

*Andrew Fuller*  
CENTER *for* BAPTIST STUDIES  
at THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# Joseph Ivimey

## THE PERPETUAL INTERCESSION OF CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH: A FUNERAL SERMON FOR ANDREW FULLER

EDITED & INTRODUCED BY  
DUSTIN W. BENGE

Occasional Publications edited by Michael A.G. Haykin

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The Perpetual Intercession of Christ  
for His Church

A Sermon to the Memory of  
the Late Andrew Fuller

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The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies  
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# INTRODUCTION

MICHAEL A. G. HAYKIN

Today, Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834), pastor of Eagle Street Baptist Church in Holborn, London, for nearly thirty years, is mostly remembered for his voluminous four-volume history of his English Baptist denomination.<sup>1</sup> In his own day, however, he was equally known for his unflinching commitment to Protestant Christianity,<sup>2</sup> his passionate advocacy of a national union of English Baptists,<sup>3</sup> and his support of missions. Now, it was this latter interest in and active support of missions that led to the commencement of Ivimey’s friendship with Andrew Fuller (1754–1815),<sup>4</sup> the pastor of Kettering Baptist Church, when the latter was visiting London during the course of 1807. Since the formation of what became known as the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, Fuller had functioned as its secretary. This involved, among other things, Fuller traversing the country on preaching and fund-raising tours, and it was on one such visit that Fuller made the acquaintance of Ivimey.

Now, it is well known that Fuller was wary of many of the Baptists in London since he regarded many of them as having been shaped by the business world and “autocratic” ways of the capital.<sup>5</sup> Typical of Fuller’s attitude in this regard is a note he once wrote to Ivimey to thank him for fund-raising for the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS). He said: “I thank you for your diligence in increasing the subscriptions. Go on, only let it be gently, without pressing anyone, without puffing or boasting, which are such common things in London, that Londoners are in danger of doing them without being conscious of it!”<sup>6</sup> By 1812, however, Fuller had come to appreciate Ivimey so much that he asked the London Baptist if he would be willing to serve on the executive of the BMS.<sup>7</sup> And in a letter to the missionary William Ward (1769–1823) the following year, Fuller told him that he considered Ivimey “an excellent man,” a significant remark from one who was always judicious in his praise of others.<sup>8</sup> Ivimey, in turn, deeply appreciated Fuller and ever regarded his friendship as one of the greatest blessings to come into his life. He was certain that it was unlikely he would meet Fuller’s equal again in his lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

Andrew Fuller was indeed an outstanding Baptist theologian and pastor with qualities that make him one of the most attractive figures in Baptist history. Self-taught when it came to theology, Fuller immersed himself in the works of Baptist and Puritan authors, including John Bunyan (1628-1688) and John Gill (1697-1771), John Owen (1616-1683) and Jonathan Edwards (1703-

1758). Ultimately, though, it was to the Scriptures that he looked for his theological convictions.

His first major work, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which appeared in 1785 with a second edition in 1801, proved to be an epoch-making book that decisively refuted Hyper-Calvinism then regnant in far too many Baptist churches and that laid the theological foundations for the modern missionary movement. In 1793 he issued an extensive refutation of the anti-Trinitarian system of Socinianism, *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems examined and Compared, as to their Moral Tendency*, which well displays the Christ-centered nature of eighteenth-century Evangelical thought. Fuller also published influential rebuttals of Deism and Sandemanianism, the latter an eighteenth-century form of “easy-believism.” The importance of his theological achievements was noted during and after his life. The College of New Jersey (1798) and Yale (1805) both awarded him a DD, though he declined to accept either of them. In addition to these literary projects Fuller was also a conscientious pastor and secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society. As a pastor-theologian, he is a great mentor for Baptists today.

It is clear that Fuller had remarkable stores of physical and mental energy that allowed him to accomplish all that he did. But it was not without cost to his body. In the last fifteen years of his life he was rarely well. He preached for the last time on April 2, 1815, and died May 7 of that year.<sup>10</sup> While there appear to have been numerous funeral sermons for Fuller, Ivimey’s was one of the few to actually appear in print.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1811–1830), 4 volumes. For Ivimey, see especially George Pritchard, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Joseph Ivimey* (London: George Wightman, 1835); Sydney Clark, “One man’s legacy,” *Baptist Times*, 7261 (September 7, 1989), 2–3; and Alexander Gordon, “Ivimey, Joseph (1773–1834),” rev. L.E. Lauer, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/article/14503>, accessed September 4, 2012].

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, his *Neutrality the Proper Ground for Protestant Dissenters respecting the Roman Catholic Claims* (London, 1813). Apparently, on one occasion, when Ivimey, along with some other Baptist ministers and a good number of Paedobaptist ministers, went to meet with George IV as representatives of their respective Nonconformist denominations, they were asked to wait in a library prior to meeting the king in his audience chamber. While they were waiting, the Presbyterian minister Alexander Waugh (1754–1827) observed an elegant vase that had been given as a present to the king from the Pope. Turning to Ivimey, he observed to the London Baptist, “Well, brother Ivimey, one could almost covet that beautiful bowl; how well it would do for the baptism of our infants.” “Exactly so, brother,” Ivimey replied, and pointing to an inscription about the vase being a gift from the



Pope that Waugh had not seen, he then continued, “it would indeed do well for the baptism of infants; for you see it comes from the Pope of Rome!” (“Anecdote”, *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record*, 8 [1849], 27).

