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**EMINENT SPIRITUALITY AND EMINENT USEFULNESS: Andrew
Fuller's (1754-1815) Pastoral Theology in his Ordination Sermons**

by

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate one slice of the multifaceted contribution of Andrew Fuller, namely, his ordination sermons to determine what key theological priorities shaped his understanding of pastoral ministry and what was his exact influence on this Baptist community as it relates to pastoral theology. And to put the theology of his ordination sermons in context, the study examined them in relation to other available Particular Baptist ordination sermons of the era.

The study revealed that Fuller's pastoral priorities as expressed in his ordination sermons concerning the character, qualifications, and duties of a pastor, which represented the chief subject matter of the ordination charge, shows a great deal of continuity with his Particular Baptists theological tradition.

There is no doubt that Andrew Fuller is at the heart of a renewal of Particular Baptists in the late eighteenth century which impacted one key element of the pastoral office in offering Christ to all and sundry. But this did not entail a complete revamping of the Particular Baptist perspective on pastoral ministry.

The continuity/discontinuity in pastoral theology between Fuller and his brethren of the earlier part of the century especially in connection with the defining characteristic of Fuller's pastoral theology of eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness, revealed that there was really little change in the sermons prior to when the evangelical revival was thought to have significantly affected the Particular Baptists in 1770. They shared a similar concern as Fuller to communicate that eminent spirituality results in eminent usefulness.

This close connection does not argue in favour of a radical redefinition of pastoral theology transformed by the so-called rise of evangelicalism. The main difference in terms of renewal centered on a return to biblical precedent of offering the gospel freely to all. The diversion of this emphasis was connected to the rise of high Calvinist dogma precipitated by a defence of the orthodoxy from the attacks of rationalist age. Still Baptist preaching was consistently plain in style, evangelical in content and affectionate in application.

Therefore rather than a radical redefinition forged by the mysterious and powerful forces of Enlightenment thought, these men were influenced, perhaps more so, by a static theological commitment rooted in biblical authority.

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