

fear lest Baptist principles and ideals should fail to prove their adaptability to the conditions and needs that will arise. A church that is distinctively English will fail; and so will a church that is distinctively Dutch. But the Baptist Church is possessed of a witness that is universal in its appeal; and the cosmopolitanism that has shown itself in the history of our denomination in other parts of the world will be seen again in South Africa, and with a richness of life not surpassed in our previous history.

D. DAVIES.

Pantygog, Pontycymmer, Glam.

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## Andrew Fuller, 1754—1815.

*Real development is not leaving things behind, as on a road, but drawing life from them, as from a root.*

G. K. CHESTERTON.

AS a raw student there came into my hands the volume of Andrew Fuller's works which Mr. Henry G. Bohn, that firm friend of good literature, had included in his famous *Standard Library*. Ever since reading the short memoir of the author, by his son Andrew Gunton Fuller, which the old green-bound book contains, I have felt an admiration for Fuller's character and work which all further knowledge of that remarkable man has increased. I have no claim to speak of Fuller on any ground of having special sources of knowledge not open to all; my right to speak is based only on the repeated perusal of all his published works and on some knowledge of the biographies of Fuller and his contemporaries.

Two things combine to make Andrew Fuller a person of unusual interest to all who respect human achievement. First, here is a man, with no education worth speaking of in youth, and without a spark of genius, who yet manages by dint of unremitting use of ordinary gifts, to write works in strong, serviceable English, which are immediately received with applause wherever theology is read at all, and which are reprinted fifty years afterwards, both on their merits as literature and as still effective pieces of Christian apologetic. If this should seem unimpressive to any of us, let us ask ourselves, fellow dribblers, how many

works of ours will be deemed essential to the completion of "Standard Libraries" fifty years hence!

The second thing that makes Fuller a man to be noted and admired is that without outside assistance, patronage, or adventitious aid of any kind, he raised himself from the plough-tail to a position where he moved with distinction among great people of church and state, and became the chief agent (after Carey) in launching Evangelical Christendom upon the enterprise of missions to the heathen world.

Fuller is the average man raised to the highest power by the full employment of every talent. Look at his grave face in the well-known group portrait of the Baptist ministers of his period. He sits at a table, a little in the background from John Foster, whose pensive form fills an easy chair on his left (Fuller never sat in an easy chair in his life!). Towering above him and well to the fore is Robert Hall's herculean frame and massive head. In natural genius Fuller is nowhere in comparison with those two. He has not the magic pen of Foster, nor the eloquent tongue of Hall, but if judgment be limited to service to the cause of evangelical religion, I am not sure that the self-educated ploughman did not excel the pair of them.

#### I.—PASTOR.

Andrew Fuller's life lies between the 6th February, 1754, when he was born under his father's little farmhouse roof at Wicken, near Soham, on the flat lands of Cambridgeshire, and the 17th May, 1815, when he died, sitting up in bed in his room adjoining his chapel in Kettering, the last earthly sounds that fell upon his closing ear being the voices of his people praising God in their Sunday morning worship.

Of his sixty-one years of mortal life, the first twenty were spent on the Cambridgeshire farm. Nothing is said of his education—probably it did not amount to much. The sturdy youth was early inured to toil. His hands held the stils of the plough as his steaming horses dragged the tearing ploughshare through the fat soil which had once been a lake bottom in the fenland. He ate his luncheon from a handkerchief at eleven, seated under the hedge, while the horses rested, as small farmers' sons do in those wide fields to this day.

In an autobiographical letter he tells of his conversion at the age of sixteen. Hyper-Calvinism reigned in the circle in which the Fullers moved; the preachers had little or nothing to say to the unconverted, and it was a dark and devious way the poor boy traversed in his silent brooding mind before he gained any assurance of his interest in Christ. He was baptized in the year 1770, and united with the Church at Soham. Through a doctrinal dispute on "human inability" the pastor resigned, the pulpit fell

vacant, the duty of supply devolved upon the members, and young Fuller was one day called upon to take his turn. His pulpit gifts, to his own surprise, meeting with acceptance, he was called to the pastorate, and ordained in 1775, Robert Hall's father, from Arnesby, taking the leading part in the solemn services of the ordination day.

The chief hinge on which the gates of opportunity turned for Fuller was his removal to Kettering in October, 1782. Mr. Beeby Wallis, senior deacon of the church at Kettering, seeking for some one to lead forward the Baptist cause in that rising industrial town, had fixed upon the young Soham pastor, of seven years' experience in his first charge, and worthy of better things, as the right man for the work. When the call came and was urged upon him through a whole year of hesitation, Fuller was reduced to the deepest distress of mind and his people went about the village in tears. The pastor was married, had a young family, had tried first a business and then a school as secondary means of income in augmentation of a stipend which never reached *thirteen pounds a year*; yet it took the scrupulous man a twelvemonth to decide whether it was right to leave his few sheep in the wilderness for the more extended and responsible field of labour Kettering could offer. Many men, Dr. Ryland said, would have risked the welfare of a nation with fewer searchings of heart than it cost this man to determine whether he should leave a little dissenting church, scarcely consisting of forty members beside himself and his wife.