<sup>3</sup> His article “Unity Essential to Prosperity”, *The Baptist Magazine*, 3 (1811), 234–237 was a key step on the road to the union of the English Baptists in the nineteenth century. For further discussion of Ivimey’s role in this union, see Ernest A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History* (London: The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1959), passim, and J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (A History of the English Baptists, vol.3; Didcot, Oxfordshire: The Baptist Historical Society, 1994), 210–214. Briggs notes that two men—Ivimey and John Rippon—“stand out for their vision and patience in holding the Calvinistic Baptists together in unity” (213–214).

<sup>4</sup> On Fuller, see especially the classic biography by his friend and confidant John Ryland, Jr, *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope, illustrated; in the Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (2nd ed.; London: Button & Son, 1818). More recently, Peter Morden has written a helpful biography and introduction to his thought: *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life* (Studies in Baptist History and Thought, vol.8; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Isaac Taylor Hinton/Holdsworth & Ball, 1830), IV, 529–530; Payne, *Baptist Union*, 17.

<sup>6</sup> Cited Seymour J. Price, “The Early Years of the Baptist Union”, *The Baptist Quarterly*, 4 (1928–1929), 56, n.2.

<sup>7</sup> Pritchard, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Joseph Ivimey*, 86.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to William Ward, March 5, 1813 (Letters of Andrew Fuller, compiled Ernest A. Payne and transcribed Joyce A. Booth, Angus Library, Regent’s Park College, Oxford University). George Pritchard, in his biography of Ivimey, reckoned that a “similarity, in many respects, of [Fuller’s and Ivimey’s] sentiments and pursuits” may explain their friendship (*Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Joseph Ivimey*, 82).

<sup>9</sup> Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, IV, 529. See also below for Ivimey’s comments about Fuller.

<sup>10</sup> See below for Ivimey’s account of Fuller’s final words in his sermon.

<sup>11</sup> See also John Ryland, Jr. *The Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ no Security against Corporeal Death, but the Source of Spiritual and Eternal Life* (London: W. Button & Son, 1815), which Ryland preached at the actual funeral of Fuller on May 15, and William Newman, *Reflections on the Fall of a Great Man* (London, 1815).

<sup>12</sup> On Barclay, see D.E. Meek and D.B. Murray, “The Early Nineteenth Century” in D.W. Bebbington, ed., *The Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow: The Baptist Union of Scotland, 1988), 32–35.13 On Saffery, see Brian Talbot, “John Saffery (1763–1825)” in Michael A.G. Haykin, ed., *The British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2003), III, 42–83.

<sup>13</sup> Pritchard, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Joseph Ivimey*, 20–21.



REV. JOSEPH IVIMEY

# THE PERPETUAL INTERCESSION OF CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH: A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION UNDER THE LOSS OF USEFUL MINISTERS

*“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”*

*Hebrews 7:23–25*

The introduction of sin into the world by the transgression of our first parents was the procuring cause of all the painful events that have since afflicted it. Among this host of miseries, death is preeminent. He is the King of terrors whose march may be traced by the graves of His victims. Not only have the slave and the peasant been subdued by Him, but persons of distinguished rank and of every station in life: judges, legislators, monarchs, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. “Your fathers where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?” (Zechariah 1:5). Even the priests officiating in the temple of God, though found offering the yearly sacrifice on the great day of atonement for Israel, have been interrupted in their work and not suffered to continue by reason of death.

The death of Aaron, the first high-priest, is very particularly narrated, “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, “Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there.” And Moses did as the Lord commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel” (Numbers 20:23–29).

Thus, in the Levitical priesthood, the office of high-priest descended from one to another till fourscore and three had filled that important station in the church of God. It is, therefore, with great propriety that the apostle speaks of them as many priests.<sup>1</sup> The constant succession that was inevitably necessary, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death is the argument employed by the apostle to illustrate the superiority of the Christian priesthood as exercised by the Lord Jesus. In all things, He hath the preeminence and especially in the duration of His existence and the uninterrupted nature of His office, for this man, “because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.” From this statement, an important inference is drawn, “wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” It is as if the apostle had said, “Notwithstanding the distress and affliction that, from any circumstances, may be experienced by the church of God, yet the present safety, and final salvation of all its members, is infallibly secured, by the immortal life and constant intercession of the Lord Jesus!” There will be no period under the gospel dispensation, when it shall be announced that the High-Priest is dead: that there is no one to appear in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9:24); no one that can have compassion upon the ignorant, and them that are out of the way (Hebrews 6:2); no one to pronounce the blessings of God upon the people (Hebrews 6:23–27). But on the contrary, this man, this exalted Mediator, the merciful and compassionate High-Priest over the house of God, “continueth ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood.” And notwithstanding all that fear, unbelief, and despondency can suggest to the contrary, “He is able, also, to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him.”

As the priests under the law were not suffered to continue by reason of death, so the ministers of the gospel are interrupted by the same cause. The recent death of a highly valued servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, is the afflictive event which I propose to improv by considering:

- I. That the removal of faithful ministers from their office by death, is a cause of deep affliction to the church.

