup> John Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register: For 1794, 1795, 1796-1797. Including Sketches of the State of Religion Among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1796), 521.

<sup>15</sup> Ernest A. Payne, “Abraham Booth, 1734-1806” *The Baptist Quarterly* 26 (January 1975), 32. Selina Countess of Huntingdon (24 Aug. 1707 -17 June 1791) was a well known, wealthy Calvinist Methodist leader and generous financial supporter of the Methodist cause. Donald M. Lewis, Editor, *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860 Volume I* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. “Huntington, Selina” by Peter J. Lineham, 585-586.

precepts. They felt that Scripture taught the necessity of the perpetuity of the ordination rite in accordance with apostolic precedent.<sup>16</sup> Also, for Baptists, preaching the Word of God, the Scriptures, was central to their concept of worship. William L. Lumpkin, describing the contents of the London Confession of 1644, says, “There is a strong emphasis throughout the *Confession* on preaching ...”<sup>17</sup> The goal of all ministry was the magnification of the glory of God as demonstrated primarily through His redemptive purposes in Christ. They were following in the doctrinal footsteps of their Reformed forefathers, echoing the cry of *sola fide*.<sup>18</sup> Salvation is by faith and faith comes primarily through hearing the Word of God.<sup>19</sup> Article XXIV of the confession states that, “faith is ordinarily begot by the preaching of the Gospel, or word of Christ”<sup>20</sup> Preaching was the responsibility of the pastor and so the church’s success in fulfilling her mandate to glorify God was integrally related to the ministry of the pastor.<sup>21</sup> In all that they did they sought to obey God through the Scriptures, or in their parlance, to maintain “orderliness.”

A unique feature of the charge<sup>22</sup> in the ordination service was that it represented an admonition from one pastor to another pastor on how the office of elder should function effectively. These sermons embody a uniquely practical exposition of the goals, purposes, encouragements, challenges, and execution of the pastoral office. Beyond a systematic exposition of a Particular Baptist pastoral theology, they contain an elucidation of pastoral theology purified in the crucible of practiced ministry. Pastors

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<sup>16</sup> See Introductory Discourse below for an expansion of this assertion.

<sup>17</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 146. See article XXVI.

<sup>18</sup> Latin for “faith alone.” This doctrine teaches that salvation is by faith alone.

<sup>19</sup> They based this on Romans 10:17- “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

<sup>20</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 163, See article XXIV.

<sup>21</sup> Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 168. See article XLV.

<sup>22</sup> The Charge represents the address of a visiting pastor to the newly ordained pastor outlining his duties and responsibilities as a Minister of the church.

who had learned to implement their inherited Particular Baptist theological convictions in their own unique context strove to transmit what they had learned to a new generation of pastoral leadership. Therefore ordination sermons served inimitably to further shorten the gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxy – that’s between a written practical theology and practiced theology. For example, although John Gill’s *Practical Divinity* clearly articulated a pragmatic theology written by an active pastor, ordination sermons were delivered by active practitioners admonishing other ministerial practitioners with the fervor of a shared interest in a divine cause. This intensified the complementary realities of the pragmatism of ministry and the relatively more abstruse concerns of practical theology.

Further, the solemn designation of a pastor to the ministry occurred in the public milieu of a local church as the charge was delivered in a covenantal context. This exchange between practitioners was expressed openly. The church and their newly ordained pastor were voluntarily binding themselves together in a covenantal relationship that produced an increased accountability and commitment towards one another. For the pastor especially this necessitated the manifestation of a blameless character. It was the pastor’s duty to admonish people to obey certain theological precepts to which he, as both a Christian and member of the church, was also accountable. In this role, where his life was regularly exposed to sustained public scrutiny, any discrepancies between his words and actions were amplified. As a leader he had an even greater responsibility than the average church member to maintain a consistent example of practicing what he preached.

As the ordination service typically included a separate address to the church they outlined their responsibilities to support the pastor in his ministry, this mutual accountability made the ordination ceremony even more significant in terms of its effect of functionalizing theology. Both pastor and congregation were mutually accountable to scriptural precepts ratified in a public ceremony. In this sense it was not unlike a marriage bond with all the accompanying privileges, duties, commitments, and responsibilities.<sup>23</sup>

### 4.3 Ordination Procedure

John Rippon's *The Baptist Annual Register* (1790-1802), the first English Baptist periodical, is an important source for the historian studying eighteenth-century Particular Baptist ordinations.<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall states that, "No other denomination has such a fine contemporary record of its churches and their ministers as exists for the 1790s in Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*."<sup>25</sup> Ken Manley believes that the thirteen years that it was published cover the most important period in the history of the Particular Baptists.<sup>26</sup> So we have a unique record of Particular Baptists ministerial activity during a crucial phase of their saga in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *A Charge and Sermon together with an Introductory Discourse and Confession of Faith Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Abraham Booth Feb.16, 1769, in Goodman's Fields. Published by the Request of the Church* (London: Printed for G. Keith, Gracechurch Street; J. Buckland, Paternoster Row; W. Harris, St Paul's Church-yard; B. Tomkins, Fenchurch Street; J. Gurney, Holborn, 1769), 35. "The office of pastor is relative to a particular church, gathered according to divine appointment; and results from a solemn contract and covenant with one another." William Nash Clarke, who delivered the Introductory Discourse, was at the time the minister at Unicorn Yard Church. Seymour Price, "Abraham Booth's Ordination, 1769" *The Baptist Quarterly* 9 (October 1938), 242.

<sup>24</sup> Ken R. Manley, *Redeeming Love Proclaim: John Rippon and the Baptists* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 139. Rosemary Taylor, "English Baptist Periodicals, 1790-1865" *The Baptist Quarterly* 27 (April 1977), 54.

<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Baptist Churches and their Ministers in the 1790s Rippon's Baptist Annual Register" *The Baptist Quarterly* 30 (October 1984), 383.

<sup>26</sup> Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 139.

The *Register* functioned as a unifying document for Baptists by sharing valuable information of common interest including records on lists of churches, associational letters, personal correspondences, reports from Europe, missionary news, list of books and other miscellaneous facts that would be of interest particularly to Calvinistic Baptists. One of these sections entitled, “Intelligence,” included descriptions of over one hundred ordinations services demonstrating further the great interest and significance of these proceedings to the Baptists. Of these one hundred sermons, five were of American Baptists, one of a General Baptist, three of Independent pastors, and the rest were of Particular Baptists.<sup>27</sup> But they not only indicate the worth of these ordination services for Particular Baptists, they also provide valuable information on the participants, the order of service, the length of service and other important details.

#### 4.3.1 Outline of Service

There was flexibility in the *modus operandi* of an ordination service due to a variety of mainly pragmatic factors. The accessibility of an appropriate meeting place might affect the number of ministers able to participate, which in turn would influence its length. If time were really short, for example, the address to the Church might be eliminated. Or the number of pastors from other Particular Baptists churches available to conduct the service might be influenced by prior commitments or geographical isolation. Nevertheless, a survey of Rippon’s *Register* indicates an homogeneity of observance in Particular Baptist ordination ceremonies.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Manley, *Redeeming Love*, 186.

<sup>28</sup> “Ordinations are recorded in both volumes...The order followed in the service, which was virtually invariable, continued to be a traditional into the present century.” Nuttall, *Baptist Churches and Ministers*, 385.

### 4.3.2 Timeline Before Ordination

Part of the tacit responsibilities of a congregation in a Particular Baptist church in the eighteenth century was to constantly look out within their own ranks for men<sup>29</sup> with ministerial potential.<sup>30</sup> If a man was suspected of having the necessary moral character and ministerial gifts he was called to exercise his talents before the church.<sup>31</sup> He would preach over a certain period of time, usually on a Lord's Day evening, for evaluation by the members.<sup>32</sup> Rippon records the testing cycle of a man called Rushton in September 1795. He first was asked to demonstrate his preaching abilities before the church on a Sunday. Judging his exhortation acceptable, they asked him to continue preaching for six to seven weeks more to allow all the church members opportunity to hear and evaluate his abilities properly. After this trial period they set apart a day for prayer and fasting to seek the Lord's will in the matter. By 8 November 1795 the entire church agreed to call him to the work of the ministry and after prayerful consideration he accepted the call.<sup>33</sup> The actual ordination procedure usually came even later.

In the case of the Rev. William Pain who was ordained on April 1794, it occurred a year and ten months after his probation period.<sup>34</sup> The Rev. Sowerby was called to ministry in 1788 and was ordained the following October,<sup>35</sup> whereas, the Rev. Robert

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<sup>29</sup> Among the Particular Baptists there was a widespread belief that only men qualified for the position of Elder.

<sup>30</sup> John Gill, *The Duty of Churches Respecting the Encouragement of Spiritual Gifts. The Circular Letter from the Baptist Ministers and Messengers, Assembled at St. Albans, May 31, and June 1, 2, 1796*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> G. Reid Doster tells the interesting story of a General Baptist named Widmer who went through a seven year period between his proposal to the office and the ordination. The delay was largely a result of some members questioning his character based on 1 Timothy 3: 7, 8. G. Reid Doster, "Discipline and Ordination at Berkhamsted General Baptist Church, 1712-1718" *The Baptist Quarterly* 27 (July 1977), 128-138.

<sup>32</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 483.

<sup>33</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 483.

<sup>34</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345.

<sup>35</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 346.