Once at Kettering a new world opened out before Fuller. Ryland junior, at Northampton, and Sutcliff, at Olney, he already knew, but they had been inaccessiblely remote from the fens in those not only pre-railway but pre-mail-coach days. Now they could meet. Pearce was near enough, at Birmingham, to be visited occasionally. That seraphic soul, too good for this hard world, and destined not long to remain in it, had a strange fascination for rough and gruff Andrew Fuller, whose private prayers contained thereafter a line of unusual character: "God of Samuel Pearce, be my God!" Soon young Carey came into their circle, and the yeasty ferment in that visionary's mind communicated itself to the group of brave hearts who were destined to lead a reluctant church forward with the gospel into the heathen world.

Fuller had no other pastorate. For thirty-two years he presided over the Kettering church, growing in power, in varied usefulness, and in honour from year to year. Of his many employments we can conveniently speak under subsequent headings, but a special note may be made of his tenth year at Kettering. The year 1792 was a memorable one to Fuller on many accounts.

In April of that year Beeby Wallis died, and over the tomb the pastor placed his tribute to his deacon and friend :

Active and generous in virtue's cause,  
With solid wisdom, strict integrity,  
And unaffected piety, he lived  
Beloved among us, and beloved he died.

During the bright days of that summer the Kettering manse covered a tragedy of the direst kind. Mrs. Fuller's mind became disordered. Her affliction is described in a letter of pathetic and poignant character to her father by her husband. That noble soul was nurse for three months wherein his anxious watch was only broken by two hours' release out of each twenty-four. Mrs. Fuller died in August, 1792. During the crushing afflictions of that year Fuller was occupied in maturing plans for the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. When the brethren met on 2 October, 1792, Beeby Wallis's widow, in her mourning weeds, gave them the hospitality of her parlour, and Fuller, fresh from his own terrible vigil and painful release, helped to do the honours. The story of this famous meeting is too well known to need recounting here.

Fuller's second wife, who survived him, was the daughter of a ministerial friend, Rev. W. Coles, of Maulden, near Ampthill. She was an exemplary companion, and did much for Fuller's comfort in the period of his incessant labours and travels which followed the founding of the Mission.

## II.—THEOLOGIAN.

Fuller's contemporaries evidently considered that his chief title to fame would rest upon his services to the Serampore Mission, and probably they were right; but Fuller would have had a strong claim upon the grateful remembrance of posterity even though another had been secretary of the Mission. His very great service as a theologian to Evangelical religion and especially to the Baptist denomination has not been appreciated at its proper value. Fuller is one of the very few British Baptists thoroughly worthy to be called a theologian.

Fuller's revolt against that system of false Calvinism which drenched the minds of the religious people of his circle was not at first an intellectual, so much as a spiritual and experiential, protest. Hyper-Calvinism had kept his young soul in bondage and misery when he was desiring salvation with all his heart, but doubting his "warrant to come to Christ," and this drove him to prayer and to the examination of the Scriptures in independence of the dogmatic lenses through which his school customarily view them. In order to clear his own mind he began to write while still in his village pastorate. He afterwards published his conclusions under the title, *The Gospel worthy of All Acceptation*:

or the *Obligation of Men Cordially to Believe whatever God makes known*. This publication involved Fuller in controversy for twenty years. William Button and Abraham Booth were dissatisfied with it as leaning to Arminianism, and Dan Taylor, the Arminian, though rejoicing in it as freeing the gospel appeal to mankind from many hindrances, was nevertheless dissatisfied with it as retaining the Calvinistic leaven. But the more discussion proceeded, the more Fuller's modifying influence was felt in the churches. He and his pamphlet became a symbol and a name. "Fullerism" was the designation fastened on that type of doctrine which, while Calvinistic at bottom, yet held forth the gospel appeal to sinners in Scripture language and with Scripture urgency as a sincere offer on God's part to whomsoever would comply with its terms of repentance and faith. The name lasted well into the middle of the nineteenth century among the Baptist people. Young Spurgeon came up from Waterbeach to London in 1854 as a "Fullerite" confessed; at least, that was the handiest and fairest term by which his brand of Calvinism could be labelled.

The controversy, in Miltonic phrase, "of fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute" had not been, in Fuller's day, as now, relegated to metaphysics, where it belongs. On the contrary, it occupied the foreground of theology as the liveliest of live issues. Difference of judgment on the most inscrutable of mysteries divided churches and separated friends and families. In rural East Anglia the fine old Puritan tradition coming down from "Eastern Association" and "New Model" days, instead of yielding to the newer spirit of the Evangelical revival, got ever higher and higher in its emphasis upon Divine Decrees and associated conceptions, until in the end it had reached Antinomianism. "Antinomianism," said Fuller, "is loose and foul; is congregations have a few individuals whose hearts are right; but the fruit they bring forth in general leads unto death. Under the influence of this presumptuous system our churches in Norfolk and Suffolk and many other places are going to ruin. Nowhere does Antinomianism grow more than in London. There is not a man there who properly lifts up a standard against it."

Fuller's pamphlet was the steel point that caught the denominational train as it was going full tilt into the stop-block of a siding, and turned it safely into the main line of advance once more.

Fuller's next adventure into theological literature was destined to give him a far wider public than could be expected from his first publication, which was, by comparison, little more than a domestic tract. Soon after Carey and Thomas had departed for India, Fuller brought out under the title *The Gospel*

*its Own Witness*, a large work in which "the holy nature and divine harmony of the Christian religion" is "contrasted with the immorality and absurdity of Deism." "Andrew Fuller's work on the deistical controversy," said Henry G. Bohn, in reprinting it in his *Standard Library*, "was written at a period of our national history when the writings of Volney, Gibbon, and especially of Thomas Paine, fostered by the political effects of the French Revolution, had deteriorated the morals of the people, and infused the poison of infidelity into the disaffected portion of the public. It is no presumption to suppose that the extensive circulation which the work of Mr. Fuller obtained had some share, at least, in bringing about the present more healthy state of public feeling."

It was from the closing chapter of this work, entitled "Redemption Consistent with Creation," that Thomas Chalmers drew inspiration for those amazingly eloquent "Astronomical Discourses" that thrilled the overflowing crowds of magistrates, merchants, and other citizens who thronged the Tron Church in Glasgow on the occasion of their delivery in 1815.

Another important controversial work, which, with the last-mentioned, chiefly supports Fuller's fame as an author, was written against the Socinians, or self-styled Rational Dissenters, whose leading apostle was the eminent Dr. Priestley. The full title of this work is, *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared as to their Moral Tendency*, and the plan pursued is to compare the tenets of Evangelicalism and Unitarianism as to their influence upon heart and life. "The tempers and lives of men are books for common people to read, and they will read them, even though they should read nothing else. They are indeed warranted by the Scriptures themselves to judge of the nature of doctrines by their holy or unholy tendency. The true doctrine is to be known by its being a 'doctrine according to godliness.'" Conversion, morality, love to God, benevolence, humility, charity, veneration for the Scriptures—these are some of the touchstones by which the Unitarian system, as represented by Priestley, Belsham, and Lindsey, is tested and found wanting as compared with the Evangelical scheme of things.

Among the remaining writings making up the five thick volumes of Fuller's complete works are *Expositions of Genesis, Revelation, the Sermon on the Mount*, and some other parts of Scripture. These were delivered from the pulpit on Sunday mornings during fifteen years of ministry. Eighty-four full *Sermons*, many *Circular Letters, Dialogues, Tracts*, and *Letters* to churches and individuals, with four valuable *Letters on Preaching* are included. His *Memoir of Pearce* and his *Apology for Christian Missions*, together with many *Reviews* and *Magazine Articles*, make up an

intellectual output truly amazing in its magnitude and quality. Considering the difficulties under which the author laboured, and the variety and weight of prior claims upon his time and strength, his literary activity leaves one gasping.

### III.—ROPEHOLDER.

Andrew Fuller was thirty-eight years of age when he commenced those labours on behalf of Carey and his helpers which form, in many minds, his noblest monument. The *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* had been well wrought as a theme on paper, and would continue for many years to come to do its leavening work in the churches; but Fuller was destined to work out in incessant toil, travel, and tribulation, the due result of the thesis with which he had challenged the churches.

Fuller always acknowledged, however, that it was Carey who first drew the full conclusion from his meditations, conversations, and writings. Carey it was who first saw that if the gospel was worthy of all acceptation, its acceptance ought to be pressed upon all mankind. "The origin of the Mission," Fuller nobly said, "is to be found in the workings of brother Carey's mind."

"Friends," said the secretary, soon after the missionaries had departed, "talk to me about coadjutors and assistants, but I know not how it is, I find a difficulty. Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, 'Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope!' But before he went down, he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us at the mouth of the pit, to this effect, that while we lived we should never let go the rope. You understand me. There was great responsibility attached to us who began the business."

Fuller travelled over England, Scotland, and Ireland, preaching whenever he could get a hearing, and taking collections for the work. He personally canvassed leading Evangelicals of all churches in the principal towns and cities, sometimes meeting with delightful surprises of Christian love, and sometimes encountering the discouragement that prosaic minds invariably heap on innovators.

His first Scottish tour was but a good sample of scores of such pilgrimages. His fame as a writer, and the debates which had been held upon his doctrine by McLean, the Haldanes, and the Scotch Baptists generally, all conspired to create interest if not a welcome. Everywhere large congregations were gathered, some of which numbered four and five thousand hearers. He returned to Kettering with upwards of £900 for the mission (big

money for those days), and with earnest solicitations to repeat his visits, and promises of future help. This journey was marked by the reception of the shattering tidings of the beloved Pearce's death.

Fuller's humour, if any, was of the grim variety. It was fitting that the Scotch should have called forth for posterity a rare sample of it. A Scotch Baptist Church in Glasgow sent, offering their pulpit, if they could be satisfied that their faith and the visitor's were in harmony. Fuller cast his eye over the paper they presented, and said he objected to nothing. When asked for his own confession, he declared that he came not as a candidate for their pulpit, and had nothing to say. The messengers retired, debated the matter, and returned saying they could not receive him. "Very well," said the deep voice, "I shall go to the tabernacle" (Haldane's). The Baptists repented, but it was too late. He preached in the tabernacle to 4,000 people, and collected £200. Eventually the Baptist Church sincerely repented and brought forth fruits meet for repentance in a £45 collection for the Mission.

Fuller did not disdain, on these journeys, to be a wayside evangelist. His journal reveals intimate conversations in inns, on stage-coaches, on ferry-boats, and in hotel parlours with souls in darkness, in rebellion, or distress. Not John Wesley himself was keener on winning souls. "Saving souls is our one business," said the great Methodist, and so said the Baptist Mission secretary. Never was a man more faithful than Fuller with the souls whom providence cast in his way on his journeys up and down the land. It never occurred to this man that saving souls by deputy in India absolved him from saving souls at home by personal effort.

A story which displays his ruling passion is told of Fuller in Oxford. A friend was showing him the buildings in the world-famous High Street of the university city. "Brother," replied his pre-occupied companion, "I think there is one question which, after all that has been written on it, has not yet been answered—*What is justification?*" His friend proposed to return home to discuss it; to which Fuller readily agreed; adding: "That inquiry is far more to me than all these fine buildings." We are sorry that Fuller did not feel the beauty of "the High," but no earnestly religious mind can deny the transcendence of "What is justification?" That to Fuller was no mere wordy debate on a Pauline idea, but a matter of life, death, and destiny to himself and to every soul who heard the gospel.

Upon the secretary fell the duty of defending the interests of the mission and the rights of its agents by interviews with Cabinet Ministers. At one such interview Lord Liverpool

remarked with genuine diplomatic courtesy that he "quite approved of liberty of thought in matters of religion." A deep voice, in measured words, answered: "My lord, we do not wish for liberty to *think*: that you cannot give or take away; we ask for liberty to *act*." Looking around for the speaker, he met the stern eye and grave face of the secretary of the Baptist Mission.

This paper must now end, albeit with reluctant abruptness, on account of space. In labours like these, in addition to a responsible pastorate and extensive authorship, Fuller toiled for twenty-three years as leading rope-holder. He carried on his broad shoulders and in his brave, noble and God-fearing heart, the chief part of the burden of the mission; and then, before his time, at sixty-one years of age, worn out with travel and toil, this true and valiant servant of God fell asleep with his hand still upon the rope.

GILBERT LAWS.

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## Abraham Greenwood, 1749—1827.

THE Rev. Abraham Greenwood is one of the least known of those who united with William Carey, on October 2nd, 1792, at Kettering, in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. He was a Yorkshireman, so his eyes seemed always to be seeing the fields afar, and he proved to be a Baptist pioneer in Lancashire, Staffordshire, and Lincolnshire. He was born at Barnoldswick, January 21st, 1749, in the cottage adjoining the Baptist chapel house, which is now the property of the church. For over two centuries his forebears had been known as *Dissenters* in the parish, and their descendants have been in the Baptist fellowship of the town ever since.

In youth he attended the ministry of the Rev. Alverey Jackson, one of the leaders of the denomination in Yorkshire and Lancashire, who helped to re-organize the original Baptist Association of Lancashire and Yorkshire in 1718, being the first to lead it in prayer at the throne of grace; and also a protagonist for the ministry of song being exercised in the then songless sanctuaries. Greenwood began to preach in 1770, and became a pupil for a year and a half with his brother-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Armitage, an Independent minister at Delph, in Saddleworth. When the celebrated Dr. John Fawcett opened an academy in his own house at Wainsgate, Hebden Bridge,