Israel mourned excessively at the death of Aaron, and it is surely proper that the church of Christ should express sorrow and regret when eminently faithful and useful ministers of the gospel are thus removed. It is painful when “the righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart” (Isaiah 51:1). As it respects themselves, indeed, there is no cause for grief as “they are taken from the evil to come to depart, and to be with Christ is far better” (Philippians 1:23) for them than any pleasures or honors they could have enjoyed upon earth. Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. At death, every faithful minister enters into the joy of his Lord and hears him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” To abide in the flesh appeared more needful to

those who composed the flock over which they presided. However, God is judge Himself, and He decides when He shall be more glorified by the death, than by the life of His servants.

Among many reasons why the death of faithful ministers is a cause of affliction to the church, I shall mention the following:

1. Because the condition of unregenerate sinners is thereby rendered increasingly dangerous.

Unregenerate sinners are in arms of hostility against God. The gospel is the ministry of reconciliation. Every minister of the gospel has it committed to his charge to make it known to all men, “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:19–21).

Is not the condition of those persons truly awful who reside where there is no minister of Christ to warn them of their danger, to call them to repentance, and to tell them of the mercy of God through Jesus Christ? It is written, “Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Where ministers are employed in directing sinners to turn to the strong hold as prisoners of hope, there is reason to expect they may be induced to flee for refuse to lay hold upon the hope set before them” (Romans 10:13–15; Zechariah 9:12; Hebrews 6:10). But, “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). In the death of Mr. Fuller, the church has lost one of her ablest ministers in the world, one of its most faithful friends, and the Lord Jesus has recalled one of His best qualified servants. No man was better able to describe the deceitful Progress of Sin<sup>2</sup> upon the human mind. No man could give a more correct answer to the Great Question,<sup>2</sup> “What shall I do to be saved?” In the most direct manner, he urged sinners to “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” without any previous qualification to receive the atonement (Romans 5:11), by believing “the record which God hath given of his Son” (1 John 5:10–11). Is it not a matter of regret that such a man should not be suffered to continue by reason of death?

2. Another reason is, because the means of spiritual edification provided for

believers are diminished.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had spoiled principalities and powers by His death and resurrection, He ascended up on high and received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them. And when seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, He remembered the destitute condition of His church and “gave gifts unto men: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come into 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” (Ephesians 4:11–13). All the ministers of the gospel are gifts of Christ for edifying His mystical body, the church. But some of them are like Apollos, who helped them much which had believed through grace. The correct and comprehensive sentiments formed by such ministers of the righteousness and atonement of the Lord Jesus, of the fulness and freeness of divine grace exhibited in the gospel for all who believe in His name, of the divine influence of the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify the heart unto obedience, and of the peculiar afflictions, temptations, and difficulties to which believers are exposed. Prove them to be “faithful and wise stewards; who are able to give them their portion in due season” (Luke 12:42), by removing their doubts, by solving their difficulties, by strengthening their faith, by animating their hopes, and by assisting them in every good word and work. You, my hearers, will agree with me in thinking that he is the most edifying minister, the tendency of whose preaching is to lead his hearers to think meanly of themselves and highly of the Savior. He exhibits the full view of the cross to his people and hides himself behind it. Was not the late Mr. Fuller such a minister? I was once complaining to him of the difficulty I found to preach so as to edify the people. “Preach Christ,” said he, “make him prominent in every sermon.” He added, “Some years ago, I heard, before I left the town where I had been preaching, that it was said, I had not preached Christ to them. I mused on this, when returning home, and thought, well, it may probably be true, that I did not preach Christ sufficiently, but I am resolved, by Divine help, that my hearers shall not have to complain of that again as I am determined, in the future, not to preach on any other subject than Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Was not this the reason that there was such a savor and holy unction attending his sermons? They found their way to the hearts both of sinners and saints! It may be said of him in some good degree as of his Divine Master, “His word was with power” (Luke 4:32). Some of the sermons he lately preached in this place, made an indelible impression on many minds, especially those from, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth!” (Psalm 71:9) and “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8:13). Has not the church in the death of Mr. Fuller lost one of her most edifying instructors?

Ought we not to consider it an affliction when such a minister is not suffered to continue by reason of death?

3. Because there are fewer persons to defend the truth against opposers.

Notwithstanding the purity and beauty of gospel truth, its charms are not sufficient to attract the attention or to secure the affection of those who err concerning the faith, so far from this, it has excited the strongest dislike and disapprobation of such persons. "Truth has fallen in the street" (Isaiah 59:14), and it has required the exertions of its most able defenders to rescue it from insult and contempt. Ministers are set for the defense of the gospel, and so far as they understand and preach it, they magnify their office. But there are not many who are able to contend with the enemy in the gate, so as to detect sophistry and to expose error, under whatever garb it may appear. It also requires more fortitude than most men possess to attack popular errors, especially if they are mixed up with a large portion of evangelical truth. The late Mr. Fuller was frequently called into this field of warfare and his controversial pieces are fine specimens of the spirit of a Christian polemic. As he always treats his opponents respectfully while he most strenuously opposes what he considers their aberrations from the truth "as it is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21).