Hyde was sent into ministry in 1785, and was ordained on May 1787.<sup>36</sup> Another example was the ordination of the Rev. Joseph Swain, of Walworth near London, who was for eight years a member of John Rippon's church, and was called to the work of the ministry on 2 June 1791 and ordained 8 February 1792.<sup>37</sup> The Rev. James Barnett had an eighteenth-month probation period before being ordained.<sup>38</sup> There seems to be no formally established length of time before a man was ordained to the ministry. Rather the main criterion was that the church was satisfied that he was God's chosen minister for them. In many cases, the ordinand was already functioning successfully as a *de facto* pastor. There was also the possibility that he may have been ordained previously and was being re-ordained. An example of this was Robert Hyde, who was first ordained in May 1787, and was re-ordained in August 1795.<sup>39</sup> Re-ordination took place when a minister changed pastorates.

Following what they believed was the scriptural precedent set in Acts 6:1-7<sup>40</sup> and Acts 13:1-3,<sup>41</sup> pastors from other churches were invited to preside over ordination

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<sup>36</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 349.

<sup>37</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 521.

<sup>38</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 349.

<sup>40</sup> Acts 6:1-7 "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. <sup>2</sup> Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. <sup>4</sup> But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. <sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: <sup>6</sup> Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. <sup>7</sup> And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

<sup>41</sup> Acts 13:1 "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. <sup>3</sup> And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away."

services. Particular Baptists believed they that only elders were qualified to ordain for the ministry.<sup>42</sup> Usually, these were Particular Baptists ministers, but sometimes Independent ministers also participated<sup>43</sup> although typically their involvement was restricted to reading Scripture, singing, and prayer.<sup>44</sup> There could be thirteen to fourteen ministers attending as witnesses with upwards of seven participating in the service.<sup>45</sup> Typically, at least three or four visiting ministers were actively involved in the speaking and praying aspects of the service,<sup>46</sup> but other ordained men would join in when it came time to lay on hands at the ordination prayer.<sup>47</sup> Ordination services were considered important events that would often attract other clergy in the area. Rippon even records the unanticipated attendance of a “Popish priest” at one.<sup>48</sup>

Normally the service would be held in the Baptist Meeting House but poorer congregations, who had inadequate facilities, were sometimes forced to request the use of another Dissenter’s Meeting Place. Usually these were owned by either Independents or General Baptists, but sometimes they asked to borrow the facilities of Quakers or

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<sup>42</sup> J. Sutcliff, *The Difficulties of the Christian Ministry, and the Means of Surmounting them; with the Obedience of Churches to their Pastors Explained and Enforced: A Charge, by the Rev. J. Ryland, D.D. and a Sermon by the Rev. Andrew Fuller; Together with an Introductory Address, by the Rev. J. Sutcliff; Delivered June 23, 1802, At the Ordination of Thomas Morgan, To the Pastoral Office over the Baptist Church, meeting in Cannon-street, Birmingham: And, also, Mr. Morgan’s Declaration of Religious Sentiments* (London: J. Belcher; Button and Son, Paternoster Row, 1802), 6.

<sup>43</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 482. Usually ministers were from the same county unless they were very well known nationally. An exception to the dominance of participation by Particular Baptist ministers was the case of William Hoddy in 1795 at Bildeston in Suffolk, who had only one Baptist minister take part. The other five ministers were all Independents. Nuttall, *Baptist Churches and Ministers*, 385.

<sup>44</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 117, 121. 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, 1791), 518, 521. Jarvis makes mention of Abraham Tozer who was ordained by Philip Doddridge a Congregationalist minister on 20 June 1745. Jarvis, “Growth in Baptist Churches,” 14-15.

<sup>45</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345.

<sup>46</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345, 346.

<sup>47</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 122.

<sup>48</sup> Rippon. *Register*, 481.

Methodists.<sup>49</sup> If no church building was available they were forced to be more creative.

An interesting anecdotal account in Rippon's *Register* illustrates such a need at the ordination of Rev. William Terry, at Snare Yorkshire 13 November 1793:

This service was conducted in a dwelling house, the poor people not having a meeting house; a barn being too dark and cold; and their friendly neighbours the *Quakers* and the *Methodists* at Massam, being so unfriendly as each to deny the use of their respective houses upon this occasion: But it was pleasing to recollect, that the throne of grace is everywhere accessible, and that the people were within the promise, Matthew xviii.20.<sup>50</sup>

It seems that the lack of availability of an adequate building sometimes necessitated the use of someone's home. In another instance, due to a lack of space, they were forced to use the "meeting-house-yard."<sup>51</sup>

### 4.3.3 Day/Length of Service-Morning

Often the formal service began at 10:00 am or 10:30 am, usually on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.<sup>52</sup> The congregation would frequently assemble at 8:00 am to pray for God's presence and blessing at the impending service.<sup>53</sup> The ceremony would last anywhere from three to four hours sometimes even longer. There is reason to suspect

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<sup>49</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 117, 192.

<sup>50</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 122.

<sup>51</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 480.

<sup>52</sup> For example; Tuesday – William Payne 8 April 1794 (Rippon, *Register*, 345); Rev. Holmes 7 July 1795 (Rippon, *Register*, 347); Wednesday – Benjamin Evans 16 July 1794 (Rippon, *Register*, 345); Hugh Williams 24 June 1795 (Rippon, *Register*, 346); Samuel Pearce 18 August 1790 (Rippon, *Register* 1790, 517); Thursday – Joseph Hobbs 30 April 1795 (Rippon, *Register*, 346); Benjamin Dickinson 25 February 1790 (Rippon, *Register* 1790, 517); George Braithwaite 28 March 1734 (note this is calculated under the Julian calendar prior to Britain's conversion to the Gregorian calendar in 1752). John Gill, *The Duty of a Pastor to his People: Preached at the Ordination of the Reverend George Braithwaite, M.A. March 28, 1734. Sermon XXXVII in A Collection of Sermons and Tracts*: (London: George Keith, 1773), 1. At the ordination of Richard Machin at the Particular Baptist Church at Bridlington in 1737, the service was held on a Saturday. Stephen Copson, "Two Ordinations at Bridlington in 1737" *The Baptist Quarterly* 33 (July 1989), 146.

<sup>53</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345, 482. Nathan Smith 1790 met at 9:30am. Rippon, *Register* 1790, 518.

that longer was the norm.<sup>54</sup> Thomas Hunt describes his ordination service on 12 September 1793 which began at 10:30 am with John Sutcliff opening with prayer. He says, “The whole service proved very pleasant; it was compressed within three hours and a half; and the conducting of it gave general satisfaction.”<sup>55</sup> It appears that “general satisfaction” was derived, at least partially, from the relative brevity of the service, for in a footnote to these comments, John Rippon the editor adds,

The brevity of this service is to be attributed, in some measure, to the following circumstance. The church at Watford had laid their plan after the old method, to have *two* sermons at the ordination; and hence Mr. Hunt came to town, and requested his *pastor* to preach one, and *me* the other: I said to him, “My good brother, I am sure I would gladly shew you any respect in my power, but it is not probable that I can be with you at the time you have fixed; besides, why should we always have two sermons at an ordination, and tire the people to death? Must we forever groan and go on in the road of impropriety? Do give my love to friend *Booth*, and beseech him to break the neck of a custom of which everybody complains. *He* has done so much good that if he takes upon him, I mean, if he innovates a little, nobody will blame *him*: a distinction will be made by all, but idiots, between reformation and revolution.” Mr. Hunt, I suppose, carried the message, and only *one* sermon was preached; and so pleased were the people with the manner in which the business was conducted, that Brother Hunt hopes, when it is generally known, it will become, in some respect at least, a model for future ordinations, and form a new era in the history of these services.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> At the ordination service of William Steadman, Broughton, Hampshire, 2 November 1791 the service began at half past ten and concluded a little after two o’clock - Rippon, *Register*, 1790, 520, 521. At the Reverend John Bain’s ordination at Downton, 1794, The service began at 10 o’clock and was concluded at 3 o’clock. Rippon, *Register*, 189. At the Rev. William Newman’s ordination at Old Ford near London, on 15 May 1794 the service began at 10:30 am and the service lasted three and a half hours. Rippon, *Register*, 190, 191. Higgs describes a General Baptist Ordination service in 1811 that lasted from 11:00 am to 3:15 am. Lionel F. Higgs, “The Calling and Ordination of Ministers in the Eighteenth Century” *The Baptist Quarterly* 16 (April 1956), 279. At the ordination of David Kinghorn in 1771 at Bishop Burton, “The whole service lasted from a quarter-past ten till half-past two: four hours and a quarter! But still the good friends were not satisfied: for at four they assembled again, when Mr. Gawkrödger preached from Eph. v, 2, after which three deacons were ordained by prayer and laying on of hands.” Terry Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*. (Missouri: Particular Baptist Press, 1995), 1:19.

<sup>55</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 121.

<sup>56</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 121. “In 1793, John Rippon, of Carter Lane, was asked to share with Abraham Booth in the ordination of Thomas Hunt at Watford. The day fixed was inconvenient, so Rippon suggested that Booths sermon be a joint charge to minister and church. Booths pre-eminence and authority might, Rippon thought, make this a valuable precedent which would be followed. Hunt was a member of the Goodmans Fields church. It was more than a century and a half before the practice of one sermon replaced the traditional two at ordinations and inductions.” Payne, *Abraham Booth*, 33.

#### 4.3.4 Procedure

The ordination service typically opened with the reading of Scripture, prayer, and singing. As a high regard for the Word of God characterized eighteenth-century Particular Baptists, it is not surprising that such an important ceremony should include the reading of scripture. Some commonly read texts included 1 Timothy 3,<sup>57</sup> Titus 1,<sup>58</sup> Psalm 132,<sup>59</sup> and Ephesians 4.<sup>60</sup>

It is perhaps expected that 1 Timothy 3 would be a popular choice of a text as it deals with the qualifications of the officers of the church, namely deacons and elders. In this passage, the apostle Paul begins by commending the office of elder as an admirable work (1 Timothy 3:1). He then describes the qualifications and character of an elder in verses 2 through 7. Next, in verses 8 through 13, he outlines the qualification of deacons. Paul concludes the chapter in verses 14 to 16 by explaining to Timothy that he has given him these qualifications for guidance to appoint officers in the church. Likewise, Titus 1, another so-called Pastoral Epistles, is concerned mainly with the qualifications of an elder (verse 5-9).