The first piece of this kind, published by him, is entitled, *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation or The Duty of Sinners to believe in Jesus Christ*. He has been much blamed for this measure as stirring up a controversy fatal to the peace of our churches. He, however, considered it as necessary in order "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) and that "the truth of the gospel might continue" (Galatians 2:5), which was in danger of being expelled by the ascendancy of a system. It would not admit of the gospel being preached to every creature that led unconverted hearers to conclude their rejection of the gospel arose more from the sin of Adam than from their own sin. Their final destruction depended more on the decree of God, appointing them to wrath, than on the depravity of their hearts which prevented them from coming to Christ that they might have life. Mr. Fuller's design was to prove that the only reason why sinners did not repent and believe the gospel was the depravity of their hearts, manifested by their love to sin, and enmity to the ways of God, according to the Divine declaration, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (John 3:19).

After he had published this work, a minister said to him, "I am persuaded that you have a two-edged sword in your hand. You have cut off the head of Antinomianism, now whet the other edge, and it will cut off the head of Socinianism!" It was this suggestion that led to the celebrated work, which he afterwards published, under the title of *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems examined and compared, as to their moral tendency*. In this, he had demon-



strated that the tendency of the latter system is to promote the spirit of the world and not the "Spirit which is from God" (1 Corinthians 2:2). And if he did not cut off the head of this corrupt system, so as effectually to destroy it, he tied a millstone about its neck, which has sunk it beneath the surface of Christianity into the depths of infidelity. Soon after its publication, Mr. Fuller preached the lecture on a Lord's day evening at Broad Street. After the sermon, a minister came to him in the vestry and said, "I thank you, Mr. Fuller, for your piece against Socinianism; you have hit the right nail on the head." Mr. Fuller expressed his surprise to receive such a testimony of approbation from Mr. Worthington, of Salter's Hill, but Mr. Worthington repeated his assertion by saying, "Depend upon it, you have hit the right nail upon the head."

At the time when infidelity was making considerable progress in England, he published a work, which gained him much celebrity as a writer, entitled, *The Gospel its own Witness, or the Holy Nature and Divine Harmony of the Christian Religion, contrasted with the Immorality and Absurdity of Deism*. His object, in this, is to prove from the internal evidence contained in the Bible that it is the word of God. The saying of the converted infidel, Lord Rochester, which stands as a motto to his book, is the text which Mr. Fuller has successfully illustrated, "Laying his hand upon the Bible, he would say, "This is true philosophy; this is the religion that speaks to the heart, a bad life is the only grand objection to this book."

Mr. Fuller's last controversial piece is called, *Strictures on Sandemanianism*. In this he has discovered an intellect of the acutest order. Here, too, he has laid hold of a spirit which was too subtle for most men to have perceived. The spirit of this system he has compared with the spirit of primitive Christianity, which he remarks, was full of the "devout and affectionate;" of "meekness and humility;" was "catholic and pacific." In this work, he has shown the difference between the spirit of censoriousness and bigotry, produced by Mr. Sandeman's system, and the benevolence and brotherly love enjoined and produced by the gospel of Christ. He also proves that those who make trifles of discipline so important as to be constantly dividing the churches and are yet so unconcerned about the conversion of unbelievers do not resemble Paul, who "warned every man, and taught every man in all wisdom; that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). Mr. Fuller told me, that, a few years ago, he received a long letter from a gentleman in Scotland complaining of the defects in the discipline of our English Baptist churches and extolling that of the Scottish Baptists. "I replied," said he, "Well, admitting all you say to be true, I think you will acknowledge, that the end of disciplining troops is to make them better soldiers. You have taken great pains to discipline your churches, now bring them into the field and make them fight. Make them fight, I say. Send the gospel into villages; promote missions to the heathen, or in some way or other, adopt measures for propagating the gospel of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

It was in this way that Mr. Fuller maintained and defended the principles of



the gospel.<sup>4</sup> He spoke the truth in love. All his writings bear evident marks of a sound and comprehensive mind and of a heart deeply imbued with the love of the truth. He always maintains the doctrines practically and precepts evangelically. In this volume of sermons, lately printed, there is “milk for babes, and strong meat for them that are of full age; even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:12–14).

4. Finally, because their number is reduced who may be expected to feel compassion for the destitute condition of unenlightened heathens.

There is now no controversy about the duty of Christians to attempt means for the universal diffusion of the gospel of Christ. But twenty-four years ago, however, when the present Dr. Carey, of Calcutta, published his pamphlet entitled, *The obligations of Christians to unite for the Purpose of sending the Gospel to the Heathen*, it was treated by many as a chimerical notion and few thought it a matter of duty. Christians, in general, seemed to say, “A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.” “Some of our ministers,” said Mr. Fuller, “considered the plan to be somewhat like a proposal to make a turnpike road to the moon.” He added, “I acknowledge that, I also said in effect, ‘If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?’” but he soon entered heartily into the measure. In 1792, he preached at Clipstone from Haggai 1:2, “This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.”<sup>5</sup> The next year he, with a few others, formed the Baptist Missionary Society at Kettering, and he became the secretary. His annual subscription of one guinea composed part of that remarkable fund of 13l. 2s. 6d. which was raised to covert the Heathen world!

His disinterested toils and labors in conducting this Society, for twenty-three years, are too well known to require any enumeration. It may truly be said, the grace bestowed upon him was not in vain. He labored more abundantly than any of his brethren. There is no doubt, but his constant attention to the business of the mission, engaging him for eight hours in a day, upon an average, for several years, in connection with writing for the press, and his pastoral labours, brought on that fatal complaint which has terminated in his death. He frequently had severe attacks of affliction. One especially, immediately after the departure of Messrs. Thomas and Carey, through the extreme agitation of his mind. But, having given himself entirely to this work, he was willing to spend and be spent in promoting it. “When Thomas and Carey went to India,” they said, “We are like men going down into a well; you are on the top, and have got hold of the rope, do not let us fall! We told them,” said he, “we never would!”

I appeal to you, my hearers, whether Mr. Fuller and his associates have not redeemed the pledge they gave to their missionary brethren. Three of them have been faithful unto death and a fourth has consented to occupy the place,<sup>6</sup>

left vacant by the removal of him, who was not suffered longer to fill it by reason of death.

The loss of Mr. Fuller will be severely felt by the Baptist Missionary Society and by the missionaries in India, whose affection for him was very great. The Baptist denomination has lost one of its brightest and most distinguished ornaments. Nor is it too much to say that a man so well qualified to instruct unconverted sinners, to edify believers, to defend the truth against opposers, and to promote plans for propagating the gospel among the heathen is a source of affliction to the whole church of Christ.

I proceed to the second part of the subject,

II. That the perpetual intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ affords a ground of strong consolation under such afflictive events.

From the certainty of the immortality and the unchanging priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, we may safely conclude that notwithstanding the death of ministers, He will be at no loss for instruments to accomplish His gracious purposes on behalf of His church and, therefore,

1. Continual accessions will be still made to the church by the conversion of sinners.

The death of ministers does not unfrequently excite the exclamation, "O Lord God! By whom shall Jacob arise?" (Amos 7:2). To which it may be replied by Him, because "he ever liveth to make intercession for us, is, therefore, able to save to the uttermost." Having "all power, both in heaven and in earth, he promised to be with his ministers, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Has He not demonstrated both His power and His faithfulness, "by taking out of the nation a people for his name?" (Acts 15:14). To what was it owing that the ministry of the apostles was so successful in the conversion of thousands to the church of Christ? "The hand of the Lord was with them" (Acts 11:21). Why was it that the word so mightily grew and prevailed? "The Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace" (Acts 14:3). "I have planted," said Paul, "Apollos watered but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). The church was built, even by the apostles, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God" (Zechariah 4:6)! Though the number of believers was constantly reduced by the ravages of cruel persecutions, yet it continued to increase, so that it is become proverbial to say, "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church!" To what could this be owing, but to the grace and power of Him who continueth ever, and who hath an unchangeable priesthood? It is not to the supply of the Spirit of Christ, that the constant accession of members to the church must be attributed during the last eighteen hundred years? Millions

of saints have been removed from the earth to heaven yet the church on earth still remains and the number of believers multiplied. Is not the residue of the Spirit still with Him? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Is His ear heavy, that He cannot hear? Is His hand shortened, that He cannot save? May we not then confidently expect that the church will be still built up and increased? Fear not, though useful ministers die, yet Jesus lives and hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore, He is able also to save unto the uttermost.

2. The means of edification will still be provided for the church.

When Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha exclaimed, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kings 2:12). Elisha appears to have thought that now Elijah was gone, the church was left without the means of defense and protection. Everything must stand still as there were neither chariots nor horsemen. But He who bestowed the powerful spirit of Elijah was able to give a double portion to Elisha. So, also when Moses died, the spirit of wisdom descended upon Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9).

To believers at Jerusalem, must have been greatly grieved at the death of Stephen. Devout men carried him to his burial and made great lamentation over him. The dying testimony of the proto-martyr was well calculated to counteract their distress. "Behold," said he, "I see heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). Was it not to give a proof of his constant attention to the concerns of his church that the Lord Jesus took this opportunity to prove Himself able to save unto the uttermost, not only by giving support to His suffering disciples, but immediately after, by calling Saul, His persecutor, by His grace, in order to put him into the ministry? What an illustrious evidence of the exceeding riches of His grace! What a proof that He is at no loss to raise up instruments to carry on His work! That the ministry and writings of this man, who had attempted the extermination of Christianity, the church was instructed and increased and continues to be edified to the present day.

It was during the last days, of the last of the apostles that the Lord Jesus again gave a visible appearance of His priestly work in heaven, to His exiled servant John. Overpowered with His glorious majesty, John fell at the feet of his exalted Lord, and heard him say, "Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:17-18). Was not this declaration designed to strengthen the faith of the church in His constant care over it and His inviolable affection towards it? Has He not from that period supplied all the spiritual wants of His people? Are not His word and ordinances still continued? Surely, He that ever liveth, will not suffer His church to want the means of grace for the edification of His people! The Lord Jesus, who raised up apostles, as Peter and Paul; evangelists, as Timothy and Titus; reformers, as Calvin and

Luther; and pastors and teachers for our churches, as Booth and Fuller; is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. He hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore, He is able also to save to the uttermost.