The common use of Psalm 132 might seem a bit inappropriate for modern-day readers. A casual appraisal may suggest that the Psalm had more to do with ancient Jewish liturgy than an eighteenth-century English Baptist ordination service. But this

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<sup>57</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 118, 119, 121, 191, 348, 480. Rippon, *Register 1790*, 518, 520, 521, 522.

<sup>58</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 122, 479, 482. Rippon, *Register 1790*, 518.

<sup>59</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 118, 191, 482. (read) Rippon, *Register*, 480 (sung) Rippon, *Register 1790*, 519. (sung). At the ordination of Richard Machin at Bridlington in 1737, they sung part of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Psalm at the beginning of the service and they sang the rest of the Psalm after the charge to the minister. Copson, *Ordinations at Bridlington*, 146.

<sup>60</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 121, 480. Rippon, *Register 1790*, 518, 520. Examples of other popular texts cited in the *Register* include: Ezekiel 3:17-21. Rippon, *Register*, 119, 479; Ezekiel 33:1-6. Rippon, *Register*, 480. Rippon, *Register 1790*, 518; Psalm 133. Rippon, *Register 1790*, 522; Isaiah 4. Rippon, *Register*, 118; Matthew 28, Rippon, *Register*, 122; 1 Peter 1:1- 4. Rippon, *Register*, 122.

Psalm was used – both read and sung – regularly.<sup>61</sup> Why was this Psalm so popular at ordination services?

John Gill was the first Baptist to write a verse-by-verse commentary on the whole Bible, and according to Timothy George, “Gill influenced an entire generation of younger ministers through his remarkable preaching and pastoral labours.”<sup>62</sup> Speaking of Gill’s commentary on the entire Bible, his successor at Carter Lane, John Rippon writes, “In short, this Exposition is of unquestionable celebrity in the Republic of Letters, as well for its *unparalleled* learning, as for its profound research; and has obtained the affluence of fame, among all the *evangelical* denominations, at home and abroad.”<sup>63</sup> Gill’s work was highly esteemed and frequently used among the Baptists.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, as one of the most respected Baptist biblical expositors, particularly of the middle of the eighteenth century, his interpretation of Psalm 132 may provide clues to help us understand the Psalm’s popularity at Particular Baptist ordination services.

Gill understands the Psalm to be inherently Messianic.<sup>65</sup> Therefore references to the tabernacle (Psalm 132:3) are understood typographically as allusions to the church.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 118, 191, 482. For example: (read). Rippon, *Register*, 480. (sung) Rippon, *Register* 1790, 519. (sung).

<sup>62</sup> Timothy George, “The Ecclesiology of John Gill” in Michael A. G. Haykin, edited by *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 225.

<sup>63</sup> John Rippon, *Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D.D.* (Harrisonburg, Va.:1992), 77.

<sup>64</sup> Tom K. Ascol, “John Gill’s Approach to New Testament Exposition” in Michael A. G. Haykin, edited by *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 114.

<sup>65</sup> “Moreover, respect in all this may be had by the authors of this psalm, or those herein represented, to the Messiah, who is the antitype of David; in his name, which signifies “beloved”; in his birth, parentage, and circumstances of it; in the comeliness of his person, and in his characters and offices, and who is often called David, Psalm 89:3; see Jer. 30:9, Hos. 3:5; and so is a petition that God would remember the covenant of grace made with him; the promise of his coming into the world; his offering and sacrifice, as typified by the legal ones; and also remember them and their offerings for his sake; see Psalm 20:3. Likewise “all his afflictions” and sufferings he was to endure from men and devils, and from the Lord himself, both in soul and body; and so as to accept of them in the room and stead of his people, as a satisfaction to his justice. Or, “his humility” in the assumption of human nature, in his carriage and behaviour to all sorts of men, in his ministrations to his disciples, in seeking not his own glory, but his Father’s, and in his sufferings and death, which was foretold of him, Zec. 9:9.”-page 4- “And indeed the

Psalm 132:7 which says, “We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool,” is speaking of the church, where Christ

has his residence, takes his walks, and dwells; and which are very lovely, amiable, and pleasant, and so desirable by believers to go into; because of the presence of God in them, the provisions there made for them, the company there enjoyed; the work there done, prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administration of all ordinances.<sup>67</sup>

With David as the Messiah and the Tabernacle as the Church, it may be expected that the priesthood anticipates the pastorate. Psalm 132:9, “Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy,” may refer to

...the ministers of the word; who may be said to be clothed with righteousness when they perform their work righteously, and faithfully dispense the word, keep back nothing that is profitable, and administer the ordinances according to the rules of Christ; and when their lives and conversations are agreeable to the Gospel they preach...<sup>68</sup>

For Gill and the Particular Baptists, this Psalm was a grand expression of God’s love for His church with a concomitant pledge of his ongoing care revealed in a declaration of His desire for her prosperity.<sup>69</sup>

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Messiah is meant, the antitype of the ark and temple; of whom the saints or believers in him, a chorus of which is here introduced, had heard that he should be born at Ephratah, which is Bethlehem; see Gen 35:19.” John Gill’s Exposition of the Psalms- [http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms\\_132.htm](http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms_132.htm) , 1. Accessed Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

<sup>66</sup> “...the temple, which is meant, consisting of three parts, the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; this was typical of the human nature of Christ, the temple of his body, the tabernacle of God’s pitching, John 2:19; in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, the glory of God is seen, and through whom he grants his presence to his people; and also of the church of God, the temple of the living God, where he dwells and is worshipped: and that this might be a fit habitation for God was the great desire of the Messiah, and not only the end and issue of his sufferings and death, but also the design of his preparations and intercession in heaven, John 14:2.” John Gill’s Exposition of the Psalms [http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms\\_132.htm](http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms_132.htm) ,3. Accessed Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Page 3.

<sup>67</sup> John Gill’s Exposition of the Psalms - [http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms\\_132.htm](http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms_132.htm). Accessed Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Page 5.

<sup>68</sup> John Gill’s Exposition of Psalms - [http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms\\_132.htm](http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms_132.htm) , 6. Accessed Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

<sup>69</sup> Verse 13. “For the Lord hath chosen Zion, ....Not only to build upon it the temple in a literal sense, and for the place of his worship; but also for the seat of his majesty, and over which he has set his Son as King; and all this from the love he bears to Zion, which, in a figurative and spiritual sense, is his church;

Another commonly read passage at the opening of an ordination service was Ephesians 4: 1-16. The passage begins by discussing the unity of the church, but verses 11-13 specifically speak of a leadership, given by God, for the edification and growth of the church.<sup>70</sup> This important connection between the Church and a God-given leadership gets to the heart of the reason for an ordination service. Instruction in the knowledge of the Word of God was the primary means for the growth of the church and this instruction was the most important responsibility of the pastor. As the shepherd, it was his duty to feed the sheep with instruction and knowledge leading to godliness and Christian maturity. The installation of a new pastor was such an exciting event because it heralded the hope of prosperity as a result of God's blessing. At the ordination of Joshua Burton on 8 December 1791 the extract reflects this. "The opportunity was acknowledged to be pleasant and profitable: and the hopes of serious friends were revived, that the Lord would raise up again the ancient church at Foxton, which was nearly lost, having had no pastor for 9 or 10 years."<sup>71</sup>

Also the rationale and necessity for the continuance of the office of elder is found in these verses from Ephesians. While some of the gifts described in verses 11-13 given to edify the church ceased with the apostolic era (apostles, prophets and evangelists), the

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whom he has chosen to privileges, to grace and glory, and for his service and honour; see Ps.78:67; he hath desired [it] for his habitation; heaven is the habitation of his holiness and glory; Christ is his dwelling place, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: yet his desire is to his church and people; his heart is set upon them, and upon their salvation; his delight is in them, and he takes pleasure in walking with them, and dwelling among them; they being built up an habitation for God through the Spirit; see Ps.68:16." John Gill's Exposition of Psalms - [http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms\\_132.htm](http://www.freegrace.net/gill/Psalms/Psalms_132.htm) , 8. Accessed Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

<sup>70</sup> Ephesians 4:11 KJV "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: <sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

<sup>71</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 521.

work is to be continued through pastors and teachers.<sup>72</sup> Apostolic miracles, whose purpose was to confirm the gospel, have ceased, and have been replaced by the guidance of pastors through the Word.<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that even though there was a general agreement with this interpretation of Ephesians 4 among later eighteenth-century Baptists, there were variations in their understanding of the level of continuity or discontinuity between the present day offices of elder's relationship to the scriptural apostolic office. Some saw the contemporary pastor as a direct continuation of the office of apostle reinterpreted without the need or use of miraculous gifts, while others saw the office of pastor as completely separate.

After the reading of Scripture, they would usually sing a hymn or a Psalm. A common example of a hymn, from later on in the century, was chosen from Rippon's *Selection*<sup>74</sup> numbers 410 or 411.<sup>75</sup> For example in 1795 at the Rev. Joseph Belcher's ordination they sang Rippon's *Selection 410*.<sup>76</sup> Singing would occur at various intervals throughout the service, and in the example given above Rippon's *410* was sung after the pastoral call to office and the subsequent acceptance.<sup>77</sup> Also singing often followed the ordination prayer (laying on of hands).<sup>78</sup> Again it was common to sing after the charge to the pastor<sup>79</sup> and if a prayer followed the charge, it was sung after the prayer.<sup>80</sup> There was

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<sup>72</sup> Nehemiah Coxe, *A Sermon Preached at the ordination of an Elder and Deacons in a Baptized Congregation in London by Nehemiah Coxe* (London: Printed for Tho. Fabian, at the Bible in Saint Paul's Church-Yard, a corner Shop next Cheap-Side, 1681), 16.