3. There will still be persons provided to maintain and defend the purity of truth in the church.

To what was it owing that the fierce attacks of Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, did not succeed in destroying Christianity? Was it to the Apologies published by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and other Christian writers? How was it that the errors of papal antichrist did not exterminate pure and undefiled religion? Shall we attribute it to the ability and fortitude of the Reformers? These were only instruments used for the work assigned them by him, "who is exalted for above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:21). The church, at different periods in this kingdom, has endured many sharp trials. This was particularly the case during the last years of that eminent divine, Dr. John Owen. Two days before his death, he thus expressed his faith in the immutable care of the Lord Jesus, "I am," said he, "leaving the church, like a ship in a storm; but while the great Pilot is in it, the loss of the poor under-rower is inconsiderable." Though Owen, an under rower, die, yet Jesus lives, and is ever at the helm! And, therefore, He has blessed His church with all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, necessary to support, to guide, and preserve it. Though Fuller will neither preach nor write again in defense of truth, he by whose grace, he was what he was, ever liveth, and therefore is able to save to the uttermost.

4. The conversion of the heathen, by the universal spread of the gospel, will certainly be accomplished.

That heathen nations will be visited by the word of the truth of the gospel, is clearly predicted in many parts of the Word of God. Nor can any circumstances, however painful and afflictive, prevent their fulfillment. He who is King on the holy hill of Zion, will have "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession" (Psalm 2:8). "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:10). "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7). Recent exertions to spread the gospel led us to conclude that the time, yea, the set time, is come to favor Zion. His providence appears to be fulfilling His purposes. It is true, some, who have been zealously employed in this work, are removed. But though a Martyn, a Vanderkemp, a Sutcliff, and a Fuller have died, yet Jesus lives, who can and will carry on this great work by other instruments. Living waters are going out in all directions from our

British Jerusalem. God is sending “the rod of his strength out of Zion. His people shall be willing in the day of his power” (Psalm 102:2–3). From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia His suppliants are coming over to Him, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. The means for sending His Word among the nations are bountifully supplied. Nothing is wanting, but the promised abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit to multiply the seed sown and then “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hebrews 2:14). He, who hath an unchangeable priesthood, is able to save unto the uttermost all, of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, who come unto God by Him.

Having considered the subject of the mortality of the priests with reference to our late highly esteemed friend and father, Mr. Fuller, I shall now give some little account of his last days, and of his dying experience, and attempt a sketch of the prominent features in his character.

In prospect of his dissolution, Mr. Fuller dictated the following letter to the Rev. Dr. Ryland:

Kettering, April 28th, 1815.

My Dearest Friend,

We have enjoyed much together, which I hope will prove an earnest of greater enjoyment in another world. We have also wrought together in the Lord's vineyard and He has given us to reap together in a measure in His vintage. I expect this is nearly over, but I trust, we shall meet, and part no more. I have very little hope of recovery, but I am satisfied to drink of the cup which my Heavenly Father giveth me to drink! Without experience, no one can conceive of the depression of my spirits, yet I have no despondency. I know who I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day. I am a poor guilty creature, but Jesus is an Almighty Savior. I have preached and written much against the abuse of the doctrine of grace, but that doctrine is all my salvation, than what arises from mere sovereign grace, through the atonement of my Lord and Savior. With this hope, I can go into eternity with composure. Come, Lord Jesus! Come when Thou wilt, here I am, let Him do with me as seemeth Him good! If I should never more see your face in the flesh, I could wish one last testimony of our brotherly love and of the truth of the gospel, to be expressed by your coming over and preaching my funeral sermon, if it can be from Rom. 8:10. I can dictate no more,

But am, ever your's,  
Very dear Sir,  
Andrew Fuller

Mr. Burls having witnessed the last hours of his highly valued friend, wrote me the following account:

Kettering, 10th May, 1815.

My Dear Brother,

Respecting our dear friend, but little is known of his dying experience. While he was able to converse, the substance of what he said, was he had no raptures, no despondency. His feelings were not so much in exercise as his judgment. A short time before he was so ill that he could not see or converse with any one, he said to one of his deacons, "I am a great sinner, and if I am saved, it can only be by great and sovereign grace," repeating the words very emphatically, "by great and sovereign grace!"

In the early part of the morning, of the day on which he died, he said to one of the family just loud enough to be heard, "I wish I had strength to worship with you." By this he knew it was the Lord's day. He added, "My eyes are dim," and he appeared to be nearly blind. For nearly half an hour before he expired, he was thought to be in fervent prayer. Nothing could be made out of what he said, except two words, which were supposed to be, "Help me!" He then struggled, sighed three times, fell back, and in five minutes expired. I have thought that the peculiar trait of his character was manifest in death. You know, that when he had an important object he pursued it with all his might. It was so with him, even in death. He had to grapple with the King of terrors, he could think of nothing else. He felt he had nothing to do but to die, and in his case, it was hard indeed. His sufferings were inexpressibly great, added to this, the lowering nature of the disorder and that he suffered the more because of his great remaining natural strength to struggle with the fatal complaint. He was heard to say, putting his hand on his breast, "Oh, this deadly wound!" At another time, "All misery centres here." His son said, "bodily misery, father?" "O yes," said he, "I can think of nothing else!" Well, my brother, it is over, all is over with him. The conflict is done. His rest and his reward were to be entered upon together. Of him it may be said: "The labors of this mortal life end in a large reward!"

I was the first person who announced his death to Mr. Robert Hall. He said, "A great man is fallen! I scarcely knew a man whose whole life has been so entirely, and laboriously, devoted to the cause of God." O, my brother, may our lives, through the divine blessing, be humbly, constantly, and zealously devoted to God, and our death we may well leave with Him. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints, whatever may be the circumstances attending their dying.