<sup>73</sup> Coxe, *Ordination of an Elder*, 17.

<sup>74</sup> Describe Rippon's *Selection* use Manley. Particularly describe those hymns.

<sup>75</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 482.

<sup>76</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 482. Sometimes the hymns were read.

<sup>77</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 480. They sang the 132<sup>nd</sup> Psalm. Rippon, *Register*, 190.

<sup>78</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 121 (Psalm 132), 190 (Psalm 132), 482, 522 (410 Rippon's *Selection*).

<sup>79</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 122 (sung 410 Hymn of *Rippon's Selection*), 190 (Sung 103<sup>rd</sup> hymn), 191 (Sung *Rippon's Selection 410*), 519 (sung *Rippon's Selection 407*), 522 (sung *Rippon's Selection 411*).

<sup>80</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 519.

also sometimes singing after the address to the church.<sup>81</sup> If there was a separate address to the deacons, as the third sermon of the ceremony, they would follow by singing,<sup>82</sup> and usually they also usually sung a Psalm or hymn before the closing prayer.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise prayer was conducted at different intervals throughout the service.<sup>84</sup> At the ordination of Joseph Burroughs, Crosby describes the prayer of a Mr. Foxwell who, after reading 1 Timothy 3 and 4, “prayed for that church, for the persons called to offices in it, for the presence of God, and the assistances of his grace, in the duties to be that day performed.”<sup>85</sup> The usual times for prayer were at the opening the service, during the laying on of hands, and to close the service. The most important prayer was the ordination prayer where a visiting pastor “implored the divine blessing” on the new relation which church and pastor had formed accompanied by “laying on of hands” in which the other ministers joined.<sup>86</sup> On 20 February 1717 at the ordination of Mr. Joseph Burroughs of the Church at Barbican, Benjamin Stinton prayed,

Brother Joseph Burroughs, we do, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the consent of this church, ordain thee, to be an elder, bishop, or overseer of this church of Jesus Christ.” Mr. Stinton then, while their hands rested upon the head of Mr.

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<sup>81</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 191 (sung Psalm 132 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), 480 (Sung a hymn, Rippon’s 411<sup>th</sup> Hymn Selection), 522 (Dr. Watt’s 132<sup>nd</sup> Psalm and the whole 410<sup>th</sup> hymn of Mr. Rippon’s Selection).

<sup>82</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 408, 519.

<sup>83</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 190 (“The 132<sup>nd</sup> Psalm was sung and the opportunity concluded in prayer.”), 346 (“in the course of the service hymns sung from bro. Rippon’s Selection.”), 349.

<sup>84</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 346.

<sup>85</sup> Crosby, Thomas, *The History of the English Baptists*, (London, 1740), 184.

<sup>86</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 122. (“The Minister laid on hands and was joined by seven or eight of his ordained brethren”), 347, 348, (Hands were laid on the ministers and deacons by four other ministers), 349, 479, 482 (“...implored the divine blessing on the relationship then formed between me and the church. With laying on of hands-Brother Steadman offered Ordination prayer with imposition of hands and he also delivered the charge”), 517 (At Samuel Pearce’s ordination with Fuller praying – “Mr Fuller implored the divine blessing on the new relationship which the church and I then formed. Prayer was made with the laying on of hands, in which all the ministers joined him.” Also five members were set apart for Deacons, whom John Ryland prayed laying on hands), 521 (Mr. Sutcliff prayed with laying on of hands with the rest of the ministers present).

Burroughs, offered a short and appropriate prayer to God for him, and for the church over which he was now the recognized pastor.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Four Main Addresses of Ordination Service

There were typically four main addresses in the ordination service of Particular Baptists including, the introductory discourse, the ordinand's statement of faith, the charge to the new pastor, and a pastoral address to the Church on their rights and duties as the body of Christ.

##### 4.3.5.1 The Introductory Discourse

The visiting elder delivering the discourse would begin this aspect of the proceedings with a few words indicating both the solemnity and the joy of the day.<sup>88</sup> They were solemn events because these Baptists were convinced that they stood before an almighty and holy God who had condescended to save mankind from their sin, formed the Church through redemption in Christ, and gave them the task of proclaiming the gospel to the world. His chief means to accomplish this – through the Church – was by means of chosen pastors in every generation to minister the Word in ordinance and preaching.<sup>89</sup> The pastor, as a steward of God, was particularly accountable to the Judge. But they were also joyous events because the gift of a pastor was an indicator of the Lord's blessing and favor on the congregation. There was often a feeling of optimism, excitement, and hope that prosperity and growth would soon follow.

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<sup>87</sup> Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 148-149.

<sup>88</sup> Hugh Evans, *A Charge and Sermon, Together with an Introductory Discourse, and Confession of faith, Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Caleb Evans, August 18, 1767, in Broad-Mead, Bristol. Publish'd at the request of the church, and the ministers then present* (Bristol, 1767), 3.

<sup>89</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Caleb Evans*, 3-5.

The aim of the introductory discourse was to “open the work of the day” by explaining the nature and purpose of ordination ceremonies, answering the question, “why do we observe this rite?”<sup>90</sup> Although these discourses covered a wide range of topics there were commonly reoccurring themes.

Throughout the ceremony, there was an emphasis on simplicity as they wished to stress the internal aspects of religion above the sacerdotal, reflecting what they believed was the biblical precedent.<sup>91</sup> This desire to obey the Scripture in all they did is evident in every aspect of the ordination service. Oftentimes the introductory discourse began with a proclamation that Scripture alone was the rule for all church practice and formed the foundation of the ordination service. Yet at least one pastor conceded that “we do not find in the Word of God, any positive command for us formally to ordain.”<sup>92</sup> But the lack of a direct admonition to ordain did mean that there was no biblical precedent to continue the practice of ordination. These Particular Baptists were convinced that the pattern for the continuation of the ordinance was amply demonstrated in Scripture by the example of the apostles and the early church. And so they saw no biblical reason to discontinue the process.<sup>93</sup>

Another common element of the introductory discourse was a sincere profession of fidelity to the civil government. They lived in an age of fear, on the part of the civil government of incitement to rebellion from some Dissenting groups. It was important for the Particular Baptists to demonstrate their sincere desire to observe the scriptural

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<sup>90</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345.

<sup>91</sup> Osborn, *Ordination of Belsher*, 6.

<sup>92</sup> Osborn, *Ordination of Belsher*, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 121.

injunction to obey those in authority over them.<sup>94</sup> They desired peace in the world. Yet they also believed that the State had no right to legislate in the church and so they always emphasized the fundamental right of the church to choose her own officers.<sup>95</sup> The Act of Toleration had permitted churches to administer themselves with a newfound freedom.<sup>96</sup> For the Baptists, freedom of conscience was a fundamental axiom of Christianity and some felt that other forms of church government, like Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism, represented a form of tyranny of conscience. Choosing a pastor was the inherent right of the local church.<sup>97</sup>

They would also frequently emphasize God's sovereign authority over his church and his marvelous grace in the salvation of sinners.<sup>98</sup> He had redeemed a people for himself based on his eternal decree to form a mutual and voluntary society as means of

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<sup>94</sup> Romans 13:1- 4, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil."

<sup>95</sup> This assertion reveals "a deep distrust" for a coalition of Church and State. Ernest A. Payne, "The Ministry in Historical Perspective" *The Baptist Quarterly* 17 (April 1958), 263.

<sup>96</sup> "Blessed be God, for our happy Constitution, whereby we enjoy the free exercise of our Religion, as our Judgment and Conscience direct: This must appear to every Protestant, especially to every Protestant *Dissenter*, to be an inestimable Privilege, and of the last Importance. A Privilege this, which our Progenitors groaned under the Want of – but which our Gracious God, had in Reserve, to introduce with the glorious Revolution, and to *entail* it upon us and our Children, by the *Happy* Accession of the *Illustrious* House of *Hanover* to the *Throne*... and Act of Toleration as Dissenters. Our rightful Sovereign *King George* has given us Liberty so to do; and so has our Gracious God and Saviour, King *Jesus*... Then, let us call no Man on earth, the *Master* of our *Consciences*; but strenuously assert our Right to judge of, and chuse our Spiritual Guides: for it belongs only to the People to appoint their Ecclesiastical Officers; since 'tis for their Sake that any such are instituted, and 'tis the Peoples Interest which is concern'd., and their Good or Ill greatly depends upon their choice of Ministers." James Fall, *The Charge of God to Feed the Flock of Slaughter. A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. James Fall, of Goodman's-Fields, London, On the 28th March, 1754. In the late Rev. Mr. William Bentley's Meeting-House, in Crispin-Street, Spital Fields. To which is added, A True, and Candid Narrative of the Churches Proceedings, in the Affair of their Separation, given at the time of ordination, by Capt. Thomas Best, one of their Worthy Deacons.* (London: Lemon-Street, 1754), ix-x.

<sup>97</sup> Fall, *Ordination of Fall*, iii, viii, xi.

<sup>98</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 3.

executing his will in the earth.<sup>99</sup> Elders were appointed by God alone as a gracious gift for the edification of the church through the Word and the ordinances. The Particular Baptists believed that people must be taught the Scriptures to be effective in evangelism, to grow in holiness, and to glorify God.<sup>100</sup> All believers had the right and duty to search the Scriptures for themselves, but God had especially ordained teachers in the church (Eph. 4:11-13). Therefore, it is incumbent on the church to take great care when they determine the will of the Lord in choosing their pastor. A potential candidate had first to be tested and proved both as to his moral character as well as his ministerial gifts. Prayer was an essential part of this process.

The visiting elder would often discuss a few theological points concerning the ordination service. A commonly used text was Acts 6, which they viewed as the first New Testament example of an ordination service. They frequently stressed that in the early church it was the apostles who appointed officers, but it was the brethren who choose them.<sup>101</sup> This was the basis for their understanding that only elders could perform the rite of ordination.<sup>102</sup> They were concerned to follow the scriptural precedent because they wanted to maintain order in the church by prohibiting, as much as possible, the ordination of unqualified ministers.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> William Clarke, *A Charge and Sermon together with an Introductory Discourse and Confession of Faith Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Abraham Booth Feb. 16, 1769, in Goodman's Fields. Published by the Request of the Church* (London, 1769), 3.

<sup>100</sup> Clarke, *Ordination of Booth*, 4.

<sup>101</sup> Clarke, *Ordination of Booth*, 6. Acts 6:3 KJV "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

<sup>102</sup> Osborn, *Ordination of Belsher*, 6, 7.

<sup>103</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 9. (Acts 6:1, 2; Acts 13:1, 2; Titus 1:5).

They also argued for the practice of laying on of hands as a central part of the ordination service.<sup>104</sup> In the New Testament, the chosen men stood before the apostles who prayed, fasted, and laid hands on them.<sup>105</sup> The laying on of hands was defended as a continuing practice for Baptists, but they stressed that it conveyed no extraordinary gifts.<sup>106</sup>

Finally, the qualifications necessary for the pastor elect were briefly discussed. Specific details of the qualification of the elder were usually expounded in the charge to the newly ordained pastor, yet general credentials were sometimes outlined in the

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<sup>104</sup> Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 434, Underwood, *English Baptists*, 131. “The early Baptists, who desired to keep close to scripture, saw no reason to depart from Christian tradition in this matter.” See also Ernest A. Payne, “Baptists and the Laying on of Hands” *The Baptist Quarterly* 15 (January 1954), 203. This practise was also endorsed in the Second London Confession. “The way appointed by *Christ* for the Calling of any person, fitted, and gifted by the Holy *Spirit*, unto the Office of Bishop, or Elder, in a Church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the Church itself; and Solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, with imposition of hands of the Eldership of the Church, if there be any before Constituted therein; And of a Deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by Prayer, and the like Imposition of hands.” Lumpkin, *Confessions*, 287. Hercules Collins wrote, “Ever retain and never part with that Rite and Ceremony in Ordination of Imposition of Hands, with prayer, on the Person ordained. Some think that the Ceremony of laying on of Hands may be omitted,” but, “This hath been the ordinary way of the Ordination of Ministers in the Church of God.” Hercules Collins, *The Temple Repair’d: Or, An Essay to revive the long-neglected Ordinances, of exercising the Spiritual Gift of Prophecy for the Edification of the Churches; and of ordaining Ministers duly qualified. With proper Directions as to Study and Preaching, for such as are inclined to the Ministry* (London: William and Joseph Marshal, 1702), 59.

<sup>105</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 107. Acts 6:6 KJV “Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.”

<sup>106</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 9-10. Acts 13:3 “And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.” “In this business there was no mystery, no superstitious right [sic], no ceremonious pomp, no usurpation of prelatical authority: but there evidently appears great simplicity; pure devotion; love of order; submission to divine teaching; and true benevolence to men.” Osborn, *Ordination of Belsher*, 6. The practice of laying on of hands was often defended in an Introductory Discourse, which suggests that there was some opposition to the practice. Clarke, *Ordination of Booth*, 8 – 9. Regarding the controversy on imposition of hands Crosby comments, “That there are some among the Baptists, who object against this form of ordination, tho’ it is thus usually performed in their churches, believing it favours too much of men’s assuming great power to themselves, in their setting others apart to the ministry; and also believing, the apostles themselves in ordinations, used not this form, *We ordain thee*. And therefore decline pronouncing any words of ordination, and only pray to God for a blessing on the pastor elect, laying their hands upon his head, which they hold is ordination sufficient, and all that they know with certainty respecting the practice of the Apostles, who laid their hands over the persons whom they set apart, and prayed to God in their behalf.” Crosby, *English Baptists*, 187. Far and away laying on of hands was practiced during eighteenth-century Particular Baptists Ordination services.

preamble. Things such as moral goodness, Biblical competence, spiritual gifts, passion for the gospel, and separation from the world were essential necessities for aspiring ministers.

Near the end of the introductory discourse they would transition into the other proceedings of the service. A visiting pastor would ask what are called “the usual questions”<sup>107</sup> to the church.<sup>108</sup> These questions were addressed to both the members of the church and the ordinand. First, the ordinand would be asked if he was in full communion with the church.<sup>109</sup> This was to ensure that church order was preserved and everything done according to Scripture. The visiting elders would then require a step-by-step account of the process the church had undergone to procure the pastor. The response was usually delivered by a deacon and included a brief history of the church since their previous pastor’s departure<sup>110</sup> with an account of God’s providential leading which brought the new pastor elect and church together.<sup>111</sup>

Then the non-members were separated from the members of the church. The non-members may be asked to go into the galleries while the members would come together

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<sup>107</sup> They were sometimes called the “usual interrogatories.” Rippon, *Register*, 480.

<sup>108</sup> In a Presbyterian ceremony they would ask: 1) Do you feel that you are called of God to the ministry? 2) Do you hold the Old Testament and the New Testament to be the only word of God and necessary for salvation? 3) Do you promise to execute your charge faithfully according to scripture? Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), 228-229.

<sup>109</sup> Copson, *Ordinations at Bridlington*, 146. Richard Machin, ordained by George Braithwaite, was asked if he were “in full membership with the church.”

<sup>110</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345. The three questions asked by George Braithwaite recorded in the Bridlington Church Book, June 1737, were: Question 1 “For w[ha]t cause has ye Church desired our Company and Presence here at ys time?” Answer. “That ye may be witnesses to ye Churches Act in Calling out & setting apart our Br Mr Richard Machin to ye Office of pastor in ye Church.” Question 2 “Is Mr Richd Machin a member in full Fellowship & Communion with ye Church.” A. “Yes he is.” Question 3 “If ye Church is free & desirous to constitute and appoint Mr Rich’d Machin to ye solemn office of Pastor over `em, on his Compliance with their Call & Act, they are desired to signifie it by lifting up of their hands.” Copson, *Ordinations at Bridlington*, 147. For a detailed description of an account see, *Three Discourses Addressed to the Congregation at Maze-Pond, Southwark, on their Public Declaration of having chosen Mr. James Dore their pastor*. March 25th, 1784 (Cambridge: Printed by J. Archdeacon, Printer to the University; and sold by C. Dilly in the Poultry, MDCCLXXXIV), 18-22.

<sup>111</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 123, 347.

in the middle of the meeting place.<sup>112</sup> They would then ask the congregation's approbation of the choice of pastor. If the members acknowledged in the positive, they would raise their right hands.<sup>113</sup> A second request may be taken for asking for votes in the negative.<sup>114</sup> They would then ask for the steps the pastor took in relation to his call and public acceptance.<sup>115</sup> He would then give a brief account of his conversion, his call to ministry, and the providence which lead him to that particular church.<sup>116</sup> Then the pastor elect would publicly acknowledge and accept the call.<sup>117</sup> This was a verbal acceptance accompanied with the raising of his right hand.<sup>118</sup> Following his acceptance, he would often express his love and appreciation to the people of the church and describe the great privilege it was to serve them. Caleb Evans, who had pastored at the Broadmead church in Bristol for eight years prior to his ordination, vowed to continue serving them "diligently, faithfully and fervently."<sup>119</sup> He closed this part of the ceremony with a statement recognizing his own insufficiency and complete and total dependence on God for any success in the ministry.<sup>120</sup>

If everything appeared orderly, that is according to the rule of Scripture, the church and the visiting pastors would accept his acknowledgement and proceed to receive his confession of faith after a prayer.<sup>121</sup> The confession was given verbally, sometimes *memoriter*, but usually read, in a series of articles that articulated an orthodox Calvinistic

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<sup>112</sup> Crosby, Thomas, *The History of the English Baptists*, (London: John Robinson Bookseller, 1740), IV:184-185.

<sup>113</sup> Clarke, *Ordination of Booth*, 9. Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 6.

<sup>114</sup> Crosby, *English Baptists*, 185.

<sup>115</sup> Clarke, *Ordination of Booth*, 10.

<sup>116</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 190.

<sup>117</sup> Clarke, *Ordination of Booth*, 9.

<sup>118</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 345.

<sup>119</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 7.

<sup>120</sup> Crosby, *English Baptists*, 186.

<sup>121</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 348.

theology that was usually also expressly Baptist and evangelical, especially in the latter part of the eighteenth century.<sup>122</sup>

#### 4.3.5.2 Statement of Faith

It was important that a candidate for ordination give his statement of faith publicly to allow the other ministers present to examine his beliefs, pray for his endowment with God's Spirit, and exhort both him and the other church members to walk faithfully together in obedience and love.<sup>123</sup>

The public declaration of a precise doctrinal position was particularly important in a rationalistic age when others, like the majority of the General Baptists, had adopted universalistic beliefs and abandoned their essential doctrines. In a covenantal relationship rooted in a received canon of truth, essential agreement on this rule is crucial. This is particularly significant when the relationship is voluntary and there is a profound and mutual commitment to love and unity. Further, the main expectation of the role of the pastor was to faithfully teach biblical truths "once delivered unto the saints."<sup>124</sup>

##### 4.3.5.2.1 Content

They generally described it as a "confession of faith" or as expressing "a declaration of religious sentiments."<sup>125</sup> Sometimes, as in the case of Caleb Evans, the ordinand would

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<sup>122</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 122. Joshua Burton on 8 December 1791 gave an account of his faith in 18 articles. Rippon, *Register*, 521.

<sup>123</sup> Ernest A. Payne, "Baptists and the Ministry" *The Baptist Quarterly* 25 (April 1973), 54.

<sup>124</sup> KJV Jude 1:3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

<sup>125</sup> Abraham Booth, *A Charge and Sermon together with an Introductory Discourse and Confession of Faith Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Abraham Booth Feb. 16, 1769, in Goodman's Fields.*

begin with a preamble. Caleb Evans felt it necessary to defend the practice of publicly stating a confession of faith. Apparently some had challenged the practice on the basis that it represented an affront to religious freedom.<sup>126</sup> But Evans argues that though it had become “unfashionable” to disclaim any creeds or systematic expositions, even those who denied their value necessarily just replaced another’s system with their own.<sup>127</sup> Everyone has a right to choose what they believe. That is why is it so important that the church and pastor, who bind themselves together voluntarily, agree doctrinally.<sup>128</sup> Those lamenting the loss of religious liberty were really only rejecting the glorious truths that the Particular Baptists had inherited from the Reformation.<sup>129</sup> Therefore the minister giving his statement of faith at an ordination sermon was not interfering with rights for private judgment, but rather expressing that right through his declaration.<sup>130</sup> It is quite telling that even though Evans had already ministered among the Baptist congregation at Broadmead in Bristol for eight years, he still felt it was absolutely necessary, even a privilege, to give his statement of faith.

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*Published by the Request of the Church* (London: Printed for G. Keith, Gracechurch Street; J. Buckland, Paternoster Row; W. Harris, St Paul’s Church-yard; Tomkins, Fenchurch Street; J. Gurney, Holborn, 1769), 11. Thomas Morgan, *The Difficulties of the Christian Ministry, and the Means of Surmounting them; with the Obedience of Churches to their Pastors Explained and Enforced: A Charge, by the Rev. J. Ryland, D.D. and a Sermon by the Rev. Andrew Fuller; Together with an Introductory Address, by the Rev. J. Sutcliff; Delivered June 23, 1802, At the Ordination of Thomas Morgan, To the Pastoral Office over the Baptist Church, meeting in Cannon-street, Birmingham: And, also, Mr. Morgan’s Declaration of Religious Sentiments* (London: Printed by J. Belcher; And sold by Button and Son, Paternoster Row, 1802), iii.

<sup>126</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 17.

<sup>127</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 17.

<sup>128</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 13-14. Note similar comments at the beginning of Gill’s systematic theology.

<sup>129</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 17.

<sup>130</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 18.

#### 4.3.5.2.2 Common Content Included

Confessions of Faith given at ordination ceremonies seemed to follow a standard pattern, and although different viewpoints are expressed, the general structure was relatively uniform. Most would begin with an avowal of their belief in the being of God which was displayed everywhere in creation.<sup>131</sup> Evidence displayed in the moon and stars, the rich assortment of vegetation, the variety and complexity of different animals, as well as the human body, all pointed back to single cause – God.<sup>132</sup>

#### 4.3.5.2.3 Beliefs

Despite this general revelation in creation, the clearest revelation of God was found in the Scriptures.<sup>133</sup> The Word of God, which represents his revelation to man, manifests his moral character, and especially his goodness and love (as seen particularly in the doctrine of the cross), the future hope of resurrection, forgiveness, and the rest of his promises to the church.<sup>134</sup>

In their confession they would sometimes also include a brief apologetic for Scripture as the only Word of God. For example W. Belsher says,

From the sublimity and excellency of the doctrines; the grace and glory of the promises; the freeness of the invitations; the purity of the precepts contained in the writings of the Old and New Testament; connected with the holiness and agreement of the inspired writers; the accomplishment of prophecy; the dispersion and preservation of the Jews; the evidence of miracles, and the astonishing influence of scripture

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<sup>131</sup> W. Belsher, *The Duty of the Ministers to be Nursing Fathers to the Church; and the Duty of Churches to Regard Ministers as the Gift of Christ: A Charge, Delivered by the Rev. John Ryland, D. D. of Bristol; and a Sermon, Delivered by the Rev. S. Pearce, M.A., of Birmingham; in the Dissenters Meeting-House, Angel-Street, Worcester, at the Ordination of the Rev. W. Belsher, to the Pastorate of the Baptist Church, meeting in Silver-Street, in the same city: Together with an Introductory Address, by the Rev. G. Osborn, and also Mr. Belsher's Declaration of Religious Sentiments*(London: Button, 1796), 9.

<sup>132</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 19.

<sup>133</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, iii.

<sup>134</sup> W. Belsher, *Ordination of Belsher*, 10.

doctrines (through divine agency) upon the minds of men, I believe the Bible to be the word of God.<sup>135</sup>

The Word of God consisted of the Old Testament and the New Testament, but excluded the Apocrypha.<sup>136</sup> Because the Bible was God's revelation to man, it was therefore man's duty to submit to it, and to humbly obey all its precepts.<sup>137</sup> The Bible was believed to be an inestimable gift from the Creator and received as the only rule for their faith and practice.<sup>138</sup>

The Trinitarianism of the Nicene Creed was generally acknowledged as orthodox until the time of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. In an age where Unitarianism was flourishing again under the leadership of men like Joseph Priestly, a reassertion of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was vital. John Gill believed this doctrine was the "foundation of revelation; and of the economy of man's salvation; it is what enters into every truth of the gospel, and without which no truth can be truly understood, nor rightly explained."<sup>139</sup> In their understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, the Particular Baptists followed the standard Reformed understanding of the Trinity as a unity in essence in three Persons.<sup>140</sup> Scripture reveals that there is one true living God infinite in holiness, and in the unity of the Godhead there are three divine Persons; the Father and Son and the Holy Ghost.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> W. Belsher, *Ordination of Belsher*, 10, 11. Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 15.

<sup>136</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 20. Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 14.

<sup>137</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 20-21. Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 14-17.

<sup>138</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 17.

<sup>139</sup> John Gill, *The Form of Sound Words to be Held Fast. A Charge Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. John Reynolds. Sermon XL in A Collection of Sermons and Tracts: In Two Volumes. Volume II. Ordination Sermons. Several of which were never before Printed. By the late Reverend and Learned John Gill, D.D. To Which are Prefixed, Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author. Vol. II.* (London: George Keith, 1773), 53.

<sup>140</sup> W. Belsher, *Ordination of Belsher*, 11. Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, iv.

<sup>141</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 21. Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 17.

Another core belief of the Baptists was that Scripture teaches the doctrine of original sin where all mankind is born in a state of alienation from God.<sup>142</sup> God created man in his own image and he placed a tree in the Garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as a test of the obedience or disobedience for men and women.<sup>143</sup> His creatures failed the test and willfully transgressed by eating the forbidden fruit. Adam, as the federal head of all mankind, caused his posterity to be born in guilt, depravity, and ruin.<sup>144</sup>

Particular Baptist theology of the eighteenth century emphasized the atonement of Christ as a central doctrine. They were Calvinists believing that God sovereignly elects a people to salvation according to his eternal decrees.<sup>145</sup> Everything that happens in the world is a result of divine decree and that, “He worketh all things after the counsel of his will.” (Eph.1:11). They believed that God effectually calls and justifies his elect. Justification was understood as “a complete acquittal from imputed and contracted guilt, a deliverance from the destructive and condemning power of sin.”<sup>146</sup> Christians are justified by Christ’s imputed righteousness which is received by faith.<sup>147</sup> They also taught that saints could not lose their salvation and that God would keep them in a state of saving grace. They also believed that those who are chosen are sanctified by the Spirit,<sup>148</sup> and that the Law was good and just and so it was their duty to obey it.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, iv.

<sup>143</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 23.

<sup>144</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 23. Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 18.

<sup>145</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, iv.

<sup>146</sup> W. Belsher, *Ordination of Belsher*, 14.

<sup>147</sup> W. Belsher, *Ordination of Belsher*, 14.

<sup>148</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 22.

<sup>149</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, iv.

The Son of God became incarnate and left a perfect pattern of obedience. Through His blood there is full redemption for the sinner, but people must first exercise repentance and faith.<sup>150</sup> It is therefore a Christian's duty to try and convince people of the truth of the Gospel, that mankind is only justified by faith, through the imputation of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. They reiterated over and over again that good works do not save.<sup>151</sup> They believed in the absolute necessity of regeneration.<sup>152</sup> And that only Christ secures salvation by satisfying the demands of divine justice. The Son of God became incarnate and lived a life of perfect obedience to the divine will,<sup>153</sup> then died on the cross to become a vicarious atoning sacrifice for the sins of His chosen people.<sup>154</sup> On the third day He rose again and the justice of God was fully satisfied.<sup>155</sup>

The two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted by Christ for the edification of His church.<sup>156</sup> Baptism is by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and represents an emblem of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, as the representative of his people.<sup>157</sup> It is only administered on profession of repentance and faith.<sup>158</sup>

The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the love, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ.<sup>159</sup> Booth describes it as,

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<sup>150</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, v.

<sup>151</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, v.

<sup>152</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 30. Caleb Evans's statement of faith identifies him as an evangelical Calvinist. He said, like Fuller, in 1767, "I receive therefore this glorious heart cheering doctrine as well worthy of all acceptance." Norman S. Moon, "Caleb Evans, Founder of the Bristol Education Society" *The Baptist Quarterly* 24 (October 1971), 176.

<sup>153</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 29.

<sup>154</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Evans*, 29.

<sup>155</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 20.

<sup>156</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 22-23.

<sup>158</sup> Morgan, *Ordination of Morgan*, iv.

<sup>159</sup> W. Belsher, *Ordination of Belsher*, 15.

an ordinance where, “by receiving the elements of bread and wine, according to the appointment of Christ, *we shew forth his death*. And is designed, . . . to impress our minds with the lively sense of the evil of sin, the sufferings of Jesus for it, – the benefits derived to us through those sufferings, – together with the union and communion which we have with him, and one with another.”<sup>160</sup>

At death all people’s physical bodies disintegrate, but their immortal spirit returns to God.<sup>161</sup> The souls of believers immediately go into glory, and the wicked are immediately transmitted into the abodes of darkness and despair until the judgment day.<sup>162</sup> There will be a resurrection from the dead of both the just and the unjust.<sup>163</sup> God will judge in righteousness according to Jesus Christ, separating the righteous from the wicked.<sup>164</sup> The righteous are awarded eternal life and infinite happiness while the wicked are sent away to everlasting death and eternal torment.<sup>165</sup>

Abraham Booth concludes his confession by declaring that his statement of faith truly reflects what he believes and that he is determined to faithfully preach these doctrines to the people. Yet at the same time, he humbly acknowledges that he is fallible and must always keep his mind open to divine truth.<sup>166</sup> He then expresses his duty and determination to love other Christians, even despite their denominational affiliation.<sup>167</sup> Finally, he concludes in doxological expression of his utter dependence on God’s help.<sup>168</sup>

Joseph Kinghorn at his ordination on 20 May 1780 ends his Confession of Faith as follows,

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<sup>160</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 23.

<sup>161</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 23.

<sup>162</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 23.

<sup>163</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 23.

<sup>164</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 23, 24.

<sup>165</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 24

<sup>166</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 24.

<sup>167</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 25.

<sup>168</sup> Booth, *Ordination of Booth*, 25.

Such are the general views of Christianity which I have endeavoured to lay open to the people here, as appearing to me to be the will of God. Should I be hereafter favoured with a clearer insight into his holy will, I hope I shall not hide from them what shall appear as his counsel, but shall look on myself as bound to declare it, being sensible that anything attended with Scripture evidence is not only important, but best calculated to promote the end which I trust I earnestly desire, – the eternal salvation of souls.<sup>169</sup>

There was an implicit understanding that it was not enough just to say the words, but that they must also be believed and acted upon. Therefore the ordinand often sought to assure the church that these truths had been internalized, and, even beyond that, affectionately cherished in their hearts.

#### **4.3.5.3 Ordination Prayer – “Laying on of Hands”**

In order to understand the solemn rite of “laying on hands,” it is helpful to consider its main participants. First there was God’s role in ordination. He was the one who constituted the office of elder and gave the qualifications and abilities to the pastor. He destines, equips, and chooses men for the office.<sup>170</sup> But before the pastor is chosen by the congregation it must be first be demonstrated that he has been prepared by God for the work.<sup>171</sup>

Next there is the role the church in ordination.<sup>172</sup> In Acts 6 when the people chose their officers, they had them go before the apostles to ordain them.<sup>173</sup> Although Acts 6 seems to refer to the election of deacons, it was also regarded as the pattern for the election of elders. Joseph Stennett argues, “And if the deacons are to be chosen of the

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<sup>169</sup> Wolever, *Life of Kinghorn*, 177.

<sup>170</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 107.

<sup>171</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 108.

<sup>172</sup> Important texts are Acts 6:3, 5, 6 - chose Deacons, call them, desire for them to minister among them. Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 107.

<sup>173</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 108.

church, there is a parity of reason that elders should be chosen too; nay, there seems to be a greater reason for it, that the consent of the people should be had to whom they must commit their souls.”<sup>174</sup> The deacons were responsible for temporal affairs and the elders were responsible for people’s spiritual needs. If in Acts 6 they were encouraged to choose officers to be stewards of their money, why not in like manner, choose stewards of their souls?<sup>175</sup> Yet, the ministerial candidate was not completely passive in the process. His role was to devote himself to the ministry, not by compulsion, but for love for God and concern for the spiritual well-being of his people.<sup>176</sup> So it was vital that he joyfully and willingly give his consent also.<sup>177</sup>

Finally, there was the role played by the visiting ministers who performed the prayer with imposition of hands. Only they had the right to do this,<sup>178</sup> but their authority to do so was given by the church.<sup>179</sup> The church had complete power over the selection of her officers. As mentioned, most believed that the imposition of hands was an indispensable part of the service.<sup>180</sup> The main points they wished to stress in response to opposition to the practice was that it neither conveys extraordinary gifts nor additional qualifications to the person ordained;<sup>181</sup> rather, it represented a solemn, simple, but significant rite setting a man apart to a particular office.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 108.

<sup>175</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 107.

<sup>176</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 107.

<sup>177</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 110. <sup>KJV</sup> 1 Peter 5:2 “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;”

<sup>178</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 354. Sutcliff, *Ordination of Morgan*, 6.

<sup>179</sup> Fall, *Ordination of Fall*, vii. “...we have no Right or Authority to solemnize the Ordination of your intended Pastor, but what we receive from you as a Church.”

<sup>180</sup> Stennett, *Ordination of Rees*, 111-112; Rippon, *Register*, 345.

<sup>181</sup> Sutcliff, *Ordination of Morgan*, 8.

<sup>182</sup> Sutcliff, *Ordination of Morgan*, 7.

The main purpose of the ordination prayer was to entreat the divine blessing on relationship between the church and the pastor.<sup>183</sup> They believed that without God's presence and helping power the pastor was doomed to failure. Also the pastor was uniquely connected with the local church he was ordained in.<sup>184</sup> However, under certain circumstances it was acceptable for him to leave for another pastorate.<sup>185</sup>

#### 4.3.5.4 Charge to the Pastor

The third major address, and the most prominent in an eighteenth-century Particular Baptist ordination service, was the charge to the pastor. The main purpose of the charge was to describe the motivations, character, qualifications, duties, and purposes of ministers of the gospel.<sup>186</sup> The office of pastor was highly exalted in the sight of God but that did not mean there would be no hardship. The new pastor was warned of the various trials he would likely face, but he was also given counsel on how to overcome them.<sup>187</sup> In general, the charge contained advice on how to faithfully and diligently fulfill the

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<sup>183</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 481.

<sup>184</sup> Wallin, *Ordination of Booth*, 35. "The constitution of CHRIST'S Church, and the custom of the saints in the Apostles' days manifestly shew, that whatever occasional call the Pastors of churches may have to minister elsewhere, their stated and constant labours are required among those who are committed to their charge. It is part of the character of a gospel minister that he labours *among them* over whom he is placed: And herein lieth much of the *labour* and *honour* of his work." Benjamin Wallin, *The Obligations of a People to their Faithful Minister. Represented in a Discourse Preached at the Ordination of the Revd. Mr. Samuel Burford, September 4, 1755* (London: MDCCLV), 6.

<sup>185</sup> "I would by no means flatter or countenance the instability frequently seen: he that will shift from place to place, without consent or advice, ...Nevertheless, there may be a *just* and *cogent* reason for a change; the circumstances of a minister, and likewise those of the church, through a variety of events, may speak for his moving." Wallin, *Ordination of Booth*, 45. "It is said that in the eighteenth century a man would often remain in the same pastorate for a considerable period, even for life. Rippon's lists show that this was sometimes the case, but also that a brief pastorate was not uncommon." Nuttall, *Baptist Ministers*, 384-385.

<sup>186</sup> John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Cherubim Opened and Explained. A Sermon at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. John Davis, at Waltham-Abbey. Preached August 15, 1764. Sermon XXXIX in A Collection of Sermons and Tracts: In Two Volumes. Volume II. Ordination Sermons. Several of which were never before Printed. By the late Reverend and Learned John Gill, D.D. To Which are Prefixed, Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author. Vol. II.* (London: Gracechurch, M DCC LXXIII), II:30-31.

<sup>187</sup> Sutcliff, *Ordination of Morgan*, 11, 14.

stewardship of the office for the benefit of the Church and to the glory of God. A much more detailed analysis of the theological content of the charge is described in the next chapter.

#### **4.3.5.5 Address to the Church**

The final sermon of the proceedings, usually following prayer and singing, contained an address to the church. The main purpose of this discourse was to examine the church member's responsibilities to the pastor in the context of their voluntary relationship.<sup>188</sup>

The address also considered the individual member's responsibilities to one another.

##### **4.3.5.5.1 Church's Responsibility to the Pastor**

Following the pattern of Jesus, the church must be characterized by love if it is to fulfil its mandate. It is necessary that they love their pastor and treat him with kindness and affection.<sup>189</sup> Their esteem for the pastor was not based primarily on the fact that he was a worthy individual, but rather it reflected the high regard they held for the office of elder. God's servant was worthy of such respect because he had been chosen by God as a leader over them for their good. If God had honoured him, so should his church. Pastors should be encouraged in the work as long as they remained faithful to the Scriptures.<sup>190</sup> They

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<sup>188</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Obligations of a People to their Faithful Minister. Represented in a Discourse Preached at the Ordination of the Revd. Mr. Samuel Burford, September 4, 1755* (London: George Keith, MDCCCLV), 8.

<sup>189</sup> Hugh Evans, *A Charge and Sermon, Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Thomas Dunscombe, at Coate, Oxon, August 4th, 1773. The Charge by Caleb Evans, M.A.. The Sermon by Hugh Evans, M.A..* (Bristol: W. Pine, T. Cadell, M. Ward, & C., 1773), 23.

<sup>190</sup> Samuel Pearce, *The Duty of the Ministers to be Nursing Fathers to the Church; and the Duty of Churches to Regard Ministers as the Gift of Christ: A Charge, Delivered by the Rev. John Ryland, D. D. of Bristol; and a Sermon, Delivered by the Rev. S. Pearce, M.A., of Birmingham; in the Dissenters Meeting-House, Angel-Street, Worcester, at the Ordination of the Rev. W. Belsher, to the Pastorate of the Baptist Church, meeting in Silver-Street, in the same city: Together with an Introductory Address, by the Rev. G. Osborn, and also Mr. Belsher's Declaration of Religious Sentiments.* (London: Button, 1796), 46.

were considered rulers in the church, but not tyrants, and so they had no power to impose laws on the church that are not found in Scripture. They were to govern and guide the congregation for the good of people's souls.<sup>191</sup>

Since it is the nature of love to hide infirmities and weakness, it is important to overlook a pastor's individual flaws. Conversations about him should be positive,<sup>192</sup> always speaking respectfully of him, especially to their families.<sup>193</sup> Also, the congregation should not receive an accusation against him without clear evidence.<sup>194</sup> The only stipulation for these rules was that he had to reflect the gospel through his speech and life. If he continued to declare the whole counsel of God, preaching Christ alone as saviour, the church was under obligation to treat him with the utmost affection.<sup>195</sup>

This love was to be sincere motivated by a genuine desire for the pastor's prosperity and given freely and cheerfully.<sup>196</sup> But true love is always necessarily practical and therefore must be demonstrated tangibly. Consequently, the church was encouraged to constantly look for ways to strengthen and encourage their leaders. For example, if a pastor was struggling with grief and sorrow, they must show him compassion.<sup>197</sup> One of the best ways to encourage the pastor was to regularly attend church meetings,<sup>198</sup> and,

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<sup>191</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 64.

<sup>192</sup> Isaac Mann, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Wm. Crabtree, first pastor of the Baptist Church at Bradford, Yorkshire. To which is added a sermon, preached to the church at the ordination of the Rev. Joshua Wood, of Halifax, August 6, 1760. The Regard Which The Churches Of Christ Owe To Their Ministers. A Sermon, Preached At The Ordination Of The Rev. Joshua Wood, Of Halifax, August 6, 1760*, by the Rev. William Crabtree (London: Button and Son, 1815), 73.

<sup>193</sup> Hugh Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 34.

<sup>194</sup> John Thommas, *A Charge and Sermon, Together with an Introductory Discourse, and Confession of faith, Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Caleb Evans, August 18, 1767, in Broad-Mead, Bristol*. Publish'd at the request of the church, and the ministers then present. (Bristol, 1767), 86.

<sup>195</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 73.

<sup>196</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 80.

<sup>197</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 74.

<sup>198</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 83, Hugh Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 31; Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 83.

especially, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Irregular attendance hindered his work by showing a poor example to others.<sup>199</sup> It is particularly discouraging for the pastor, who labours over a sermon designed for the good of the church as a whole, to find members not in attendance. Paying attention to his sermons was another means of encouraging the pastor. The congregation was warned not to be inattentive, smile, whisper, or look about at others during the service.<sup>200</sup>

The need for regular attendance, and attentive listening, was partially based on a utilitarian belief that the church had an obligation to make conscientious use of their pastors.<sup>201</sup> As he was given a stewardship to preach the Word, the church was given the stewardship to listen to the Word. It was the member's duty to be taught by him through his public preaching and his private visitation, learning to humbly accept his counsel, exhortations, and rebukes. It was assumed that these admonitions were given in love and so they were to be received as a blessing and not as a personal attack.<sup>202</sup> Of course, to hear the Word implied that they would apply this truth to their lives.<sup>203</sup> Members should always be transparent about their spiritual condition, sharing their struggles and blessings with the pastor.<sup>204</sup> In turn, the church was obligated to lovingly offer their pastor advice when necessity called for it.<sup>205</sup>

Because the pastor was to be wholly committed to the welfare of the church and not distracted by worldly affairs, it was the church's responsibility to make provision for

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<sup>199</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 52.

<sup>200</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 86. Pearce, *Ordination of Belsher*, 54.

<sup>201</sup> Clark, *Three Discourses Addressed to the Congregation at Maze-Pond, Southwark, on their Public Declaration of having chosen Mr. James Dore their pastor*. March 25th, 1784 (Cambridge, 1784), 97.

<sup>202</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 82.

<sup>203</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 31.

<sup>204</sup> Clark, *Ordination of Dore*, 99.

<sup>205</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 82. See 1 Cor.13:9; Acts 18:26.

his earthly needs. His primary responsibility was to serve Christ in the Church and he must be freed as much as possible from all temporal concerns.<sup>206</sup> Beyond his basic needs, the church should, to the best of their ability, ensure the pastor and his family are comfortable.<sup>207</sup> They must try and make his ministry joyful, believing that his joy would become theirs.<sup>208</sup>

The church also had an obligation to protect their pastor's time. Two of his primary duties included visiting members and preparing quality sermons,<sup>209</sup> so it was important to guard against those who would try and steal his time just to chat.<sup>210</sup> He must be given the time to do what he had been called to do and so members should leave him to his work, especially guarding his mornings and Saturdays as it "is a little short of cruelty to interrupt him then."<sup>211</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, the church should regularly pray for him.<sup>212</sup> This was considered the supreme demonstration of love for him for they all believed that he could do nothing good without divine assistance.<sup>213</sup> More specifically the church should pray that he would resist temptation, have power in proclamation, have help in the study of Scripture, clear thoughts in formulating ideas, warmth and pleasure in meditation, liberty and boldness in speaking, strength to resist the world and its temptations, and the ability to maintain a good character.<sup>214</sup> But this love was not confined to ethereal needs only as the church is also encouraged to pray for his physical health and the material welfare of

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<sup>206</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 28.

<sup>207</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 86, Clark, *Ordination of Dore*, 96; Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 28.

<sup>208</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 25.

<sup>209</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 96.

<sup>210</sup> Pearce, *Ordination of Belsher*, 52.

<sup>211</sup> Pearce, *Ordination of Belsher*, 52.

<sup>212</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 79.

<sup>213</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 90.

<sup>214</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 93.

his family.<sup>215</sup> Prayer for the pastor was not just restricted to Sunday mornings, but should be practiced in private prayers, family devotions, and other church-meetings.<sup>216</sup> If a church refused to pray for their pastor, they hurt not only him, but also themselves.<sup>217</sup>

The address also usually included arguments encouraging the people of the church to implement these admonitions in their church life. Since God had placed the Pastor over the church as a ruler, it was a member's duty to submit to him. He was given as a free gift from God and placed there for the churches edification;<sup>218</sup> and the Lord has so ordained it that as his success goes, so goes the church.<sup>219</sup> Since their honour and reputation depend on his success in the office, the church must strive to do everything in their power to help him accomplish his duties effectively.<sup>220</sup>

Yet the church not only has responsibilities to the pastor, they also are accountable to one another. Just as they have an obligation to love their pastor, they also must love one another. As opportunity arises, they must strive to care for one another and bear each other burdens – both spiritual and temporally.<sup>221</sup> They must freely interact with one another sharing each other's triumphs and defeats while constantly praying for each other's needs.<sup>222</sup> Peace is essential for a gospel church but it takes effort. They must struggle for peace and avoid contention seeking to build each other up in "knowledge, faith, purity, and usefulness" (Rom. 14:19).<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Clark, *Ordination of Dore*, 99.

<sup>216</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 92.

<sup>217</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 93; Pearce, *Ordination of Belsher*, 49.

<sup>218</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 97, 102.

<sup>219</sup> Evans, *Ordination of Dunscombe*, 35, 36.

<sup>220</sup> Mann, *Ordination of Wood*, 107, 108.

<sup>221</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 87.

<sup>222</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 88.

<sup>223</sup> Thommas, *Ordination of Evans*, 89.

The ordination proceedings usually ended with the singing of a Psalm or hymn followed by a prayer or benediction.

If the ordination ceremony was not completed in one service in the morning, an afternoon or evening service would sometimes follow. In 1790 at the ordination of Nathan Smith at Barnoldswick, Yorkshire, the church met again at 3:00 pm to hear the address to the church.<sup>224</sup> There is another example of an evening service beginning at 5:45 pm at a Deacon's ordination at Salop Baptist Church in 1796. William Steadman opened in prayer, and then hands were laid on a Brother Evans. Samuel Pearce preached from 2 Corinthians 4:7 and a Brother Harrington closed in prayer.<sup>225</sup> At the ordination of Thomas Berry in 1796 the church met again in the evening at 7:00 pm. Brother Sharp gave an Address to the Church from 1 Thessalonians 5:13. There was no address to the church in the morning service which began at 10:30 am.<sup>226</sup> At William Carey's ordination in 1791, Samuel Pearce preached from Gal 6:14 "in the evening."<sup>227</sup>

These services were shorter in length than the morning service. Usually they opened with prayer and singing, then a sermon was preached. Typically this was an address to the church if one was not given in the morning service, but, as in the case of William Carey, it might be a special sermon to encourage both the church and newly ordained pastor or missionary.<sup>228</sup> Sometimes, if deacons were being ordained, they may also have included an ordination prayer and the laying on of hands. After the service they

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<sup>224</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 518.

<sup>225</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 483.

<sup>226</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 482.

<sup>227</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 519. See also Rippon, *Register*, 117, 192,

<sup>228</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 483, 519.

would close in singing and prayer. We have an example given in the *Register* of a service ending at 9:00 pm.<sup>229</sup>

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

These ordination services were central to the spiritual life of these early Baptists and as such reveal important clues to understanding their pastoral theological priorities. The charge which contained the pastoral advice of a more senior minister is central to understanding what was important to them concerning the ministry. The next chapter will define and describe the contours of their theological content as seen primarily in the charge.

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<sup>229</sup> Rippon, *Register*, 190.