Your's, &c.  
William Burls<sup>7</sup>

As to the character of Mr. Fuller, I do not feel competent fully to describe it. It may, however, be said of him as it was of Barnabas, "he was a good man." If he had not the polish of the gentleman, he had the integrity and simplicity of the Christian. He was the determined enemy of every thing which indicated vanity or affection, show, and parade. He had an utter abhorrence of hypocrisy, he could not bear those that were evil. To those who were indulged with his friendship, he felt and manifested tender affection. His zeal was ardent and unostentatious. He seldom spoke of himself or of what he did in the cause of Christ, but always appeared to have a strong impression of his own unworthiness. Coming into my house last summer, soon after the death of his intimate friend, Mr. Sutcliff, he said, "I have been thinking, as I passed the street, of what brother Sutcliff said to me a few days before his death, 'I wish I had prayed more.'" Mr. Fuller proceeded and said, "So I wish that I had prayed more. I do not suppose that brother Sutcliff meant that he wished he had prayed more frequently but more spiritually." "I wish," added Mr. Fuller, "I had prayed more for the influences of the Holy Spirit; I might have enjoyed more of the power of vital godliness. I wish I had prayed more for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in studying and preaching my sermons; I might have seen more of the blessing of God attending my ministry. I wish I had prayed more for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to attend the labors of our friends in India; I might have witnessed more of the effects of their efforts in the conversion of the heathen."

In a letter now before me, written just after his affliction in September last, he breathes the same humble spirit, "My affliction has been more serious than at any former period, and partly from my journeys, and partly from the succeeding affliction, I have but just finished brother Sutcliff's sermon and Memoir. It is not yet gone to press."

"Brother Sutcliff's last end was enviable, let mine be like his! Death has been making havoc of late amongst us. Yesterday I preached a funeral sermon, if so it might be called, for three of our men members, lately dead. I feel as one who has the sentence of death and whose great concern it is, whether my religion will bear the test! Almost all my old friends are dead, or dying. Well, I have a hope that bears me up, and it is through grace! In reviewing my life, I see much evil. God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Mr. Fuller had not the advantages of a literary education, notwithstanding which, one if not two, of the colleges in America sent him the degree of Doctor in Divinity, which he objected to use. The knowledge of his circumstances I had from others, never from himself. His understanding of the sense and meaning of Scripture was uncommonly correct. He had a remarkable facility in explaining many Scriptures, especially the Proverbs of Solomon, by facts which had come under his own observation. The meaning of the prophetic parts of Scripture had engaged much of his attention and he expounded them in a luminous and an edifying manner.<sup>8</sup>

He was a wise and useful pastor, an affectionate husband and parent, a ju-



dicious counselor, and a faithful friend. By his death, the church of God has experienced no common loss!

From the whole view of his character, so far as I am able to judge, he appears to have been distinguished by the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit in no ordinary degree. Surely, the language of David concerning Abner, "Know ye not, that a prince, and a great man, is fallen this day in Israel?" may, without any impropriety, be applied to the late Andrew Fuller.

The subject we have considered will suggest many profitable reflections to the serious Christian as,

1. We may learn from it the value of a gospel ministry, and the necessity of personal examination.

Let me urge you, my hearers, seriously to inquire, whether the important ends for which a gospel ministry was instituted have been accomplished in you? You may attend on the preaching of the gospel and yet remain unconverted. This is, doubtless, the case with those persons who have neglected to observe warnings, the invitations, the promises, and the precepts of the gospel of Christ! Is it a fact, my hearers, that though the light of truth has shone around you, it has not yet enlightened you? If so, the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Should you not, therefore, conclude that you love darkness rather than light because your deeds are evil? While you are walking according to the course of this world, you should expect no other than to reach that destruction to which such a course naturally tends. I entreat you to consider your ways. Confess and forsake your sins and you shall have mercy. You have, for a long time, been breakers of the law and despisers of the gospel. Repent of this your wickedness and pray God, if perhaps, the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. The grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is immeasurably great. He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. He invites you, as weary and heavy laden to come unto Him for rest. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved! How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

2. The subject suggests useful lessons to ministers of the gospel to improve their time and opportunities in the service of the church.

As the work in which they are engaged, involving an awful degree of responsibility, so the most solemn events depend upon the proper discharge of their office. As the ministers of God and stewards of the mysteries of Christ, it is required both by God and man that they be found faithful. A want of faithfulness in those to whom much is confided, will be productive of the most lamentable results. To execute their office well, they need an abundant supply



of the Spirit of Christ, but assisted by Him who ever liveth, they are the instruments of bringing lost sinners into the church of God and of establishing the saints in faith and holiness. Let those who have been invested with the office of pastors or teachers, bear in mind, that the day is far spent, that the night is at hand that very soon their time will come to die. That they, like their fathers and brethren, who have preceded them will not be suffered to continue by reason of death. Oh, that all who are engaged in this work may hear the voice of Divine wisdom saying to them, "work while it is called today, the night cometh when no man can work. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou art going."

3. We are called upon, by this solemn subject to inquire how we may increase our exertions in the cause of God so as to supply, if possible the deficiency occasioned by such deaths.

We may not, my fellow Christians, be able to do much individually to supply the vacancy made by the death of such a man as Mr. Fuller. But, by an increase of united exertion, we may contribute essentially to serve those objects, which he had so much at heart which he laboured so intensely to promote. The loss of his judicious, prompt, and energetic counsels in the management of the Baptist Missionary Society, will be severely felt. It is probable it may never be supplied by any individual person. For him to die has been felt, as when a standard-bearer fainteth. The mission will, doubtless, prove a rallying point, around which all its friends may range themselves and in promoting its objects, all may be expected to unite. And looking to Him who ever liveth, to preside over, and direct all events to His own glory, we shall find, that He will perfect that which concerneth us and that He will not forsake the work of His own hands.

Fervent prayer for the prosperity of the missions in India, ascend daily from the lips of Mr. Fuller. But, he will pray no more. Let us supply this lack of service, by praying without ceasing, that God may bless and preserve our worthy brethren and their native converts who are laboring in the work of the ministry. Through the exertions and influence of Mr. Fuller large accessions were annually made to the funds of the Mission. But, he will never more collect your bounty. May not this deficiency be supplied by those who survive? If all our ministers exert themselves in this matter, aided by their people, there will be even from the collection of small drops, a flowing river, sufficient still to fertilize the barren soil of India.

4. Finally, we may derive confidence from the continual intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, that His church shall not want anything necessary either for its protection or prosperity.

The political events of the past year have greatly exercised the faith of Christians. The power of the anti-Christian church of Rome has been wonderfully increased, and strong indications have been given, that this power will be exercised for preventing the spread of the gospel of Christ. Again the clouds of war cover the horizon of Europe and threaten misery and devastation to the human race. But while these unexpected and circumstances fill our minds with surprise and dismay, He who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. He will cause all events to subserve the accomplishment of His gracious purposes. He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and when it no longer does this, the remainder of it He will restrain. Notwithstanding the church may again be agitated, as a ship in a storm, and some of the most skillful mariners be taken out of it, yet He who ever liveth is still on board, and can with His Word hush the tempest and still the billows which beat over it. Fear not, Christian, sinners will still be converted, saints still be edified, the truth still be defended, and the gospel still propagated. Churches left destitute of useful pastors and societies deprived of active officers will still be supplied. With our minds, then, powerfully impressed with gratitude for the numerous instances of the love of Christ to His church and depending on Him for the fulfillment of all His promises, let us say, "Now unto him, that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy: to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

# NOTES

1. There was this number, from Aaron, the first high-priest, unto Phineas, who was destroyed, with the temple, at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Thirteen of these lived under the tabernacle, before the building of the temple by Solomon; eighteen under the first temple, unto its destruction by the Babylonians; and the remainder lived under the second temple. See Dr. Owen's *Exposition of the Hebrews*, folio edition, vol. 3, p. 229.
2. See two Tracts, with these titles, written by Mr. Fuller; the last of which has been translated into several foreign languages.
3. Another anecdote, of a similar kind, is related of him, in reference to this subject. Being urged upon the Sandemanian mode of church government, Mr. Fuller replied: "If I were a farmer, and one of my neighbours, whose farm adjoined my own, were to adopt a new system of agriculture, and were to urge me to use it also, I should reply, 'Let us wait, neighbour, till harvest, and see if your farm produces a better crop than mine: it will then be soon enough for me to avail myself of your improvements.' So," said he, "I will wait to see, whether, in the Sandemanian churches, there are more sinners converted to God, than in our's! Should this prove to be the case, which I do not expect, it will be soon enough then to adopt that system, and reject our own."
4. Mr. Fuller's religious sentiments may be found in *Adam's View on Religions*, under the article *Calvinism*, written by himself. See also his *Essay on truth*, prefixed to that Work.
5. This Sermon was published, intitled, *The Pernicious Influence of Delay, &c.*
6. Messrs. Pearce, Sutcliff, and Fuller; the fourth is the Rev. Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, who was consented to do the business of Secretary to the Baptists' Missionary Society, till the next Annual Meeting, in October.
7. A more full and detailed statement may be seen in the *Baptist Magazine* for July.
8. This observation is verified by two papers, written by him, printed in the *Baptist Magazine* for January and February, 1815, which conclude in this remarkable manner: "These remarks may be thought to afford but little prospect of continued peace, but rather give us to expect a succession of judgments. I wish all success to every attempt at peace; but, so long as popery remains in the earth, I believe there will be no continued peace for it. 'Is it peace, Jehu? What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, are so many?' Prophecy apart, it cannot escape the observation of thinking men, that popery, notwithstanding its being raised by recent events to somewhat of its former greatness, is still dissatisfied. It must be a persecuting enemy of true religion, or nothing. There is not a papal nation in being, of any account, but what has in it the seeds of discontent and future wars. The preponderating powers of Europe will have to say, WE WOULD HAVE HEALED BABEL, BUT SHE IS NOT HEALED."

**Dustin W. Benge** is Lecturer and Administrative Research Assistant for The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

**Michael A. G. Haykin** is Professor of Church History & Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, as well as a lecturer at Munster Bible College, Cork, Ireland.

*Andrew Fuller*  
CENTER *for* BAPTIST STUDIES  
at THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY