

CHAPTER 6 THE PASTORAL THEOLOGY OF ANDREW FULLER

6.1 Introduction

Andrew Fuller is recognized as perhaps the most influential figure among the Baptists of the late eighteenth-century. The purpose of this chapter is to discover his particular theological emphasis from his ordination sermons. What was the unique emphasis in Fuller that helped set the theological course for later Baptists? When compared with other Particular Baptists how much continuity did Fuller share with them? To help to answer these questions Fuller's ideal of the role of the pastor, his duties, and his qualifications will be considered, particularly as demonstrated in the charge and address to the church.

6.2 Pastoral Theology in Ordination Sermons

As we begin this investigation of the pastoral theology found in Andrew Fuller's ordination sermons, it is necessary to distinguish between the "ordination service," a "theology of ordination" (as a sub-category of pastoral theology), and a "pastoral theology" which is contained in an ordination sermon.

An ordination service was the actual event where the church and others gathered to recognize the call of the pastor to the ministry as described in chapter 4. Such a study might examine things like the outline of service, the timeline before ordination, the day/length of service, and the details of the actual ordination procedure. A "theology of ordination" refers to the biblical basis, or theology, of the ordination ceremony which may or may not be found in ordination sermons. A theology of ordination answers questions like, "why is the ceremony

performed?” “Why did the Particular Baptists practice it?” “How did they practice it based on biblical standards?” This is a valuable study and is subset of a pastoral theology of ministry contained in the sermons. But the purpose of this chapter is to consider the published ordination sermons, and sketches of sermons, of Andrew Fuller, originally preached at various ordination services, as a unique corpus of material that sheds a very personal and practical light on the pastoral theological priorities of this prominent eighteenth-century Baptist.

One of the main goals is to show Andrew Fuller’s pastoral priorities, emphases, and therefore his unique contributive influence among Particular Baptists practical theology in eighteenth-century ordination sermons especially in light of the growing evangelistic concern within his denomination. Was he distinguished by a particular theological emphasis?

As we have seen for the Particular Baptists in the eighteenth century, ordination was of central importance because it displayed the heart of a loving God in his divine plan for the redemption of His elect.¹ Where these God-called elders were given as the primary means to equip the saints for the work of ministry, and to build up the body of Christ until they attained to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.² The ceremony itself, in this sense, was a public confession of God’s love as demonstrated by His enduring plan to redeem the world through the church, by the proclamation of the cross of Christ, as evidenced by the reality of the divine establishment of chosen men to facilitate the fulfillment of that mandate. These leaders represented the gracious provision of God to his beloved church for the successful discharge of the stewardship of the gospel which was entrusted to them. They saw ordination as the

¹ Andrew Fuller, *Importance of Christian Ministers Considered as the Gift of Christ* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 506.

² Ephesians 4:12-13.

scripturally prescribed establishment of God's call on a man's life to the office of elder or deacon. And so the frequent publishing of these sermons reflected the esteem that Particular Baptists held for the office of elder itself.

This unique corpus of material is extremely valuable for illuminating Fuller's pastoral theological emphasis for it reveals his understanding of the motivations, character, qualifications, duties, and purposes of ministers of the gospel. The charge to the pastor is of particular importance because as mentioned, it represented an admonition from one pastor to another pastor on how the office of elder should function effectively and successfully. These sermons embody a uniquely personal and practical exposition of the execution of the pastoral office. More seasoned pastors would share their unique insights and experiences with usually less experienced men with the goal both of encouraging them and also advising them on any potential pitfalls they may face in the ministry. Therefore they were dealing with very practical issues as opposed to mere theological or academic reflection. This gives us an exclusive look at the issues that really drove Fuller's pastoral convictions in the context of his inherited Particular Baptist theology described earlier in chapter 5. It reveals what really mattered to him.

There are thirty one extant ordination sermons of Fuller, of which, thirteen are charges to an ordinand,³ nine are addresses to churches,⁴ five are single sermons which both address the

³ Andrew Fuller, *The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister of Illustrated by the Character and success of Barnabus* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 25-39; Andrew Fuller, *The Obedience of Churches to their Pastors Explained and Enforced* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 111-119; Andrew Fuller, *Pastors Required to Feed the Flock of Christ* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 446-448; Andrew Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge and Holy Love Necessary for the Gospel Ministry* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 448- 453; Andrew Fuller, *On an Intimate and Practical Acquaintance with the Word of God* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 453-458; Andrew Fuller, *Ministers are Appointed to Root out Evil and to Cultivate that which is Good* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 458- 461; Andrew Fuller, *Ministers Should be Concerned not to be Despised* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 462- 465; Andrew Fuller, *Ministers are Fellow-Labourers with God* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 465-468; Andrew Fuller, *The Nature of the Gospel and the Manner in which it Ought to be Preached* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 469 - 472; Andrew Fuller, *The Work and Encouragement of the Christian Minister* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 472-

church and charge the new pastor,⁵ two are charges to students (one to students at the Bristol Education Society⁶ and the other to the students at Stepney Academical Institution⁷), and the last two represent charges to missionaries for India sent through the Baptist Missionary Society⁸. All of these will be examined to discern clues to Fuller's pastoral theological priorities.

6.2.1 The Significance of the Ministry

It was important to Fuller that his ordinands understand that through the act of delivering the charge Fuller in no way considered himself superior or authoritative to them.⁹ Really, many charges offered a reminder of what the ordinands already knew and had experienced, especially when addressed to more seasoned pastors.¹⁰ This declaration of equality however was more than

478; Andrew Fuller, *On Preaching Christ* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 478- 482; Andrew Fuller, *The Influence of the Presence of Christ on the Mind and Work of a Minister* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 483- 484; Andrew Fuller, *Habitual Devotedness to the Work of the Ministry* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 485-488; Andrew Fuller, *Affectionate Concern of a Minister for the Salvation of his Hearers* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 488- 491.

⁴ Andrew Fuller, *Importance of Christian Ministers Considered as the Gift of Christ* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV:505- 507; Andrew Fuller, *Nature and Importance of Christian Love* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 507- 510; Andrew Fuller, *Christian Churches Fellow-Helpers with their Pastors to the Truth* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV:510- 513; Andrew Fuller, *On Christian Steadfastness* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 513-516; Andrew Fuller, *Churches Walking in the Truth the Joy of Ministers* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 517- 519; Andrew Fuller, *Churches should Exhibit the Light of the Gospel* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 519- 523; Andrew Fuller, *On Cultivating a Peaceful Disposition* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 523- 528; Andrew Fuller, *Christian Churches are God's Building* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 528- 530.

⁵ Andrew Fuller, *The Satisfaction Derived from a Consciousness that our Religious Exercises have been Characterized by Godly Simplicity* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV:531- 533; Andrew Fuller, *The Reward of a Faithful Minister* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV:534 – 536; Andrew Fuller, *Ministers and Churches Exhorted to Serve One Another in Love* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 536 – 538; Andrew Fuller, *Ministerial and Christian Communion* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV:539 -541; Andrew Fuller, *Ministers and Christians Exhorted to Hold Fast the Gospel* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV:541- 543.

⁶ Andrew Fuller, *Faith in the Gospel a Necessary Prerequisite to Preaching it* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 497- 501.

⁷ Andrew Fuller, *The Young Minister Exhorted to Make Full Proof of his Ministry* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 501- 505.

⁸ Andrew Fuller, *The Nature and Encouragements of the Missionary Work* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 491- 494; Andrew Fuller, *The Christian Ministry a Great Work* (London: William Ball, 1837), IV: 494- 497.

⁹ Fuller, *Qualification and Encouragements*, 25; Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

¹⁰ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 448; *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

just a token display of humility as Fuller understood all pastors to be subject to the same divine authority. They were co-servants whose humility stemmed from a belief in the impartial love of God coupled with a deep sense of man's unworthiness to minister as a sinner, albeit redeemed, apart from the grace of God. For Fuller this emphasis on a minister's absolute dependence on God is foundational to understanding the qualifications and duties of an eighteenth-century Particular Baptist pastor.¹¹ He believed that without Christ's sovereign grace there could be no success in the ministry. Fuller wanted his comments to be understood in this vein. Not as coming from a superior, but from one also seeking his way knowing that all his advice and encouragements applied equally to himself.

Fuller considered the work of the ministry to be a very significant thing. Ministers are servants of the people but ultimately they serve the God who commissioned them. So they are not the servants of the people in a sense that implies inferiority for the people are commanded by God to, "obey them that have the rule over you." But ministers are servants inasmuch as all their time and energy should be devoted to the spiritual advantage of their people—to know, caution, counsel, reprove, instruct, exhort, admonish, encourage, stimulate, pray, and preach to them. The pastor was to work hard to promote their spiritual interests as individuals, and their prosperity as a people.¹² Indeed the significance of the work of the ministry, based on a great love for the cause of God, was the *raison d'être* of the ordination ceremony itself.¹³ The charge was to motivate successful pastoral ministry through counsel, advice, and encouragement based on the experiences of the usually more seasoned pastor giving the charge.¹⁴ The encouragement was needed because of the magnitude of the responsibilities coupled with the inevitable

¹¹ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 465.

¹² Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 482.

¹³ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 495.

¹⁴ Fuller, *Qualification and Encouragements*, 25.

difficulties inherent in the office.¹⁵ Firm rootedness in this grand divine mission would encourage wholeheartedness, diligence, and perseverance throughout the inevitable setbacks and oppositions that accompany all great works of God.¹⁶ But the magnitude of the work, if misunderstood, could create an unsolvable dilemma as the inherent inability of sinful creatures to perform spiritual work presented the minister with an impossible task. The guiding principle to motivate the pastor to give his life to a seemingly impossible task was a foundational reliance on God to help him.¹⁷ It was true that the pastor was not sufficient in himself to do the work, but he could be assured of God's promised help.¹⁸ Rather than encouraging the ordinand along the strain of "all will be well," Fuller did not shrink back from expressing the inevitable and inherent difficulties of the pastorate. He knew it was challenging work, but he also believed that the man God called as an elder would be helped by the One who called him. As a result, in addition to passing along practical advice regarding the ministry, Fuller was also concerned to educate his charge that all great work is accompanied by trials.

Pastoral work involved the salvation of souls which, though minimized or despised as unimportant by many outside the true church, was of far more importance than any other "temporal deliverances." By, "temporal deliverances" Fuller is thinking of those providences of God which do not directly relate to the salvation of souls. An example may be seen in a military victory or political coup. The reason he emphasized the magnitude of a faithful minister's work was because he believed that every soul was destined to eternal misery or eternal bliss.¹⁹ Therefore heaven or hell was at stake for every man, woman and child. Because of the potential

¹⁵ Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 472.

¹⁶ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 495.

¹⁷ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496.

¹⁸ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 495.

¹⁹ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 495.

offensiveness of this message for some Fuller knew that there would be conflict from the world – that ideology that opposed God and his kingdom. The inevitable opposition ultimately came from, the Accuser, Satan whose goal was to resist the work of God and his people at every step. As we shall see, a large part of Fuller’s encouragement to pastors was eschatological, rooted in the faith of promised rewards at judgment.²⁰ But also in the here and now the minister could count on God’s promises to be with his people to support them and strengthen them.²¹

One of Satan’s tactics was to divert God’s people from their assigned tasks so it was essential that the Christian leader stay focused on what he was called to do and not be distracted by temporal things. In the eighteenth century there was a pervading fascination among the English of this time with all things political. For Fuller the gospel ministry deserves single minded devotion not to be interfered with by worldly affairs.²² For example it was likely this supercharged political climate coupled with Fuller’s own experience with missionary candidate John Fountain that perhaps influenced him to cite excessive political involvement as an example of this form of diversion.²³ This did not mean that the pastor was to have no involvement in the world, as Fuller himself benefited from political involvement firsthand in defense of the Baptist Missionary Society with Parliament,²⁴ but all such activity must remain subservient to the pastor’s primary calling.

As mentioned the rationale of many ordination sermons was not only to point out the necessary pastoral qualifications but also to encourage faithfulness and diligence in the newly

²⁰ Fuller, *Hold Fast the Gospel*, 543.

²¹ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 497.

²² *The Christian Ministry a great work*, sermon 16, p. 514.

²³ *Letter to John Fountain* 25 March 1796 [Transcribed by Joyce A. Booth from a calendar of Fuller’s letters prefaced by the Rev. Ernest A. Payne found in manuscript box (4/5/1)] (Angus Library, Regent’s Park College, Oxford). As seen when he felt it necessary to rebuke the missionary John Fountain (1767-1800) who was thought to be jeopardizing the success of the mission because of radical political views that he was propagating in India.

²⁴ See chapter 2.

ordained pastor's charge. So there were often exhortations, encouragements and motivations offered for successful stewardship of the entrusted charge. One such motivation was to persuade the new pastor to reflect on the great cost underpinning the Christian ministry as described above.²⁵ For Fuller the groundwork of the pastoral ministry lay in the sacrifice of the Son of God. Given the doctrinal centrality of Christology among eighteenth-century Baptists, this was tantamount to saying there was no more expensive sacrifice to be made. Since the death of the Son of God was of inestimable cost, indeed the quintessential expense, so it followed that a sacrifice of this magnitude required a corresponding conscientiousness on the part of the appointed steward. But the main encouragement for the pastor was the assurance of God's divine help in fulfilling his purpose to prosper his church.

The supremacy of the divine sacrifice mirrors the preeminence of the concomitant divine purpose for God's steward. So for Fuller the work of the pastor reflects the chief design of God inferring the subservience of all other enterprises to that of the pastor's mandate of evangelism. These other temporal enterprises only serve the grander purpose of God's divine will for the sake of the gospel. It follows that a sovereign God would assist the pastor in this, his chief design, and all opposition was ultimately futile and all so-called setbacks, temporary. The despondent pastor was encouraged to remind himself of this reality and to believe in it with certitude.²⁶ With the cross at the center of human history and imputed sin at the root of all mankind's woes, Fuller believed that salvation, with the associated reversal of the effects of the Fall, was the only path to happiness. The work of the Christian minister was therefore not only good for the church but also represented the only hope for the happiness of all mankind. The joy of both believers and

²⁵ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496.

²⁶ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496.

unbelievers alike rested on the success of this “great work” which made the pastors purpose more universal in nature.²⁷

Discontented with just an esoteric teaching and fully expecting actuality in his hearers, Fuller offers some very practical principles necessary to accomplish the work of evangelism which he called a “great work.”²⁸ A minister, if he is to be successful, must pay close attention to the little things to do a great work. Usually such works are accomplished by a series of seemingly less important labors rather than a single great heroic act. So a minister is called to pray, inquire of God, weep, and be persistent.²⁹ Conversely, a great work can be hindered or stopped by little things like disagreements between Christians, and self-will.³⁰ These must be anticipated and nipped in the bud as a preventative method.

Fuller was convinced that a key technique for communicating scriptural truths in preaching was through highlighting the lives of biblical characters. He believed that by studying the characteristics and actions of proven saints, those blessed of God, it encouraged emulation among contemporary observers.³¹ He was persuaded that this was an inherently scriptural methodology designed to positively influence Christian living.³² Especially worthy of imitation were, the apostles, and prophets³³ but this does not exclude the value of studying other important figures in church history. Through these positive examples the pastor’s need for improvement is revealed and he will be motivated to be more effective.³⁴ Biblical models represent the best

²⁷ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496.

²⁸ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496.

²⁹ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496.

³⁰ Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496-97.

³¹ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragements*, 26; Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

³² Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

³³ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

³⁴ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragements*, 26.

illustrations for emulation because they are God inspired examples of certain important truths.³⁵

Fuller's emphasis on the close connection between the life of a minister and his effectiveness is evident here. We will explore this in more detail as we progress, but we must note here the connection between piety and efficacy in ministry. Fuller cites Barnabus³⁶ as a model for emulation, who based on his faithfulness and unction in the Spirit, was successful in evangelism. His piety resulted in many people coming to the Lord. Indeed this was God's usual method in evangelism, to prosper the spiritual labours of godly men.³⁷ So as there were certain qualities in a minister that would help to prosper his work there were also qualities that may hinder his work. The starting point for successful ministry was always the minister's own spirituality so he must take great care to watch his own soul in addition to the souls of his people. In fact he was particularly susceptible to the neglect of his own soul as he invested in the spiritual welfare of others.

A final great encouragement for the minister to persevere was to look to the end of his ministry while constantly taking stock along the way. He believed that everyone, including the minister, would one day at the *eschaton* stand before God to give an account for the ministry entrusted to him where he would receive either rewards or punishment. This reminder was both to serve as a motivator to promote faithfulness and an incentive to look forward to the reward of faithful service.

As mentioned a primary feature of the ordination service was that it was conducted in the context of community. The ordination was a covenant between the church and the pastor and therefore each had their own concomitant responsibilities to one another. The charge to the

³⁵ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragements*, 26; *Preaching Christ*, 479.

³⁶ Acts 4:36-37.

³⁷ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragements*, 26.

pastor outlined his responsibilities to God, himself, his family and the church. The address to the church outlined in turn the churches responsibility in covenant to their pastor and to one another. First we will consider the responsibilities of the pastors as described in the various charges to ordinands.

6.3 Fuller's Theology in the Charge

6.3.1 The Pastor as a Shepherd

According to Fuller a genuine love for the church was the foundational and indispensable quality necessary for pastoral success.³⁸ Therefore it is not surprising that he seemed to prefer the biblical metaphor of the shepherd, for the biblical shepherd must have an authentic, affectionate concern for the salvation of souls just as a shepherd protects and nurtures his beloved sheep.³⁹ He saw the pastor as a shepherd after the example of the Great Shepherd Jesus Christ. Christ was very concerned that his sheep be “fed” and the notion of feeding was even closely linked with his death (Acts 20:28). “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” In other words, just as Jesus as a shepherd was motivated primarily by a sacrificial love to give people what they needed to subsist, so the pastor, his under-shepherd, was required to feed the flock of Christ with the Word of God.⁴⁰ The pastor was to imitate Christ's example through loving self-sacrifice.⁴¹

Also since Christ had a form of ownership of his sheep since they were bought with his blood (Acts 20:28), and as they were given to him by the God (John 10:29), he was not willing to

³⁸ Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 474.

³⁹ Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 488.

⁴⁰ Fuller, *Faithful Minister*, 535.

⁴¹ Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 446.

entrust them to another shepherd that did not love them (John 10:12).⁴² Christ only entrusts his flock (the church) with under-shepherds who love the church as he does. This is the source of the pastor's love for his people, he will love them because Christ loves them and he loves Christ. This is the sign of authentic pastoral ministry; if a minister does not love his people he is a counterfeit and doesn't belong in the office because without it the pastor cannot properly care for them, be vigilant for their well-being, or defend them from all dangers.⁴³ The genuine shepherd is prepared to literally risk his life for his "sheep." Love for God and the church is the foundation of all the duties of a pastor.

6.3.2 Pastoral Duties

Continuing with the metaphor of a shepherd, the pastor's main duty was to feed his flock. "Feeding" refers not only to giving them the Word of God as food for their souls through preaching, but for Fuller it includes the complete care of the flock, including all the inherent duties and responsibilities of their governance and protection.⁴⁴ He is describing the role of the "elder" usually referred to as an "overseer." But a minister can only rule effectively when he is first intimately acquainted with Jesus and his gospel.⁴⁵ He is concerned that the young ordinand bear much fruit through in all his ministerial duties and in order to accomplish this he needs "a special divine influence."⁴⁶ As it shall be observed, this emphasis on effectiveness in the ministry through divine power dominates his thought throughout the ordination sermons.

⁴² Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 447.

⁴³ Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 447; Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 475.

⁴⁴ Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 447.

⁴⁵ Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 447.

⁴⁶ Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 469.

Before a pastor can preach effectively he must also understand some important characteristics of the gospel. Since the gospel by its very nature is often offensive to people, the pastor must determine to be faithful in preaching it accurately.⁴⁷ He cannot assume that all his hearers are saved⁴⁸ and so when he preaches subjects that offend people's conscience he must resist the pressure to soften hard truths. Likewise there is a temptation to tell people what they want to hear so they will approve of him and congratulate him. Ultimately he must be faithful to the scriptures regardless of what people think of him. He says, "beware of giving up the authority of God over the heart."⁴⁹ By this he means don't try and minimise someone's sins by comforting them so they may feel better in the short term but be lost in the end. The key to preaching effectively was the approbation of God himself. No matter what happens to the minister as a result of his preaching his main objective must be to please God and if a pastor was ashamed to preach the entire gospel he was not worthy to hold the office of elder.⁵⁰ Therefore great faith and boldness was required of every minister of God.

6.3.3 The Role of Scripture in the Ministry

For effectiveness in ministry, Fuller in full unison with his Particular Baptist heritage, felt it absolutely essential that the ordinand built his ministry on the Word of God as seen in the canonical scriptures as they revealed the will of Christ to his people.⁵¹ There is a consistent emphasis in Fuller's thought that a pastor must practice what he preaches before he is equipped to feed people effectively. This consistency in Christian character is learned mainly through the

⁴⁷ Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 469.

⁴⁸ Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 489.

⁴⁹ Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 470.

⁵⁰ Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 470.

⁵¹ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

laborious work of disciplined study of the scripture.⁵² Although Fuller sees value in reading the works of other Christians he respects, he consistently exhorts pastors to “learn your religion from the Bible.”⁵³ Non biblical sources were only valuable in proportion to the level they reflected the Bible anyway. The pastor must learn to discern the teachings of the scripture himself without always relying on someone else’s interpretation. He did this by persevering seeking truth in every part of the Bible through reading, meditation, and prayer.⁵⁴ The goal of this study was not merely for intellectual knowledge but also to know Christ more intimately, for it was possible to read scripture without discerning the mind of Christ making the exercise all but spiritually valueless. Fuller gives Thomas Paine as an illustration. “Paine read the scriptures to pervert and vilify them. We may be acquainted with the original languages, and be able to criticize texts; and yet not discern the mind of the Spirit.”⁵⁵ Because study was a religious exercise, prayer and meditation were necessary for understanding for it was essentially concerned with a spiritual illumination that must come from God. Such illumination was central to pastoral success. In harmony with his axiom that the goal of ministry was to both enlighten the mind and affect the heart, he was not suggesting a kind of mysticism where one relies solely on the Spirit’s illumination. Rather he was saying that the intellect must be spiritually conditioned through prayer not only see factual truths and doctrine but also “see the beauty and feel the force of many parts of scripture.”⁵⁶ When a minister is in a “carnal” state of mind he cannot be passionate about these truths. A frequent admonition from Fuller is to study the scriptures as a Christian and not as a minister.⁵⁷ In other words he must feed his own soul first before trying to impart spiritual

⁵² Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

⁵³ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 454.

⁵⁴ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 455.

⁵⁵ Fuller, *Godly Simplicity*, 532.

⁵⁶ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 455.

⁵⁷ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 456.

wisdom to others. If a minister doesn't take time to do this he has nothing of value to offer his people. The pastor's great temptation was to go to the Bible to try and find something to teach the people without letting the same truths impact him first but to do this was extremely dangerous because an important aspect of the ministry was not just to teach truth but to model it as well. If the message of his preaching was inconsistent with the minister's character there would be little spiritual fruit. This close communion with God enlivened a ministry and improved the graces necessary for effective ministry.

6.3.4 Subject of Preaching

The subject matter of preaching, in perfect harmony with Particular Baptists theology was to preach Christ as the main theme.⁵⁸ Christ was considered to be the grand theme of the Christian ministry and so Fuller says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent...Preach Christ, or you had better be anything than a preacher. Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel."⁵⁹ Fuller believed that Christ should be the main subject of every sermon. He says, "every sermon, more or less, should have some relation to Christ, and bear much on his person and work."⁶⁰ But the pastor doesn't need to fear running out of material or having boring sermons because Christ's person and work are an unfathomable topic. Every Divine attribute is seen in him, all the Old Testament types pre-figure him, the prophecies point to him, every truth somehow relates to him and finally even the Law itself is properly understood through him.⁶¹ For Fuller to preach Christ meant that; the pastor must regularly exhibit Christ's divinity and all his

⁵⁸ Fuller, Faith in the Gospel, 498.

⁵⁹ Fuller, Faith in the Gospel, 498.

⁶⁰ Fuller, Faith in the Gospel, 499.

⁶¹ Fuller, Preaching Christ, 481.

glorious attributes, always point to the efficacy of Christ's blood in saving sinners, display his atonement as the only ground of a sinners hope, resist any hope that good works can save, convince hearers that their natures are corrupt, and dwell on the freeness and all sufficiency of his grace.⁶² Only when Christ was properly preached would the pastor see effective results in evangelism. Fuller says, "This is the doctrine that God owns to conversion, to the leading of awakened sinners to peace, and to the comfort of true Christians."⁶³

The eminent usefulness of a minister through preaching is accomplished on a practical level through teaching everything in the Bible and not being afraid to teach any truths.⁶⁴ Every part of scripture should be taught proportionately in the way scripture itself presents it.⁶⁵ This way the pastor can avoid the temptation on dwelling on his favorite topics to the neglect of other important truths he may not personally find so appealing. Here Fuller distinguishes between doctrinal preaching and practical preaching.⁶⁶ Doctrinal preaching seems to include more abstract topics like the Trinity, whereas practical preaching dealt with moral directives. To be effective the minister must in the words of Fuller, "Preach the law evangelically, and the gospel practically; and God will bless you and make you a blessing."⁶⁷ Finally, since the very nature of the gospel is a mystery that needs to be revealed, the minister cannot be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of it. Therefore he must learn to think for himself.⁶⁸

Fuller's concern for the effectiveness of a minister stems from his belief that the gospel was the most important thing you could tell someone because its subject was the salvation of

⁶² Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 481-2.

⁶³ Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 482.

⁶⁴ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 457.

⁶⁵ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 457.

⁶⁶ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 457.

⁶⁷ Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 457.

⁶⁸ Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 471; Fuller, *Habitual Devotedness*, 486

their souls.⁶⁹ It is God's only way to eternal life and if a pastor were to distort the message he was in danger of losing his own soul.⁷⁰ Essentially the gospel is a message of love and so it must be preached with great warmth.⁷¹ Therefore he can say, "To preach these things with an unfeeling heart are not to preach as we ought to preach. Cultivate the affectionate."⁷² The minister's delivery must be wholly consistent with the message for it to be effective. As Christ wept for sinners so must the good pastor and these tears were motivated by love.

6.3.5 Goals of the Ministry

This mutual love in a voluntary society was necessary for effective ministry because the two chief goals for a pastor were to enlighten the minds and affect the hearts of the people in his sphere of ministry.⁷³ Enlightening the mind involved teaching them the entire gospel faithfully as presented in the scriptures. He says, "I love a sermon well laden with Christian Doctrine."⁷⁴ But his goal was not to just impart intellectual understanding.⁷⁵ He was concerned that they be emotionally attached to Christ in love as a living person. Truthful and faithful Bible exposition revealed Christ and provided the foundation for this relationship but as Fuller says, "the union of genuine orthodoxy and affection constitutes true religion."⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Fuller, Nature of the Gospel, 471.

⁷⁰ Fuller, Nature of the Gospel, 470.

⁷¹ Fuller, Nature of the Gospel, 471.

⁷² Fuller, Nature of the Gospel, 471; Fuller, Serve in Love, 537.

⁷³ Fuller, Spiritual Knowledge, 448.

⁷⁴ Fuller, Affectionate Concern, 490.

⁷⁵ Fuller, Hold Fast the Gospel, 543. Conversely Fuller recognizes the danger of emphasizes the heart to the exclusion of the head. He says, "People foolishly discard doctrines under the pretence of exalting practice; but holy doctrine is the source and spring of a holy life."

⁷⁶ Fuller, Hold Fast the Gospel, 543.

In order to enlighten others the pastor himself must be an example of what he teaches. Just as he communicates intellectual knowledge through expositional preaching, the affections, or emotions, likewise are communicated through the pastor's own intense love for Jesus and the gospel.⁷⁷ Fuller illustrates a distinction between two main types of ministers in his day. One sort, which he labels "popular preachers" who although they may be applauded by people, really have little "spiritual light" to give.⁷⁸ For Fuller spiritual light is that intangible, yet authentic, knowledge from the Holy Spirit that effects real spiritual change in people's hearts. The other, gospel ministers are used by God not to promote themselves by Christ.

The first type of minister is merely exercising their natural gifts of speaking without this spiritual light that influences people's hearts away from worldly interests towards godly interests.⁷⁹ It is quite possible for a minister to preach with great enthusiasm without having a genuine love for God or the salvation of souls. The other – the ideal servant of God – is characterised by this spiritual light coupled with a holy love for his people in all aspects of his life and ministry – especially in preaching, ruling the church, and visiting the church people.⁸⁰

So if he must first be transformed in order to be effective, in preaching the gospel it follows that it is essential that the pastor be knowledgeable about the holy character of God. Fuller believed that most people see God as an extension of themselves thus essentially ignoring his revelation of himself in scripture.⁸¹ The pastor's job is to educate people on who God is really like. For example, the minister must teach them that God is holy, and that they are sinners and therefore his enemies. Fuller believed that almost all error in the church, including those

⁷⁷ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 448.

⁷⁸ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 448.

⁷⁹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 448.

⁸⁰ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 448.

⁸¹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 449.

prevalent in his day such as Socinianism, Arianism, and Antinomianism, stemmed from a misunderstanding of the true nature of God.⁸² For the pastor to avoid this common error himself, he is urged to spend much time in communion with God through prayer. Communion with God through private prayer is the best way to know and experience his holy character.⁸³

The pastor also must know Christ as the only mediator between God and man.⁸⁴ He must know Jesus, as a living resurrected person and value this relationship above all others, and in turn pass this knowledge along to his people. This knowledge does not just comprise facts about his life and work, but also the glory of his character. The pastor must be familiar with, and able to relate to, Christ's works and qualities.

Because his goal is not just to impart facts, the pastor as shepherd was required not only to know the scriptures but also human nature as created in innocence, as depraved after the fall, and as sanctified by the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵ Just as a doctor is required to know the anatomy of a body, the minister must be intimate with the anatomy of the human soul.⁸⁶ He will not be able to help men if he is unaware of their spiritual condition. So must be able to identify the motives that affect their actions. Fuller distinguishes between what he calls "primary" and "criminal" emotions.⁸⁷ Primary passions involve things that belong to man's nature and are not in-and-of-themselves evil if used as God intended. But if they were abused, that is used in excess, they became "criminal" or evil.⁸⁸ For example, God has given every person a desire to own things which is not wicked unless it is cherished to excess and then it becomes idolatry or

⁸² Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 449.

⁸³ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 449.

⁸⁴ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 449.

⁸⁵ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 449-450.

⁸⁶ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450.

⁸⁷ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450.

⁸⁸ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450.

covetousness.⁸⁹ The pastor must follow the scriptures and appeal to man's created nature and show that all these passions are only satisfied in God in a spiritual sense. So for example, the desire for possessions on earth is dwarfed in light of God's promise of an eternal inheritance. This is the promise and hope the pastor must direct his people towards.

Further in order to minister effectively a pastor must also be aware of the depraved nature of the human condition. One of the characteristics that makes sin so dangerous is its deceptiveness in making bad things seem good. So for example, sin makes attitudes resulting in "parsimoniousness," or stinginess, appear as the more noble virtue of frugality.⁹⁰ Unless the pastor is aware of the root of sin and the nature of its operation he will not be able identify these deceptions and so help the people.

Likewise he must understand human nature as sanctified by the Spirit of God. He is speaking here of recognizing if a person has become a Christian through God's supernatural work. As mentioned conversion entailed the creation of new man with a new nature and the pastor must be equipped to recognize these changes. Only then could he help mature the individual as a Christian and identify the real from the counterfeit as Fuller believed that some who alleged faith were false professors.⁹¹

6.3.6 The Importance of "Feeling"

Because a central goal was also to affect the heart of his hearers, the minister could not be successful in preaching if his sermons were dry or insincere. As mentioned he is not merely

⁸⁹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450.

⁹⁰ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450.

⁹¹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450.

relating information but endeavouring to have his church experience the emotion of the truths he proclaims. So he himself must believe it to the point where it in turn affects his emotions and manifests itself as sincerity to his listeners. Biblical truth must warm his heart and create a genuine zeal for scriptural truths. If he is not passionate about the truths in this way his words are empty, hypocritical and powerless. Fuller says, “Indeed, without feeling, we shall be incapable of preaching any truth or of inculcating any duty aright.”⁹² For Fuller the greatest enemy to truth was indifference.⁹³ This is not something that can be faked and if it is not felt by the preacher it will not be felt by the congregation. If he preaches against sin he must really feel holy indignation against it.⁹⁴ These feelings are not merely an emotion the pastor must drum up to bolster his sermonic delivery, rather they are the result of a genuine love for God and men. Just as Christ wept over lost sinners so must the pastor. But Fuller still believed that not only is the content of the sermon important but also the way it is preached,

Some have supposed that it is the matter, and not the manner of preaching, that God blesses. But I see no ground for this distinction. I allow that the matter is of the first importance; but the manner is not of small account. For example: the apostle prays that he might make the gospel manifest, “as he ought to speak,” Col. iv. 4. And this relates to manner, not to matter. You may preach even the gospel dryly. It must be preached faithfully, firmly, earnestly, affectionately. The apostle so spoke that many believed. Manner is a means of conveying truth. A cold manner disgraces important truth.⁹⁵

The point is not that emotion is inappropriate in the pulpit, but is the emotion genuine, rooted in love for Christ and the church. Fuller’s sole desire was that people should apprehend the gospel and to accomplish this, the minister must preach with a correspondingly integral passion.

Accordingly he pleads,

⁹² Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 451. See also Fuller, *Godly Simplicity*, 531.

⁹³ Fuller, *Hold Fast the Gospel*, 543.

⁹⁴ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 451.

⁹⁵ Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 490.

How would you feel in throwing out a rope to a drowning man, or in lighting a fire in a wilderness to attract the attention of one who was dear to you, and who was lost? How did Aaron feel during the plague, when he stood between the dead and the living? O my brother, enter into these feelings. Realize them. Let them inspire you with holy, affectionate zeal. Souls are perishing around you; and though you cannot “make an atonement for the people’s sins,” yet you can publish one, made by our great High Priest; and, receiving and exhibiting this atonement, you may hope to save yourself and them that hear you.

For he adds, “a spiritual, diligent minister is commonly a fruitful one, and a blessing to his people.”⁹⁶

6.3.7 Doctrine and Christlikeness

The pastor’s task in enlightening minds and affecting hearts was also accomplished through discouraging evil and promoting good in the church. Every minister faces certain dangers, or evils, that can prevent or even destroy his work of building up the body of Christ.⁹⁷ In order to avoid this he must consciously guard against potential errors in his doctrine. An essential part of his preaching ministry involved overturning all heresies through sound scriptural argumentation.⁹⁸ Since love was the predominant motive and foundation for ministry it was a pastor’s duty to vigorously oppose anything that could damage God’s holy character or damage his church. For Fuller an attack against biblical doctrine was an attack on the character of God himself revealing again this Particular Baptist axiom that the Bible was the inspired Word of God. So for example he encouraged the ordinand to diligently defend important Particular Baptist doctrines like the atonement of Christ.⁹⁹ In order to maintain this purity of belief regular church discipline must be applied according to the standard of scripture. There was no room for

⁹⁶ Fuller, *Habitual Devotedness*, 488.

⁹⁷ Fuller, *Opposes Evil*, 459.

⁹⁸ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 458.

⁹⁹ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 459.

partiality here, even if the member being disciplined was rich and influential in the church.¹⁰⁰ The pastor while constantly battling false doctrines that impugn God's character and destroys the souls of his people must also proactively seek to build the church by encouraging truth. In disseminating biblical truth the pastor does the most to build the church through unity.

Christian unity is comprised of three main factors. First, each member must strive for individual purity in their personal Christian life.¹⁰¹ The people of a church must be united in their commitment to individual holiness. Second, they must be mutually committed to apostolic doctrine.¹⁰² There will always be some difference of understanding but they must all agree on the essentials. Essentials include things like those outlines in their statement of faith especially concerning the atonement and person of Christ. Third, each member must serve in the church humbly according to their individual gifting.¹⁰³ Each should use their gifts for the edification of the whole church or else there will be disorder and growth will be hindered. These are the main things that promote fellowship and unity in a church.

In regards to cultivating love and unity in the local church Fuller again stresses the importance of careful attention to the pastor's own spiritual state.¹⁰⁴ "While you root out and pull down, and build and plant, in *God's* house and vineyard, *do not overlook your own*. Personal religion is of the utmost importance to a minister."¹⁰⁵ He must be united with Christ in holiness because God's help was connected to his spirituality. God's help was absolutely essential for success because the pastor was co-labouring with God in the ministry.

¹⁰⁰ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 459.

¹⁰¹ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 460.

¹⁰² Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 461.

¹⁰³ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 461.

¹⁰⁴ Fuller, *Ministerial and Christian Communion*, 538.

¹⁰⁵ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 461.

By the term “co-labourer” Fuller understands pastors as both subordinate and co-operative with God in the work of the ministry.¹⁰⁶ The pastor shares with God in the same goal and the same cause which is essentially to glorify Christ, abase the sinner, alarm the wicked and comfort the believer.¹⁰⁷ Fuller says in this regard, “our constant message must be – It shall be well with the righteous, but it shall be ill with the wicked.”¹⁰⁸ Fuller envisions the nature of the ministry as a labour. It requires hard work and so if an ordinand enters the ministry with the idea of an easy idle life he will be sorely disappointed and his main work was to labour in the Word of God and doctrine, to devote himself to the continuous study of scripture. The pastor is to be characterized as a “perpetual gospel student,” always searching and learning.¹⁰⁹ Fuller likens studying the scriptures to mining.¹¹⁰ One must work hard to extract the gems to that he can transfer the treasures to others. Of course, consistently, this is again not just the accumulation of facts about God but the goal is to apprehend the mind of Christ, to feel the things that Christ felt and to absorb scriptural sentiments along with the facts.¹¹¹

Once the pastor has mined the Bible to achieve intimate communion with Christ the goal is then to instruct the people. He does this by applying the scriptures to their particular situation in life. Whatever circumstances the people are facing he must apply scriptural wisdom so they might learn to love Christ more. In order to do this effectively the minister must also study his people. By observing them in the daily experiences of life he can better understand their situation, and can more effectively encourage them in Christlikeness.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 465.

¹⁰⁷ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 467.

¹⁰⁸ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 467.

¹⁰⁹ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 466.

¹¹⁰ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 465.

¹¹¹ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 465.

¹¹² Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 466.

Fuller recognizes the reality of the opposition of spiritual warfare and so for encouragement to the ordinand he reminds him that because as a co-labourer with God he can also expect divine support, blessing, assistance, and sympathy. Further, he can one day anticipate a great reward for all his faithful labours.¹¹³

The pastor will never experience success in the ministry if he is not concerned for a mutual love between the church and her pastor. He has been given a very important stewardship and as a steward he is a servant of God, entrusted with his church, so he must be faithful with that trust.¹¹⁴ When Jesus returns he will ask the minister, if he warned them about eternal destruction, if not their blood will be on his head.¹¹⁵ As a result it was very important that this warning be useful.

6.3.8 Piety and Effectiveness

In every example of extant ordination charge of Fuller, there is an emphasis, to varying degrees, on a direct connection between the character, or spiritual maturity of the pastor and his effectiveness in the ministry. Effectiveness, or success, was not measured strictly in terms of numerical growth, but rather more by the spiritual character of the individuals comprising the church. Fuller instructs the ordinand therefore to, “labour to build up your people... That is not always the best ministry that draws the most followers, but that which does the most good. When I see a company of modest, humble, upright, lovely, diligent, holy people, I see the best

¹¹³ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 468.

¹¹⁴ Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 473.

¹¹⁵ Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 474.

evidences of a good minister.”¹¹⁶ Ideally these saints would be added to the church as converts through evangelistic efforts.

This connection between piety and success is well illustrated in Fuller’s charge at the ordination of the Rev. Robert Fawcner at Thorn, Bedfordshire in 1787, where Fuller describes the qualifications necessary for the successful discharge of the stewardship of the office of pastor. He uses Barnabas from Acts 11:24 as an example to the ordinand to emulate as he is paradigmatic of the characteristics of a man that is blessed by God.¹¹⁷ Fuller then goes on to describe his character in detail as one who loved God and his people, and was particularly tender and affectionate as a preeminent quality of his ministry. Indeed Barnabas’ particular strength was even reflected in the meaning of his name “son of consolation.”¹¹⁸ For Fuller these personal characteristics were indicative of spiritual maturity. He observes three main things about Barnabas that the ordinand must emulate to achieve similar results in his ministerial efforts, especially in evangelism, so that “more people would be added to the Lord.”¹¹⁹ He must be a good man, a man full of the Holy Spirit and a man of faith. Piety reflected through these attributes would result in a corresponding success in evangelism.

First, the pastor must be a “good man.” This “goodness” necessarily begins at conversion, but it extends beyond regeneration to a maturity in piety, meekness, and kindness.¹²⁰ But this piety is not a passive thing; it must be nurtured as a key priority in the minister’s life. It begins with a proper valuation of a man’s character before God. He must value this goodness above all worldly ambition to achieve personal greatness. For the Christian minister does not

¹¹⁶ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 460.

¹¹⁷ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 26.

¹¹⁸ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 26.

¹¹⁹ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 27.

¹²⁰ Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 467.

judge greatness according to the world but as God judges, according to the scriptures. As is consistent with Fuller this piety is pragmatic and purposeful. The minister is not pious for the sake of piety but in order to increase his effectiveness in ministry. This piety it is not just necessary when the pastor is functioning in his office in the church as an elder, but it extends to every aspect of his being as a Christian. He was not to be just a professional minister but a sincere Christian at all times. In order to do this he was required to discipline himself with certain personal habits. A minister must study the lives of men who have been faithful to the gospel, men that “God has distinguished for gifts, and graces, and usefulness.”¹²¹ Secondly, although these examples are important most of his time must be spent reading the scriptures. When he does this coupled with prayer, his heart will become passionate about what he believes and is teaching.¹²² Third, he must learn to read human hearts, both his own and others. The best understanding comes from observing practical life so the minister must constantly study how the human heart operates. If he just read about human nature in a book, rather than learning in personally, it is likely to be inaccurate.¹²³ Here again is the repeated emphasis on originality of thought, even in the observation and experience of interpreting day to day life.

It begins with being pious at home.¹²⁴ The pastor was to live out his life before his family with integrity, constantly both modeling the gospel through his life, and faithfully and consistently teaching the scriptures to his children. This involved regular family worship and prayer while maintaining of proper discipline in the home. By “proper” Fuller seemed to mean that discipline was neither too indulgent on one hand nor too strict on the other. Further stressing the pastor’s obligation to his family’s spiritual welfare he also regularly warns against a tendency

¹²¹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 452.

¹²² Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 452.

¹²³ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 452-3.

¹²⁴ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 27.

of some pastors to neglect time with the family by visiting others church members just to loiter and gossip.

The pastor must also strive for goodness in his personal devotional life with God. As noted, the pastor must first desire the influence and presence of Christ in his mind and heart, but he must also possess it if he would be successful in the ministry.¹²⁵ This influence is hard to describe in words rather it is only understood as it is experienced, or felt, in the heart of the Christian. When Christ was present through intimate communion, Christians had their wants provided for, they were strengthened and their work was rendered productive. In this respect Fuller distinguishes between these special blessings of Christ's presence with the spiritual gifts he gives to all Christians. These gifts do not ensure this special communion with God, in fact without this special influence of the Spirit of God, gifts on their own could even prove to be destructive.¹²⁶ Rather this presence of Christ sanctifies these gifts and makes them spiritually effective. This is the foundation of all effective ministry and so Fuller says, "If we study, and pray, and preach merely as ministers, we shall make but poor work of it; but if as Christians, we shall prosper."¹²⁷ It is foundational because it will affect everything a minister does. The influence of Christ helps a pastor understand and delight in biblical doctrine, it gives him the ability to communicate more effectively, it gives him wisdom in dealing with people, and it helps sustain him during periods of difficulty.¹²⁸

He appropriates the presence of Christ by devoting himself to the study of the Word of God and prayer.¹²⁹ "Walking with God in the closet is a grand means, with his blessing, of

¹²⁵ Fuller, Influence of Christ, 483.

¹²⁶ Fuller, Influence of Christ, 483.

¹²⁷ Fuller, Influence of Christ. 483-4.

¹²⁸ Fuller, Influence of Christ, 484.

¹²⁹ Fuller, Qualifications and Encouragement, 28.

illuminating our minds and warming our hearts.”¹³⁰ A warmed heart is a conscious realization of the love and presence of God and accordingly the minister who feels God’s love will never be bored or disinterested when studying the Bible. Likewise if private prayer is neglected the minister will lose his passion for the work. As a pastor converses with God it “heightens” his “graces,” and better prepares him for spiritual work.¹³¹

This personal spiritual preparation is necessary for a pastor to bring this correspondingly real and vital spirituality into all his ministrations, especially in his preaching. But it must be genuine zeal, not a phony enthusiasm for God as some of his contemporaries apparently expressed in the pulpit through their violent gestures and yelling. The minister must really feel the truths he preaches. People will discern his sincerity and it will influence the effectiveness of preaching. If they know he is sincere it gives him a sort of prophetic authority¹³² whereas faking it just creates disgust.¹³³ The reference to “prophetic authority” means that people will discern if his heart, motives, and message are from God and that he is not just pursuing a personal agenda. This will give weight to his preaching. He must continually test his motives to ensure that he is not preaching just to be heard, but sincerely motivated by love for Christ and the furtherance of his kingdom as it is possible to preach with selfish motives even in the name of Christ. In regards to the injunction to the biblical command to “preach in season and out of season,”¹³⁴ for example, a pastor could manipulate that scripture as an excuse to be heard by a wider audience in an attempt to promote his own name. As noted Fuller was more outward looking than some of his Particular Baptist predecessors in the early eighteenth century, and in line with his belief in

¹³⁰ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 453.

¹³¹ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 29.

¹³² Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 29. Fuller uses the words “divine authority.”

¹³³ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 29.

¹³⁴ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 29. See 2 Timothy 4:2.

the so-called “free offer,” he was concerned that everyone be persuaded to respond positively to the gospel. He says in regards to responding to the gospel that, “It is not merely the privilege of believers; for then it would not be for every creature. It is a declaration of what Christ has done and suffered, and of the effects; exhibiting a way in which God can be “just and the justifier of the ungodly.” It is not merely to convince of sin, but also to point to the remedy.”¹³⁵ Some of his high Calvinist forefathers would stop short of an evangelism that asked people to respond to the biblical crisis of sin.

Finally this goodness or piety should also be reflected in the pastor’s general behavior. He should strive to be known as a meek and peaceful man who is generous and caring to those inside and outside the church. Reflecting the biblical priority, he should especially care for the poor and afflicted and show them mercy practically and spiritually.¹³⁶

These characteristics are antithetical to selfish ambition hence the regular emphasis on the necessity of humility in a pastor. The pastor’s goal was not to be great in this world. So although Fuller did not believe that it was wrong for a pastor to be wealthy, the accumulation of riches was not a minister’s ultimate objective. So he must guard against the temptation to be distracted from his calling in this regard. Rather he had a responsibility as a steward to develop his natural gifts to be used solely for the edification of the church over personal gain and the applause of men.¹³⁷ Again there is an emphasis on the development of character for the pragmatic purpose of ministry.

Fuller also believed that a pious minister should strive to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He is not referring to the “extraordinary” gifts of special power as seen in the apostles in the first

¹³⁵ Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 449; Fuller, *Make Full Proof*, 503.

¹³⁶ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 29.

¹³⁷ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 30.

century, but rather the normal working of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit common to all Christians.¹³⁸ The Spirit works in the Christian to produce certain characteristics like those described in Galatians 5:22-23, such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. This is what defined distinguished spirituality. Fuller believed that when a fruit such as patience (longsuffering) was manifested in a man, it was a “miracle” far superior than a dramatic supernatural event. While the extraordinary gifts as seen in apostolic times displayed God’s unique power, his holy nature was revealed through Christians through the fruit of the Spirit.¹³⁹ To be “filled” with the Spirit did not refer to quantity as in filling up a cup of water, but rather denotes the influence, or the effects, of the Spirit on the Christian. The Spirit, in this sense, controls the actions of the pastors and it is reflected in his character which in turn enhances his ministry. This divine influence was often described using the word “unction.”¹⁴⁰ Fuller’s distinction between extraordinary and ordinary gifts revealed he followed the majority in his Particular Baptist heritage as a cessationist in regards to the apostolic gifts of the Spirit.¹⁴¹

Unction, or this filling of the Holy Spirit, was essential for ministerial success as it allowed the scriptures to become more easily understood by the pastor. The Spirit authored the Scriptures and so the man filled with the Spirit had the word, metaphorically, written on his heart.¹⁴² The Holy Spirit within would then help him easily and accurately understand divine truths. And this filling was also important for the people in his charge listening to his sermons.

¹³⁸ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 30.

¹³⁹ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 30.

¹⁴⁰ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 31.

¹⁴¹ A cessationist believes that some special endowments of the Spirit, such as *tonques speaking*, were unique to the apostolic era and so were no longer available today. See for example Nehemiah Coxe, *A Sermon Preached at the Ordination [sic] of an Elder and Deacons in a Baptized Congregation in London* (London: Printed for Tho. Fabian, at the Bible in Saint Paul’s Church-yard, a corner Shop next Cheap-side, 1681), 6.

¹⁴² Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 31.

This corporate filling of the Spirit produced unity among Christians by promoting agreement with essential doctrines. Those not filled with the Spirit were unable to perceive the judiciousness of Christian doctrine so many biblical truths seemed offensive or absurd to them and their natural tendency was therefore to reject them. For the minister, as a sinful man himself, there is always a tendency to soften some key truths, like the imputation of sin. But the filling of the Spirit would help him resist this. The minister's success in ministry was contingent upon his dependence of the Spirit above his own natural gifts and without the filling of the Spirit there was no chance of success as he was sure to slip into error.

Another reason the pastor must be filled with Spirit is to empower his preaching and public prayer by more closely and accurately reflecting the mind of Christ. Fuller is speaking here about the way divine truths are communicated to others. A pastor may communicate true facts while still missing the essential essence of the text. For example, when scriptural terms such as "holiness" are replaced by words like "morality," the intended sentiment is softened and thereby changed.¹⁴³ Fuller believes that this can have a profound spiritual effect on listeners. "Holiness" communicates the separateness of man from God by his sin where the gap can only be breached through the mercy of God and grace. Whereas the term "morality" hints at the ability of man to "fix" his own shortcomings through determined self effort. Morality is a more vague term that usually reflects the pervading values of a secular culture, whereas a Christian morality is clearly defined in scripture and directly linked to the person of God and his revealed law. Morality is achievable through self effort whereas holiness comes only through grace as a gift of God. Or if the term "believer" was to be replaced by the words "good men," the exclusivity of the gospel through election was substituted by an indistinct group of relatively

¹⁴³ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 33.

moral people who may or may not be saved. Fuller was concerned to remind the novice pastor that language can be used as a subtle form of manipulation that could soften the hard truths of the gospel and repackage them in a less obtrusive manner but in the process destroy the author's intended meaning. It is interesting that Fuller, as an eighteenth-century man, was well aware of linguistic traps that could affect meaning, reflecting to some degree the contemporary "postmodern preoccupation."¹⁴⁴

Fuller in encouraging new pastors is not just concerned that they effectively fulfill a role to the satisfaction of a congregation, he believes that the truths they proclaimed were real and life changing and they would, if followed, result in the salvation of souls. If he was to be effective it was absolutely necessary that a minister's character reflected these truths he was proclaiming.¹⁴⁵ Otherwise people would quickly recognize him as a hypocrite and reject his ministry.¹⁴⁶ Therefore unction was necessary to prove that the Holy Spirit was truly at work in the minister and his message.

This filling of the Spirit would not only empower the ministry of the pulpit but also give power to the full range of pastoral duties. For example, if the pastor were to have success in his important duty of visiting his flock he would need this divine infilling to help discern people's spiritual condition and supply him with the wisdom to rebuke, edify and encourage as the occasion required. During visitation it was especially important that he manifest the fruits of the Spirit of faithfulness and love.¹⁴⁷ Both a head (doctrine) and heart knowledge (the engaged affections) are necessary for the effective implementation of the important pastoral duty of

¹⁴⁴ Neil Postman, *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century: How the past Can Improve Our Future*, Vintage Books, New York, 1999, 74.

¹⁴⁵ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 456.

¹⁴⁶ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 33.

¹⁴⁷ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 33.

visitation. Visitation for Fuller represented a “considerable part of the pastoral office.”¹⁴⁸ The scriptural basis for this pastoral duty is found in the book of Acts where Paul is appealing to the elders of the church of Ephesus to teach “from house to house” (Acts 20:20). Since this visitation, consistent with Fuller’s sanctified pragmatism, was purposeful for the instruction and edification of the saints, the pastor needed the same filling of the Spirit required for effective preaching. That is the pastor must both “know” and “feel” the truths he was teaching. Fuller recognized that in the name of ministry a pastoral visit could quickly deteriorate and become just a social call that amounts to “religious gossip.”¹⁴⁹ Satan is particularly at work here. If this visitation is not spiritually purposeful it becomes a waste of time and an excuse to avoid the discipline of hard study in sermon preparation. The preciousness of time and the accompanying required stewardship was clearly acknowledged by Fuller and consistently demonstrated by his actual work ethic. Pastoral visitation was such an important duty for pastors because it allowed him to better understand the circumstances and spiritual needs of his congregation.¹⁵⁰ It created an openness of communication that allowed the pastor to give more candid and personal counsel in a way he could not do from the pulpit. If a pastor’s people knew he loved them and truly wished their best for eternity, Fuller believed he could say almost anything to them without their being offended.¹⁵¹ He consistently emphasized the necessity of genuineness in all of a pastor’s ministrations. So he advised the ordinand not to “affect the gentleman in your visits.”¹⁵² He was essentially warning not to pretend he was more important than then his people because he bore

¹⁴⁸ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 451.

¹⁴⁹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 451.

¹⁵⁰ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 452.

¹⁵¹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 452.

¹⁵² Fuller, *Not Despised*, 464.

the title of pastor. On the other extreme the pastor should guard against a causal familiarity where he told rude jokes or where he acted silly.¹⁵³

The key to effective visitation, as with every other duty as a pastor for Fuller, was a genuine, impartial love for the church. In order to govern effectively in the church a pastor must maintain a position of neutrality among members and be zealous for the glory of God and his truth above all else.¹⁵⁴ But it is essential not only that a minister loves his people but also they know he loves them. Often major differences in a church could be overcome through frank discussion during home visitation.¹⁵⁵ Fuller also recognized that the pastor could also greatly benefit from home visitation because as people relate their spiritual condition to him, “it will assist him in his preaching more than a library of expositors...”¹⁵⁶ The empowering of the Holy Spirit was essential for effective ministry during home visitation.

Another essential quality necessary for a pastor to be effective in ministry, and in particular evangelism, was faith. Faith involves three key elements; “having the mind occupied with Divine sentiment; being rooted and grounded in the truth of the gospel, and daily living upon it.”¹⁵⁷ The first deals with the pastor’s knowledge of doctrine and scriptures. He must have worked out his theology and be certain of what he believes and why he believes it. If not he was particularly susceptible to false teaching or to constantly changing his view on issues.¹⁵⁸ This principle may reflect Fuller’s own emphasis on independent thought that was described in earlier.¹⁵⁹ The second aspect of faith helps defend against the pressure of public opinion as the

¹⁵³ Fuller, *Not Despised*, 464.

¹⁵⁴ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 451.

¹⁵⁵ Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 460.

¹⁵⁶ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114.

¹⁵⁷ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 34.

¹⁵⁸ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 35.

¹⁵⁹ See page 20.

standard of truth rather than the scripture. The gospel message sometimes appears to counter the truth of the age, so the pastor first must be settled in his view that it represented the truth. Then he must be convinced of the essential doctrines of the Christian church, like the deity and humanity of Christ.¹⁶⁰ The third key element of faith again deals with the issue of personal integrity. If the pastor studies the scriptures just to instruct others and not to feed his own soul, he is in danger of not growing in grace. He himself must combine his knowledge of scripture with genuine personal faith. In other words he must be striving to live out the doctrines he preaches to others. Fuller uses the analogy of a surgeon or a soldier who are so used to the sight of blood that they grow insensitive to it. Likewise a pastor who studied the Bible just for knowledge and not to feed his own soul was in danger of imparting facts without feeling them. Fuller regularly advises, “read as one (a Christian) converse as one – to be profited, as well as to profit others.”¹⁶¹ He must first live the life of a Christian if he will succeed as a minister.¹⁶²

When looking at the thirteen specific charges of Fuller in his collected works, at least eleven of them explicitly point out the necessity for a pastor to read as a Christian and not as minister in order to first feed his own soul. Fuller was convinced that one of the greatest temptations for the Christian pastor was to read the scriptures with the goal to edify and teach others while neglecting his own soul. For Fuller this was one of the most dangerous temptations for pastors, to handle truth as a minister and not as a Christian and so edify others but neglect his own spiritual growth. Profession of faith alone was not enough but must be worked out in the pastor’s life. Fuller believed that graceless, or wicked pastors, were, “generally the most

¹⁶⁰ These essentials include the key doctrines as summarized by the pastor in his personal statement of faith delivered at his ordination service. See page 99.

¹⁶¹ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 453.

¹⁶² Fuller, *Faith in the Gospel*, 499.

hardened against conviction of any character whatever.”¹⁶³ Therefore he must read, and preach, and converse so that he is profited also. Then he will have the word mixed with faith and others will profit also. So unless the minister studies the scripture primarily to feed his own soul rather than reading in order to teach others, he will have nothing of spiritual value to say to the church.¹⁶⁴ Just as he encourages his own people, the minister must also regularly examine his own spiritual state. Fuller, says, “It is certainly possible, after we have preached to others, that we ourselves should be cast away!”¹⁶⁵ It was common to take it for granted that the pastor was a Christian but he must be careful to nurture his own soul while preparing to feed others.¹⁶⁶

6.3.9 Results of Piety

The labours of a pious minister would most likely be evidenced through effective evangelism as demonstrated by a growing church. Fuller did not define success in terms of merely numerical growth, which in of itself was of little value to him. He wanted to see the pews filled with committed believers through the conversion of sinners.¹⁶⁷ This is very important because it demonstrates again Fuller’s conviction of an integral connection between the piety of the minister and success in the ministry. In fact Fuller believed that it was axiomatic that “*eminent spirituality in a minister is usually attended with eminent usefulness.*”¹⁶⁸ In Fuller’s observation the most effective pastors did not necessarily have the greatest intellectual gifts

¹⁶³ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 36.

¹⁶⁴ Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 453.

¹⁶⁵ Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 478.

¹⁶⁶ Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 479.

¹⁶⁷ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 36.

¹⁶⁸ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 36.

rather they were most often characterised by a “humble and affectionate” character.¹⁶⁹ But for Fuller because God works sovereignly according to his own purposes, this relationship is not *a priori*.¹⁷⁰ It was not a formula whereby the pastor must do this and then blessings were guaranteed. Still it seemed to Fuller that God often prospered pastors in this regard.

Ineffectiveness in the ministry was more often due to a lack of piety than a lack of natural gifting and talent. So men with lesser abilities than others often had great success in the ministry above very naturally talented men.

Fuller understands piety in terms of character traits such as humility, watchfulness, godliness, and sobriety.¹⁷¹ Humility is the proper understanding and response of man in relation to God. Since man is finite and God is infinite and because the purpose for mankind was the glorification of God, it was necessary for the pastor to assume his proper role and minister accordingly. Watchfulness is concerned with the careful appropriation of God’s supplied graces that ensure successful Christian living, such as, maintaining a consistent and meaningful prayer life with daily Bible study including a close examination and maintenance of the “heart.” For Fuller this was the repentant soul in close communion with God. Godliness concerned walking in obedience to God’s commands, the avoidance of habitual sin, and regular repentance and forsaking of all things opposed to God and His Word. And finally sobriety represented a life or demeanour consistent with the gravity and importance the gospel.

When a minister reflected God’s grace through a pronounced spirituality it would be apparent to all. First, it would increase his love for Christ and his passion for evangelism.¹⁷² The

¹⁶⁹ Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 488.

¹⁷⁰ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 36.

¹⁷¹ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 37.

¹⁷² Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 37.

Bible provides evidence that when men obey God with all their heart; it often results in a spiritual revival among the people of God.¹⁷³ Second, it would allow him to avoid selfish ambition and focus solely on the glory of God's name.¹⁷⁴ Selfishness would ruin all his work and reveal poor judgment.¹⁷⁵ Then the minister works with God to accomplish his will for the salvation of souls. If he had only his own goals and agenda in mind God would not walk with him and he could not prosper in his work. And finally, it would allow the pastor to prosper in ministry without increasing pride in his own ability and effort.

6.3.10 Practical Advice on Guarding Character

This connection between the piety of the pastor and his effectiveness in ministry is so central to Fuller's theology that the pastor is obligated to make sure the love of the church is not disrupted through his own character flaws. For Fuller it was axiomatic that "contempt is not a voluntary feeling."¹⁷⁶ Men can dislike someone but deep in their hearts they cannot despise him for no good reason.¹⁷⁷ Therefore it follows that if a minister reflects the character of Christ, as he should, he cannot be despised by his people.¹⁷⁸ In the three main areas of pastor's life-in the pulpit, the church and in the world – Fuller gave the ordinand some practical advice on promoting love in a local church. In his preaching he must be sincere not pretending he is someone he really isn't. His goal is not to appear more educated than he really is or use the pulpit

¹⁷³ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 37. See for example: 2 Chronicles 31:21 "And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart, and prospered."

¹⁷⁴ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 38.

¹⁷⁵ Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 447.

¹⁷⁶ Fuller, *Not Despised*. 462.

¹⁷⁷ Fuller, *Habitual Devotedness*, 485.

¹⁷⁸ Fuller, *Not Despised*. 462.

for a personal performance.¹⁷⁹ The goal was not to promote himself but to promote Christ. He was to relate the simple message of the gospel rather than advance his own genius or orthodoxy. This desired simplicity was attained by using common language, avoiding coarse language, and maintaining seriousness. Fuller felt there was no room for joking in order to make people laugh just to entertain them in the pulpit.¹⁸⁰ So in order to avoid perverting the central message of the gospel he must always be able to support his arguments with biblical support.

Another way that the people can grow to despise a pastor is if he preaches an “unfelt gospel.”¹⁸¹ This makes people doubt his credibility and judge him a hypocrite. And finally the pastor must ensure that he does not let his fear of certain individuals prevent him from teaching all the doctrine of the Bible. Even if he knows a friend may be offended he must boldly preach the word of God. For if he does not over time people will begin to despise him for his cowardice in proclaiming the word.¹⁸²

Second he must guard his character when presiding over the church as overseer. The pastor as under-shepherd of Christ’s church must not be a dominant and controlling dictator always trying to force others to submit to his will and way.¹⁸³ Sometimes the pastor must be willing to happily acquiesce to the will of the church in non-essentials if his views are opposed by the majority.¹⁸⁴ Always demanding his own way on everything does not foster love. But this does not mean he cannot be firm on some important issues. If he is weak and always tries to please the people he will also be despised over time and so at times the pastor must take a strong stand on certain issues but only if he can provide biblical evidence to defend his case.

¹⁷⁹ Fuller, Not Despised. 462.

¹⁸⁰ Fuller, Not Despised. 462.

¹⁸¹ Fuller, Not Despised, 463.

¹⁸² Fuller, Not Despised. 463.

¹⁸³ Fuller, Not Despised. 463.

¹⁸⁴ Fuller, Not Despised. 463.

6.4 Fuller's Pastoral Theology in the Address to the Church

As mentioned the ordination service was a physical outworking of the reality of a spiritual covenant between an elder and the members of a local church. As the charge to the pastor outlined his covenant responsibilities to the people so the address outlined the churches responsibilities to the pastor. Therefore through Fuller's addresses to churches we see glimpses into his pastoral theology from the perspective of the "other side" of the covenant.

6.4.1 Mutual Success Based on Mutual Love

Since the relationship between the pastor and the people in Dissenting Churches was completely voluntary the only bond that could truly unite them for success was love.¹⁸⁵ The importance of ministers to the church was not based on some special quality within the man for he was a sinner like every other man. The reason the church was to esteem him was because he represented a gift to the church from Christ.¹⁸⁶ The church was to esteem him and love him for Christ's sake. This special blessing from the Lord was another aspect of Christ's mediation between God and man. Although Fuller at times acknowledges that the two main ways that God dwelt with men and women in a local church was through the ordinances and ministers, he certainly emphasizes the latter.¹⁸⁷ To the degree that people in a church loved and feared God they would also love and respect their pastor as Christ's special gift to them.

¹⁸⁵ Fuller, *Walking in the Truth*, 517.

¹⁸⁶ Fuller, *Ministers the Gift of Christ*, 506.

¹⁸⁷ Fuller, *Ministers the Gift of Christ*, 506.

All the duties of the church to her pastor and to one another were summed up in the words “Christian love.”¹⁸⁸ For Fuller Christian love was not just civility between men, or mere friendship, or respect, or just membership in a social group, or even just benevolence itself.¹⁸⁹ Rather it was something spiritual, where individual’s hearts were united in Christ.

6.4.2 Obedience to the Pastor

Fuller believed that the church had a duty to obey their pastor based on passages in scripture such as Hebrews 13:17.¹⁹⁰ In fact the churches success or failure hinged on it. Even in the address to the church there is connection between biblical obedience and effectiveness in the divine cause. But Fuller also prudently recognizes that the whole area of authority must be treated with care because of the potential for abuse. So consistently with Fuller’s theology the minister was primarily a servant of God who was not mandated to “lord it over” the church (2 Corinthians 1:24). He recognized rather that this necessary obedience of the church was conditional upon certain requirements. First, the pastor must have been freely chosen by the church.¹⁹¹ This is in accordance with Particular Baptists theological tradition that both insisted on and emphasized the right of the church to choose its own officers. Second, his rule is subject to the rule of Christ.¹⁹² So he must be obeyed as long as he faithfully teaches and preaches scriptural truth. But for Fuller because the mind and heart were intricately connected the minister must not only teach correct doctrine but it is also necessary for him to live out biblical truths. He

¹⁸⁸ Fuller, Importance of Christian Love, 507.

¹⁸⁹ Fuller, Importance of Christian Love, 508.

¹⁹⁰ Fuller, Obedience of Churches, 111. Hebrews 13:17 KJV “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.”

¹⁹¹ Fuller, Obedience of Churches, 112.

¹⁹² Fuller, Obedience of Churches, 113.

is responsible to be consistent with his own teaching in his lifestyle, in fact even in greater measure.¹⁹³ Fuller says, “And, when he exhorts and warns you, if he himself should privately pursue a contrary course, he seals his own destruction.”¹⁹⁴ When all three of these factors were present the church was obligated to obey their pastor. This obedience to the pastor was to be manifested in four main areas. First, the members of the church were expected to obey his instruction from the pulpit.¹⁹⁵ And this instruction should not only declare the truth but reflect scriptural sentiments through the delivery because for Fuller, “you may as well have no minister, as one who never makes you feel.”¹⁹⁶ The individual church member would not profit much if their sole purpose in listening was just to criticize the sermons so they must come to worship with an attitude of humility. This spiritual fruit was a prerequisite for blessing. Second, they were to be open and honest in pastoral visitations.¹⁹⁷ Church members were to freely share their personal spiritual concerns with their pastor with a view to help ministers promote in them the mind of Christ.¹⁹⁸ Third, they were to show him respect in church business meetings.¹⁹⁹ He has the authority to maintain proper decorum because disputes in these settings publically shamed the name of Christ. Fourth, they were to be humble and receptive if they received a private rebuke for sin.²⁰⁰ It was not always wise to deal with personal individual sin from the pulpit, so if the pastor approached you it would be to your benefit to listen humbly rather than acting irritable and resentful. Things he may discuss in private include; “spiritual declensions, hesitating on

¹⁹³ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 113.

¹⁹⁴ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 113.

¹⁹⁵ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114.

¹⁹⁶ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114.

¹⁹⁷ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114.

¹⁹⁸ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114.

¹⁹⁹ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114.

²⁰⁰ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 114-5.

important truths, neglect of religious duties, worldly anxiety, and the early approaches to any evil course.”²⁰¹

It was not only out of duty that a church is to submit to the authority of her pastor but also because it is always in her best interest to do so. The spiritual condition of the church is vitally connected to the ministry of the pastor because the Lord had placed the pastor over the church as a shepherd to watch for their souls. One day the pastor would give an account before the Lord for the stewardship of this ministry. The church had a responsibility to help him fulfill this mandate from God.²⁰² Since the salvation of the people in the local church was his main business and because the Lord had wed them together, it was in the churches best interest to cooperate with him. Because it was possible that not all placed under his charge would reach heaven. Fuller warns the church in this regard saying, “in short, if you have any regard to your own souls, or the souls of others, obey the counsels of heaven, which are communicated to you through his ministry, and submit yourselves.”²⁰³

The feelings of the people in regards to how they respond to his ministry will also have a direct effect on their own happiness. The people have within their power, through their response to his ministry, the ability to make it a joy or a sorrow. For example if they respond to his preaching with keen interest, attentiveness, appreciation, love and humility it will give him great joy in the ministry. This is revealed through regular attendance and arriving early for worship especially his preaching ministry.²⁰⁴ This kind of attitude will motivate him to pray for them and excite him to preach more effectively. For Fuller this was because, “God works not only by the

²⁰¹ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 115.

²⁰² Fuller, *Christian Steadfastness*, 516.

²⁰³ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 117.

²⁰⁴ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 117; Fuller, *Ministers the Gift of Christ*, 507; Fuller, *Importance of Christian Love*, 507.

word preached, but by the effects of it on the spirit of believers.”²⁰⁵ In others words feeling or emotions are directly connected to the effectiveness of the minister’s preaching.

They will also create joy for the minister when they support him in issues of church discipline.²⁰⁶ When a church stands together in unity it promotes joy but when there is infighting, and quarreling and gossip and slander it makes the pastor’s work a misery. It is vital for a church to be concerned with the pastor’s joy, because as mentioned, it will directly increase their own spiritual blessing. And so since the church’s success rests on a mutual love between the pastor and the church, this affection must be guarded and developed constantly.

This love is nurtured when people are concerned for his temporal welfare, when they provide comfort during his afflictions, and when they are gentle with him. Love is the secret to make all happy and successful but this love must be constantly nurtured because it can easily be disrupted.²⁰⁷ The reward of the pastor for all his efforts is to see his people grow in spiritual maturity as seen through their growth in holiness and intimacy with God. So the church also demonstrates love to their pastor when they strive for spirituality in their own lives.²⁰⁸

When a church member sees weaknesses and faults in their pastor they should approach him in love with the goal of tenderly correcting him for his own well being. They should not talk to others without first talking to him²⁰⁹ and they should not listen to gossip about him without evidence.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 117.

²⁰⁶ Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 118.

²⁰⁷ Fuller, *Ministers the Gift of Christ*, 507.

²⁰⁸ Fuller, *Churches Fellow Helpers*, 512.

²⁰⁹ Fuller, *Importance of Christian Love*, 509.

²¹⁰ Fuller, *Exhibit the Light*, 520.

Because pastors are sinners they constantly need the churches prayers.²¹¹ Their main role was to enlighten a dark work with the gospel, so the church was to pray that they were first enlightened.²¹² Without this enlightenment they would not be effective in feeding them with “knowledge and understanding.”²¹³ The more they “feel” their Christian experience the greater the benefit to the church. Also congregants have a responsibility to teach their children and servants to love their pastor, for they won’t profit from his ministry if they do not respect him.²¹⁴

This love for the pastor was only part of their responsibility as they were also required to work hard at loving one another and rejoice to be with God’s people in the house of God.²¹⁵ When people were concerned with every member’s well being and they loved each other, forgave each other, and prayed for one another they would experience God’s approbation with his blessing. This special Christian love for one another and for the pastor must be continually nurtured through self denial and personal holiness.²¹⁶ Peace among the brethren ensured prosperity and harmony.²¹⁷ This fruit of the spirit again resulted in blessing from the Lord.

The key to maintaining this mutual love and harmony in a church was to walk in the truth of the scriptures.²¹⁸ For the most effective way to promote the gospel for a church was to believe and practice the gospel in their lives with integrity. Fuller says, “The great means of promoting religious union among Christians is, not by dispensing with disagreeable truth, but by aspiring to conformity to Christ.”²¹⁹ They must believe and live under the divine authority of the Bible as

²¹¹ Fuller, Churches Fellow Helpers, 511.

²¹² Fuller, Exhibit the Light, 521.

²¹³ Fuller, Exhibit the Light, 521.

²¹⁴ Fuller, Churches Fellow Helpers, 512.

²¹⁵ Fuller, Importance of Christian Love, 509.

²¹⁶ Fuller, Walking in the Truth, 517.

²¹⁷ Fuller, Peaceful Disposition, 528.

²¹⁸ Fuller, Exhibit the Light, 522.

²¹⁹ Fuller, Churches God’s Building, 530.

their rule for both faith and practice.²²⁰ Doctrines that were especially important included: the total depravity of man, redemption by the blood of Christ, election, efficacious grace, and the perseverance of the saints.²²¹ The goal of the church was conformity to the image of Christ and when holiness was present God blessed his people with his presence and dwelled in his church to prosper it.²²²

6.5 Conclusion: Eminent Spirituality Equals Eminent Usefulness

In summary these sermons clearly reveal that running through every published ordination sermon and sketch of Fuller is the common, prominent, and central thread of thought captured in the phrase, “eminent spirituality leads to eminent usefulness.” Included in this first part of the phrase “eminent spirituality” are the related concepts of; the admonition to read and study as a Christian and not as minister for the purpose of having something spiritual to feed the flock,²²³ words that described emotions, such as the *heart, holy love, affecting the heart, and feeling*,²²⁴ descriptives such as *intimate communion with Christ, consistent character with the Gospel, approbation of God, spiritual influence, enlightening the mind, piety, goodness, faithfulness,*

²²⁰ Fuller, *Walking in the Truth*, 517.

²²¹ Fuller, *Walking in the Truth*, 517-8.

²²² Fuller, *Churches God’s Building*, 530.

²²³ For example as seen in, Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 36; Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 453; Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 456; Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 471; Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 474; Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 479; Fuller, *Influence of Christ*, 483- 4; Fuller, *Habitual Devotedness*, 486; Fuller, *Faith in the Gospel*, 500; Fuller, *Godly Simplicity*, 532.

²²⁴ For example as seen in, Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 29; Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 112; Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 450; Fuller, *Not Despised*, 463; Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 466; Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 456; Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 471; Fuller, *Influence of Christ*, 483; Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 490-1; Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496; Fuller, *Faith in the Gospel*, 499; Fuller, *Godly Simplicity*, 533; Fuller, *Serve in Love*, 537; Fuller, *Ministerial and Christian Communion*, 540; Fuller, *Hold Fast the Gospel*, 543.

*love, spiritual light, unction, presence of Christ, and the mind of Christ.*²²⁵ All of these concepts that help define eminent spirituality would likely result in great usefulness or effectiveness in ministry.

The preeminent evidence of true spirituality, or piety, in a minister was the reality of a manifest love for God resulting in a corresponding love for souls. And this love, if real, must necessarily be revealed through tangible feelings. These feelings were cultivated through an intimate communion with God, which in turn would produce spiritual fruit in the pastor's life. This communion was enhanced particularly through the study of scripture, through meditation and through prayer which would affect the heart producing a godly character. But for Fuller piety was a very pragmatic thing in that this spirituality was always purposeful. It involved the impartation of God's power, producing the fruit of the Spirit, to make the minister spiritually effective in all his ministrations, but especially in evangelism. For Fuller there was a direct connection between the minister's personal holiness and his effectiveness in leading souls to repentance in Christ. Eminent spirituality produces eminent usefulness. In the following chapter it will be necessary to compare the continuity/discontinuity between Fuller and other Particular Baptists with a view to discovering the extent of the transformation of the pastoral ministry.

²²⁵ Fuller, *Qualifications and Encouragement*, 27; Fuller, *Obedience of Churches*, 113; Fuller, *Feed the Flock*, 447; Fuller, *Spiritual Knowledge*, 448; Fuller, *Intimate and Practical Acquaintance*, 455; Fuller, *Oppose Evil*, 460; Fuller, *Not Despised*, 462; Fuller, *Fellow-Labourers*, 465; Fuller, *Nature of the Gospel*, 470; Fuller, *Work and Encouragements*, 472; Fuller, *Preaching Christ*, 479; Fuller, *Influence of Christ*, 483; Fuller, *Habitual Devotedness*, 486; Fuller, *Affectionate Concern*, 491; Fuller, *Nature of Missionary Work*, 492; Fuller, *Ministry a Great Work*, 496; Fuller, *Faith in the Gospel*, 499; Fuller, *Ministers the Gift of Christ*, 507; Fuller, *Importance of Christian Love*, 508; Fuller, *Christian Steadfastness*, 516; Fuller, *Exhibit the Light*, 521; Fuller, *Churches God's Building*, 530; Fuller, *Godly Simplicity*, 533; Fuller, *Faithful Minister*, 535; Fuller, *Serve in Love*, 537,8; Fuller, *Ministerial and Christian Communion*, 539; Fuller, *Hold Fast the Gospel*, 543.

Chapter 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Continuity and Discontinuity

7.1.1 Introduction

An evaluation of the available published Particular Baptists ordination sermons beginning in the long eighteenth century with Nehemiah Coxe's sermon of 1681 to George Sample's ordination in 1818 as compared with Andrew Fuller's published ordination sermons of the late eighteenth century manifests a palpable theological continuity within the larger Particular Baptists ordination history. In order to discover if there was indeed a radical re-conception of the pastoral office by Fuller, his theology must be carefully considered in light of other Particular Baptists. This chapter will compare Fuller's theology with theirs particularly in light of his theological emphasis of eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness. Also the earlier part of the eighteenth century, prior to 1770 when the evangelical revival began to affect the Baptists, will be the focus of comparison with Fuller.

7.1.2 Ordination Dynamics

Fuller continued in the Particular Baptists belief in the value of ordination as demonstrated through his wide spread participation in preaching sermonic charges and addresses to the church. His involvement also extended beyond just those two aspects as we have seen for example that he closed with public prayer at times. The evidence that his involvement was significant is reflected in the number of his extant ordination sermons which probably represent the largest remaining corpus among the eighteenth century Particular Baptists. He not only followed the

general Particular Baptists structure of the service but also shared with them its necessity and importance based on apostolic example and biblical precedent.

This reveals continuity with the earlier Particular Baptists stress on the importance of orderliness, for the ordination service's *raison d'être* was a biblically prescribed church structure achieved through the proper installation of its officers. The church was God's primary means for building the kingdom of God and at the center of this was the pastor who was given the gifts and graces to help build the church up to maturity. Order then was a sign of biblical fidelity and essential for the approbation of God and his accompanying blessing on the church. In the earlier Particular Baptists sermons especially prior to around 1773, there is a regular overt mention in charges on the importance of orderliness in the local church and this emphasis continued, though generally with less force, until the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. Although Fuller would have wholeheartedly agreed with the truthfulness and importance of the regulative principle of worship, he rarely, if at all stressed its importance to his charges beyond the need for church discipline and care in accepting new members. When he did point out the importance of taking care in "laying on of hands" it was mostly in his address to a church.¹ He also shared the same Baptist priorities of simplicity, solemnity, and joy as characteristics of the ceremony itself.

As mentioned the event was so important in the life of the church because the calling of a faithful pastor was directly connected to the prosperity of the church. As a result there was a comprehensive agreement among Particular Baptists that no man was sufficient for the office without the approbation of God's supplied grace. But because God established a man in the office as confirmed by the people in a voluntary society he also promised divine assistance as a

¹ Fuller, Churches Fellow Helpers, 510.

reward for faithfulness and diligence. The vast majority of all Particular Baptists sermons at one time or another pose the question, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

7.1.3 Continuity in the Broader Particular Baptists Theological Tradition

Concerning the broader Particular Baptist tradition, Fuller shared essentially all the same foundational theological concerns and emphases. For example there was homogeneity in their belief that the Bible was the supreme authority of all life and practice as articulated in the Second London Confession. They believed that its teachings were plain and clear and accessible to all men with the help of the Spirit of God and that it was the foundation to all order and worship in the church and which regulated all Baptist practice. The Bible was also believed to be one of the key means to know God and his will for the church in the world. Fuller also shared with other Baptists the importance of reading other biblically faithful secondary sources based on the Bible. However they were always to be read as uninspired works of men subject to error and prejudice. Fuller’s unique emphasis in this regard reflected the need for autonomous thinking that was characteristic of his whole life, for he regular stressed the need to think independently and critically no matter how revered or respected the author was. This allowed Fuller to remain faithful to his tradition while critically evaluating some of its aspects, like no offers of the gospel to all and sundry, in light of an infallibly authoritative Bible. Fuller also shared the Baptist belief that it was not enough just know the facts of the Bible but it was incumbent on every believer to live out these truths.

Another axiomatic truth that Fuller shared as foundational to all ministry was the centrality of the magnification of the glory of God especially as reflected in a love for God and

his people as the motive for all ministry. The glory of God was pre-eminently displayed through his redemptive purposes in Christ. For Fuller, as with the other Baptists, this defined success in ministry. That is also partly why they consistently highlighted the great importance of the work of the pastor at the beginning of the charge. The pastor was given an essential stewardship in the primary mission of God. This love was to be expressed in mutual love for God and one another and so Fuller shares in common with many of his brethren the image of the shepherd as a favourite metaphor for the function of the pastoral office. They all emphasized that in a voluntary society the grand motive for communion was rooted in a love for God and his people.

Another commonality among Fuller in comparison with all other Particular Baptists was the centrality of Christ and the cross. Universally they taught that Christ was the central theme of all preaching. Without Christ there was no reconciliation with God and no way to enjoy fellowship and communion with him. Christ was the center of all their thoughts, motives and actions and they stressed this constantly. They expressed it most often through the phrase “preach Christ and not self” which meant that preaching should further the glory of Christ rather than promote the preacher’s personal goals or self interests.

7.1.3.1 Character Qualifications of a Minister

In terms of the descriptions of the character and qualifications of a minister there is also a strong connection between Fuller and his tradition. It was very common in the charge to stress the reality of trials and temptations and discuss the encouragement of God’s promised help and comfort. They also reminded the ordinand that a great reward awaited all ministers who were

faithful and diligent in the stewardship that God had entrusted to them. Fuller regularly articulated all these same concerns.

Generally eighteenth-century Particular Baptists emphasized the need for consistency between the message the pastor preached and the life he lived as a prerequisite for success in ministry. Whereas the ordination sermons at the earlier part of the century stressed the specific New Testament qualifications of elders and deacons in Titus and Timothy by listing and describing each in turn Fuller generally used broader descriptors such as piety and holiness as the necessary qualities of the elder. He was in complete homogeneity with other Baptists on the importance of only allowing qualified men in the office. Perhaps he used these more general categories for the pragmatic purpose of conserving time as there is evidence that there was pressure to shorten the length of the services as the century advanced. Many later ordinations reflect this same trend. Also the earlier idea of the excellence of biblical examples as a more effective teaching tool than mere precept continued in Fuller as an essential teaching for the ordinand.

Another area of continuity between Fuller and his brethren was the distinction between extraordinary and ordinary officers, as the vast majority of Particular Baptists seemed convinced that their unique supernatural gifts ended with the apostles. They went to great pains to describe continuity between the contemporary office of elder with the early New Testament apostolic precedent, but distinguished some of these gospel pioneer's powers as uniquely historically bound.

Finally in the general area of the character of a pastor there was a common stress for the need for a complete devotion to his calling and the avoidance of the evils and distractions of the

world. They stressed the importance for temperance and self denial in every aspect of the pastor's personal and private life.

7.1.3.2 Duties of a Pastor

The Particular Baptists had clearly defined duties for a pastor with very little variation. They included, ruling the church, preaching the Word, public prayer, dispensing the ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), visiting the people, presiding over singing and public meetings, and participating in other ordination ceremonies if called upon. These duties represented a stewardship from God and so the primary response of the pastor was to be faithful and diligent in fulfilling his charge. Fuller in the tradition of his fathers frequently mirrors this concern.

We have seen that Fuller describes the same essential duties as other Particular Baptists, especially preaching the Word and visitation, but does not discuss presiding over singing or participating in ordination services as a prescribed duty. In addition, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Fuller rarely stresses the ordinances in terms of a specific duty of a minister. Although he does mention dispensing them as a pastoral duty he rarely explicates this duty choosing instead to stress preaching both publically and privately. It is surprising because elsewhere in his writings he deals extensively with the centrality of the ordinances even arguing at length for closed communion against some of his closest friends.² Perhaps in the charge he was reticent to bring controversial and potential distracting issues into the joyful proceedings of the day knowing there was disparity here among the Baptists. He chose instead to encourage the ordinand in less conflict-ridden areas and withheld such a discussion for another time and place.

² Andrew Fuller, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, (Works, III, 499, 508).

This would be consistent with Fuller's central concern to avoid controversy when possible in the pulpit with his stress on prudence in the method, manner and purpose of specific discourses.

As a ruler or overseer Fuller tended to stress the importance of church discipline and careful membership requirements rather than some earlier Baptists who seemed more concerned to describe a theology of church order in and of itself. In the earlier part of the century the Baptists were closer to the political concerns leading to the Act of Toleration in 1689. These Baptists were concerned to clearly articulate issues of self governance in the context of a politically tumultuous time. Fuller upholds these same principles but with the enjoyment of increased freedom they became less of an emphasis in the latter part of the century. None the less Fuller uses many of their popular metaphors like the pastor as a shepherd, gardener, builder, or labourer.

As mentioned Fuller's greatest emphasis was on the duty of the pastor to preach the Word for the edification of the saints and the salvation of sinners. The primary goal was not to make Baptists but to convert lost souls. Because this was so central to Fuller's emphasis as pastoral duty, a more thorough comparison, particularly with the Particular Baptists thought prior to the evangelical revival is discussed below.

In regards to doctrine in ministry Fuller agreed with the Baptists common emphasis that a minister must have firm convictions about what he preached and so as reflected in their inherited Calvinistic confessions he regularly called attention to the importance of the Doctrines of Grace. However in Fuller it was not stressed to the degree found in the charges of John Brine. Brine would explicate in great detail the high Calvinist stress on these doctrines, where Fuller would usually briefly define them and highlight their importance. But Fuller, akin to his forbears, often

described the importance of doctrine in his sermons, at one time saying, “I love a sermon well laden with Christian Doctrine.”³ He like Brine and Gill also discussed the necessity and importance of preaching against false teaching to battle the main challenges to orthodoxy in their day as seen particularly in Socinianism, Arianism, and Antinomianism.

False doctrine was an enemy to all Particular Baptists but they went even further than a mere contentment with orthodoxy in teaching that the church must also have the correct sentiments of scripture as well. Fuller, echoing earlier Baptists, believed that the manner of preaching was as important as the method and so he insisted that the gospel must be preached with great affection. They were to preach doctrines practically and preach practise doctrinally for the concern was to win the hearts of the people. Particular Baptists were concerned to teach the truth of the Bible to stir up emotions. For Fuller, “the union of genuine orthodoxy and affection constitutes true religion”⁴ and even the earlier doyen of high Calvinism himself John Gill had a very similar concern as discussed below. Regarding the manner of preaching most Baptists believed in a plain, simple delivery with the goal that all and sundry would comprehend and apply its message their lives.

Whereas some early Particular Baptists put the importance of public prayer on par with preaching Fuller only mentions it and never really develops public prayer as a chief pastoral duty. But as mentioned he himself did participate in public prayer as evidenced in the ordination service of Thomas Dunscombe. But his main emphasis in ordination sermons is clearly on private prayer to enhance personal communion with God.

³ Fuller, Affectionate Concern, 490.

⁴ Fuller, Hold Fast the Gospel, 543.

Fuller in complete unison with other Particular Baptists often stressed the importance of the pastoral duty of visitation. The main content in his discussions of this pastoral duty very closely mirrors the same emphases of his Baptist brethren with exhortations to frequently visit church members to know their spiritual state and to privately exhort, encourage or rebuke as needed.

In summary, an examination of 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 Baptist theological tradition. In these categories it is not likely that a congregant familiar with earlier eighteenth-century ordination sermons would have recognized any major disparity in regard to the general emphasis and content of the proceedings. However one noticeable emphasis in Fuller, that is also reflected in other Baptists ordination sermons at the latter part of the century, namely his stress summed up in the words "eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness," must be analysed separately in light of Fuller's significant theological departure from some earlier Particular Baptists who were reluctant to offer the gospel to anyone without a warrant. In other words was there a significant revamping of Particular Baptists pastoral theology, or was this re-correction a response to an historical abnormality that appeared near the beginning of the century? Some scholars argue that the evangelical revival beginning in 1730 caused a major transformation within Particular Baptists pastoral theology. For example a recent Master's thesis by Keith Grant asserts that there was an evangelical renewal of pastoral theology within the Particular Baptists church as witnessed in a significant alteration in the pastoral office. This transformation as personified in Fuller was characterized as "very affecting and evangelical" but unique in the larger evangelical revival in that it was worked out within a

congregational setting. The transformation of Particular Baptists to a more outward looking body as they embraced evangelicalism in late eighteenth century had an accompanying affect on their pastoral theology. Fuller's emphasis on conversion and the affections in addition to a Congregationalist desire for orderliness shows that this renewal happened inside the church. This is significant to this study because he argues that this renewed pastoral theology was expressed primarily through Fuller's preaching ministry described as plain (in style), evangelical (in content), and affectionate (in application), which also reflected the emphasis of evangelicalism in the eighteenth century.⁵ In conclusion Grant argues that the evangelical transformation of the Particular Baptists was articulated mainly through a renewed pastoral theology, and was uniquely expressed through the congregationalism as reflected by Andrew Fuller's pastoral theology. His ecclesiology emphasized voluntarism, affectionate, and evangelical priorities as expressed through his main characteristic of "very affecting and evangelical" ministry. This was the main thrust of both his personal change and the resulting influence he had on broader evangelicalism. Grant seems to conclude that Fuller's example reflects David Bebbington's quadrilateral definition of evangelism as especially seen through his crucicentrism and conversionism enhanced by a renewed sense of assurance. Fuller's distinctive contribution was in the area of his congregationalism as central to his "expression" of evangelism where the church becomes an agent for evangelist concerns.

But if it can be shown that specifically in the area of these evangelical affections, voluntarism, and evangelical priorities like conversionism and crucicentrism, Fuller in fact showed significant continuity with his Baptist forbearers prior to around 1770 when the revival

⁵ Keith Grant, "Very Affecting and Evangelical" Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology (Th.M. Thesis, Regent College, 2007).

began to take hold among the Baptists, then his thesis is somewhat undermined. For even if there was a Baptist recovery of evangelism expressed through free offers of the gospel, this does not necessarily show a radical transformation of the pastoral office as an effect of the enlightenment.

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 did this entail a complete revamping of Particular Baptists perspective on pastoral ministry? In other words when older Particular Baptists heard Andrew Fuller's ordination sermons did what they hear differ significantly that what they heard as younger men and women? Or did they hear much that was similar?

7.2 Continuity in the Affections Prior to the Evangelical Awakening

It is instructive to analyse 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. As shown, much of this emphasis reflects the priorities of the new evangelicalism especially in regard to language concerning the heart and affections, but also in the resulting evangelical pragmatism. Was Fuller's emphasis on conversions and the heart and holiness a new innovation or is there evidence of it prior to and even during the dominant era of high Calvinism?

7.2.1 Comparison Between Fuller and Nehemiah Coxe

Our analysis begins with the earliest extant Particular Baptist sermon at the beginning of the long eighteenth century by the prominent Baptist Nehemiah Coxe in 1681. A contemporary of Coxe, C. M. du Veil, referred to Coxe as “that great divine, eminent for all a manner of learning.”⁶ As mentioned earlier he was also believed to have been significant in shaping the Second London Confession to which all later Baptists were bound.

One of the most obvious signs of continuity between Coxe and Fuller is their mutual emphasis on the prominence of Christology as a central theme of their preaching. Coxe and Fuller regularly highlight the concept of *Aliquid Christi*, that is, something of Christ in every sermon. There are also parallels in themes like the minister’s need to be holy, to sincerely reflect the gospel he preaches, and to continually cultivate his God-given gifts.

Coxe and Fuller also stress the same basic duties of pastor. In fact, their emphasis is almost identical except that Coxe seems to make more of the duty of public prayer than Fuller. Throughout the sermon Coxe, like Fuller, emphasizes the necessity of the pastor to be a consistent example to the flock in both word and deed. He says the pastor must be a man, “whose general conduct and demeanour is to the adorning of that doctrine which he possesses himself, and must teach others.”⁷ To be effective he must practice what he preaches by living a holy life that reflects the truth of the scriptures. But for Coxe, just like Fuller, this effectiveness is not just confined to the positive influence of emulation, but through divine communion, reflected in a piety that empowers his message by enlivening heavenly influences. For Coxe says,

⁶ Nehemiah Coxe, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/bcf.iv.v.ix.html?highlight=nehemiah,coxe#highlight> Accessed August 4, 2008.

⁷ Coxe, Ordination, 142.

...it is no less than the evidence of Divine authority that will work upon the soul, and command the conscience of a man; whether it is by way of comfort, exhortation, or reproof, it is the stamp of heaven upon the things delivered by you that renders them powerful. Let it therefore be your principal care in preaching clearly to open and pertinently apply the Scriptures, that your hearers may bear away this conviction from your sermons, that you may “have the mind of Christ.” It is not enough that the things you speak be true, but you must manifest them to be so by strong and convincing proof. Make conscience of giving, what in your lies, the very sense of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures that you speak about...⁸

Although the power comes primarily from a divine influence on the Word preached, piety enhances a pastor’s effectiveness. For Coxe, although the content is crucial, the manner of preaching also bears directly upon pastoral efficacy. Like Fuller he despises gesturing and yelling as a means for communicating divine truth showing he is concerned with the sentiments as well as the precepts of scripture. It is also interesting that Coxe utilizes some of the same biblical language as Fuller in relation to the importance of pastoral piety as an example to the flock. Coxe says,

And all this pains must be enlivened by a holy example; for if a minister does not live under the instruction he gives to others, and appear a burning and shining light in life and conversation, as well as in doctrine, his ill manners will do more hurt, than all his words can ever do good. Examples have the greatest influence upon men...⁹

In Fuller’s ordination to the Rev. Robert Fawkner in 1787 he introduced the sermon by talking about the power of example for emulation in the context of the holy biblical example of Barnabus and in a charge to another young minister instructs him, “burn with holy ardour” as a “burning and shining light.”¹⁰

For Coxe, like Fuller, the goal of a holy example, was evangelism, for concerning the task of preaching he says, “let your care be to deal with the souls and consciences of men, as

⁸ Coxe, Ordination, 145.

⁹ Coxe, Ordination, 147.

¹⁰ Fuller, Spiritual Knowledge, 479.

knowing that it is the salvation of souls which you are to labour after...”¹¹ Note also the prominent concern for their consciences which are connected to their emotions. The task of preaching for Coxe was about more than just dispensing biblical truth but also reflects a desire to affect minds and hearts of the hearers making it purposeful or useful. Coxe says in an address to the church concerning the work of an elder,

Their work is such, as they can never fill up their callings as they ought, but by the special aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit; the success of all their labours depends upon a Divine blessing and the presence of God with them; and in these things both the glory of Christ, and the comfort and edification of your own souls is nearly concerned; which is sufficient reason for your making conscience of this duty.¹²

In exhorting the people to pray for their pastor Coxe attaches the need for divine empowering with success or usefulness in pastoral ministry as seen in edification of the people. Elsewhere he connects the usefulness emerging from a divine influence on the pastor directly to success in preaching for Coxe can say,

He that will do the souls of his people good, and approve himself as a pastor after God’s heart, must feed them with knowledge and understanding; and endeavour to maintain a constant zeal and affection in them, by well-informing their judgments, and such an opening of the mind of God from scriptures, and may command their consciences. ...Mistake me not! I know the success and fruit of all the studies and labours of him that preaches the Gospel is from the grace and power of the Holy Spirit; but the assistance of the Spirit is to be expected by us in way of our duty.¹³

Like Coxe, Fuller also emphasizes the goal of preaching which is to stir people’s affections.

So regarding eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness Coxe also connects personal piety and the accompanying divine influence with usefulness in ministry as particularly expressed through the conversion of souls. It is also interesting that in this regard he frequently

¹¹ Coxe, Ordination, 145.

¹² Coxe, Ordination, 151.

¹³ Coxe, Ordination, 155.

uses similar language to Fuller such as; “affection,” “burning,” “shining,” “sense,” “divine blessing,” and the “mind of Christ.” This demonstrates not only a very consistent degree of continuity with Fuller’s emphasis on the duties and qualifications of a pastor but also a substantial continuity with Fuller’s main emphasis of eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness.

7.2.2 Comparison Between Fuller and Joseph Stennett

In another very early Particular Baptist ordination sermon by Joseph Stennett in 1705 there is also an emphasis on the pastoral duty to “teach people the mind of God.” Like Coxe Stennett stresses that God will supply the divine grace to be effective in ministry, and that the pastor’s own example in piety and consistency is a model for effective preaching. He instructs the ordinand to be a, “pattern to the flock that they may learn from your behaviour, as well as your preaching, how to practice the duties of Christian religion.”¹⁴ Again it is not just good doctrine that matters but a life that reflects that doctrine as a positive model for the church. For the pastor must be “very pious and religious; devoted to prayer, reading and meditation when alone...”¹⁵ One of the main goals of the pastor according to Stennett was to, “seek their increase in number, by the conversion of sinners, in preaching the gospel of Christ.”¹⁶ Stennett seems to carry on with some of Coxe’s emphasis where he connects the example of a pastor’s ministry with success in the conversion of sinners.

¹⁴ Stennett, Rees, 123.

¹⁵ Stennett, Rees, 123.

¹⁶ Stennett, Rees, 124.

7.2.3 Comparison Between Fuller and John Gill

The other major Particular Baptists figure of the eighteenth century and considered by many to be the father of high-Calvinism himself was John Gill (1697-1771). In his *Sermons and Tracts* there are four published ordination sermons containing charges from the years 1734, 1758, 1764, and 1766.¹⁷ He was so influential among the Baptists, especially in the earlier half of the eighteenth century that his authority was considered “oracular.”¹⁸ If there was a radical discontinuity in pastoral theology among the Particular Baptists between the earlier and latter part of the century one might expect to find very different expressions of the office between Fuller and John Gill, especially in light of the fact that many nineteenth century Baptists polarized into two main camps designated “Gillites” and “Fullerites” as distinguished by the necessity of offering the gospel to everyone. There is of course a divide in their view of offering the gospel which obviously had a bearing on the priorities in evangelism but often the extent of the continuity between Gill and Fuller is overlooked. In regards to the centrality of the Bible, the doctrines of grace, Christology and other pastoral qualifications, there was little difference in emphasis between Gill’s sermons and Fuller. But what about in the area of the “heart”? Was there a radical theological separation from Fuller’s main emphasis of eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness?

Greg Wills has revealed that for Gill the “essence of Christian living was loving Christ” and even labels him primarily as “a theologian of the heart.”¹⁹ Wills believes that the main emphases in Gills’ theology lay in “his promotion of Calvinism, his defence of believer’s

¹⁷ John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts: In Two Volumes* (London: Keith, 1773) II.

¹⁸ Gregory A. Wills, “A Fire that Burns Within: The Spirituality 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), 191.

¹⁹ Wills, *Fire that Burns*, 191.

baptism, and his insistence on the religion of the heart.”²⁰ It is this last point especially where Gill shows a great affinity to Fuller’s own key theological emphasis although as discussed it was also a central concern of Fuller to defend the doctrines of grace as well as uphold the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

In Gill’s ordination sermons there are regular appeals for evangelical spirituality. Like Fuller he stresses the absolute necessity for a pastor to cultivate his gifts for if he is not a good steward of them they may decline, or even be lost entirely, which would render him ineffective. Like his predecessor Coxe, the goal of Christian preaching was not just to impart facts but to communicate spiritual light. So for example he can say in an ordination sermon from 1734, that if a minister doesn’t cultivate his gifts, “all his light and knowledge, his abilities and usefulness, shall be taken from him.”²¹ Gill not only stresses the diligence use of means to cultivate God given gifts, he also describes these means in the same way as Fuller, namely as, Bible study, reading good men, meditation, and prayer.²² For both men, who use essentially the same language to describe it, it resulted in, “more light and knowledge.” Gill often uses this similarly affective language that Fuller does when describing the cultivation of these gifts. For example he says, “Gifts are sometimes like coals of fire, covered and buried in ashes, . . . which must be stirred up, or blown off, that they may revive and be re-inflamed, and so communicate more light and heat.”²³ Gill is concerned, like Fuller, to reach the affections of his hearers for greater spiritual usefulness. He knows that a man cannot procure or increase these gifts himself but only

²⁰ Wills, *Fire that Burns*, 191.

²¹ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 4.

²² These are usually the written works by men who have been proven orthodox and effective in ministry.

²³ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 5.

God gives “more light and knowledge by use of means.”²⁴ So Gill says, mirroring Fuller’s own emphasis and language,

...it is the Lord that gives men an understanding to know them, that opens their hearts, and enlightens their minds by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of them; for whatever understanding natural men may have of natural things, they have none of spiritual ones; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God (Rom. 3:12)... he gives to his ministers a larger understanding of divine things, and of the scriptures and the truths of them; he opens their understandings, as Christ did his disciples, that they may understand the scriptures; he gives unto them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to a greater degree than he does to others; and he enlarges their understandings, and increases their gifts, their light, and knowledge; ...and the Lord will give thee understanding in all things; and so is used as an encouragement to consider well what had been said, and to expect a richer furniture of knowledge, and a larger measure of spiritual light and understanding; and as Christ gives more light to his people, who are made light by him; and there is such a thing as growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and of all spiritual things, in common Christians; and the path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day; so faithful ministers of the word, who are diligent and industrious in their work, may expect, and be assured, that God will give them an enlarged knowledge and understanding of divine truths, and of everything necessary to the due performance of that sacred work they are called unto, and holy office they are invested with. I shall close, as I begun, with the words of my text, Consider what I say, or have been saying; consider the work of the ministry, that it is a work, and a laborious one May the blessing of God rest upon you, and may you have success in your work.²⁵

Gill is describing an enlightening of the mind and heart that sounds very much like Fuller’s own language where he even articulates a distinction between natural and divine knowledge. He like Fuller is seeking the mind of Christ for greater spiritual light and understanding which is necessary for the effective performance of his task as a pastor. In other words, so he can be more useful, for in describing the pastor who appropriates these means Gill encourages the ordinand to be, “... in frequent prayer, constant meditation, and in daily reading the scriptures, and the writings of good men; which are transmitted to posterity for the benefit and advantage of the

²⁴ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 5.

²⁵ Gill, Larwill (1758), 28.

churches of Christ.”²⁶ For Gill this usefulness cultivated through personal spirituality was primarily expressed in terms of giving the gospel to the world for he says, “the commission of gospel-ministers being to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”²⁷

In unison with their Particular Baptists tradition both Gill and Fuller are very similar in their expression of the importance of the minister’s own example for success. They stress that personal holiness, after the example of Christ, must apply to all aspect of their lives, public and private. Both warn that if a pastor’s example doesn’t match his teaching that it may be indicative of his unhappy eternal state so both warn the ordinands to guard their hearts. Gill, like Fuller connects a minister’s usefulness with his character,

...every Christian ought to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, but most especially the preachers of it-their lights should so shine before men, that they seeing their good works, may glorify their father which is in heaven. The name of God, the ways of Christ, and the truths of the gospel, are blasphemed, and spoken evil of, through the scandalous lives of professors, and especially ministers. Nothing is more abominable than that one, whose business it is to instruct and reprove others, is himself notoriously culpable; to such a person and case, the words of the apostle are very applicable, Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?²⁸

Likewise Fuller repeatedly warns that one of the greatest dangers for a minister was to neglect his own heart leading to his eventual condemnation.

Although for Gill it was not enough that a minister knows the truth on just an intellectual level, but also must adorn it through his example, for him doctrine was the chief means to this passionate spirituality. In fact at times he even relates the orthodoxy of a doctrine to its effect on hearers saying, “Whatever doctrines are subversive of true piety, or strike at the life and power of godliness, are to be rejected: if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he

²⁶ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 5.

²⁷ Gill, Davis (1764), 41.

²⁸ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 7.

is proud, knowing nothing...”²⁹. But Gill was not content to encourage the ordinand to improve only the content of his preaching, but because he was concerned to affect the hearts of his listeners, he also encouraged the importance of perfecting the manner of preaching. He not only advised the standard Particular Baptists exhortation on plain speaking, but also cautions,

It is also very advisable that he take heed that he express his doctrine in the best manner, and to the best advantage. He ought to be careful about the manner as well as the matter of his ministry; that he speak plainly, intelligibly, and boldly, the gospel, as it ought to be spoken: Elocution, which is a gift of utterance, a freedom of expression, with propriety of language, is one of the gifts fitting for public usefulness in the work of the ministry; and which may be improved by the use of proper means.³⁰

This is because the manner is a key element in effectively involving the affections of his listeners which is the goal of preaching. Gill says, “let controversy, as little as may be, be brought into the pulpit; controversial sermons, when best managed, are generally unedifying ones to the people in common; tend to damp the true spirit of religion and devotion, which it is the design of preaching the word to excite.”³¹ The goal is to reach people’s emotions through the truth preached.

The necessity of divine influence for effectiveness is also a common feature of Gill’s ordination sermons. So he often uses evangelical language of light, warmth, and fervency in Spirit. He says of pastors,

...it is requisite they should be lively in their ministrations; it is most comfortable to themselves, and best for those to whom they minister, when they are lively in their frames, lively in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; when they are fervent in spirit, while they are serving the Lord their God; and under a divine influence, they are the savour of life unto life; the instruments and means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving and

²⁹ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 10.

³⁰ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 10.

³¹ Gill, Larwill (1758), 18.

refreshing drooping saints; and happy are those that sit under the ministry of the living creatures, regenerate men, the living and lively ministers of the gospel.³²

The minister would not benefit others unless he himself was under a divine influence. He must first be enlightened before enlightening others. For Gill pastors needed to have,

their eyes enlightened, their understandings opened by Christ, as were the disciples; the scriptures are to be diligently searched into, and explored for the rich treasure that is in them; and those that search into them, as for hid treasure, shall find knowledge of great and excellent things; but these escape the sight of all but those who have spiritual eyes to see.³³

As we have seen Fuller saw the main goal of the minister as “enlightening the minds and affecting the hearts” of his hearers.

Gill also sounds very much like Fuller when describing the necessity of a pastor to love his sheep as a prerequisite for ministry. He says,

Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, (John 21:15-17), intimating, that such a lover of him was a fit person to feed the flock or church of God; even one whose love is so ardent that the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame, that many waters cannot quench; even waters of afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and sufferings for the sake of Christ and his gospel: and by coals of fire may they be described, because of their burning zeal for the glory of God and the interest of a Redeemer; hence they are called Seraphim, fiery or burning, as before observed; and it is not unusual for ministers of the gospel to be compared to lamps; the apostles are called the lights or lamps of the world; and John the Baptist was a shining and burning light or lamp; and so others have been, holding forth the word of light and life to men: and whereas it is said that it, the fire, went up and down among the living creatures; this is true of the word of God, compared to fire, Jeremiah 20:9 and 23:29, by which the minds of ministers are enlightened, their hearts warmed, and are filled with zeal for God, and become the means of enlightening and warming others; which fire was bright, clear, as the word of God is; and out of the fire went forth lightning; denoting the quick and penetrating efficacy of the word, and the sudden increase of the kingdom and interest of Christ by it, which, like lightning, has been spread from east to west.³⁴

³² Gill, Davis (1764), 38.

³³ Gill, Davis (1764), 43.

³⁴ Gill, Davis (1764), 44; Fuller, Feed the Flock, 477.

Again it is hard to miss the affective language so characteristic of the evangelical revival like “warming” and “enlightened minds.” Fuller even uses similar biblical metaphors to Gill, like shepherds tending their sheep or farmers breaking up the fallowed grounds of men’s hearts.³⁵

For Gill this divine influence results in divine empowering in the task. The eminent spirituality of minister would usually produce eminent effectiveness. He says,

...the...gospel...under the divine influence; and which is not the voice, sound and word of man, but of God himself; which appears by its powerful effects on the hearts of saints and sinners, when attended with a divine energy; and indeed it is the Lord God almighty that speaks in ministers, and speaks powerfully by them, 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 13:3.³⁶

Like Fuller, Gill often gives strong appeal for activism where he can say, for example, that Ezekiel 1:8 and 10:8, “denotes the activity of gospel-ministers, who have not only the theory and knowledge of things, but are men of practice and business; they have much work to do all around them, on every side preaching the gospel, administering ordinances, visiting their people, praying with them, and giving them counsel and advice, instruction and exhortation, when needful.”³⁷

Gill also distinguishes between natural and divine knowledge which allows for a theological rationale for a spirituality of the heart and the head. There is a natural knowledge available to all men and spiritual knowledge requiring divine illumination so accordingly Gill says, “the ministers of the gospel have need of a large share of knowledge, both of things natural and spiritual; knowledge of themselves, and of their state by nature and by grace, and an

³⁵ Gill, Davis (1764), 44.

³⁶ Gill, Davis (1764), 45.

³⁷ Gill, Davis (1764), 45.

experience of the work of the spirit of God upon their hearts.”³⁸ Both Gill and Fuller warn against Satan’s attacks on the minister to distort both types of knowledge.

In Gill’s ordination sermons there is also a strong and constant emphasis on usefulness, directly connected with the empowering of the Spirit directed towards especially towards effectiveness in evangelism. First off he described the necessity of holiness in a minister by saying, “Ministers, by taking heed to themselves, may, through a divine blessing, and the influences of the Spirit of God, save themselves from an untoward generation, and be preferred from the pollutions of the world.”³⁹ Then he gives the specific reason ministers must watch both their life and doctrine,

What can, or does, more strongly engage ministers to take heed to themselves, to their doctrine, and abide therein, than this? That they may be useful in the conversion, and so in the salvation of precious and immortal souls, which are of more worth than a world: He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins (Jam. 5:20).⁴⁰

Holiness leads to usefulness in the mandate of the pastor primarily expressed through the conversion of souls.

Like Fuller, Gill envisions the pastoral work as that of a labourer. To be successful Gill advises ordinands that, “...it requires much reading of the scriptures, frequent prayer; constant meditation, and study to prepare for it; and much study is a weariness to the flesh (Eccl. 12:12): and in the performance of this service, with that zeal, fervour, and affection, which are necessary

³⁸ Gill, Davis (1764), 39.

³⁹ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 12.

⁴⁰ Gill, Braithwaite (1734), 13.

to it, a man, to use the apostle's phrase, may spend and be spent (2 Cor. 12:15).⁴¹ The means for the cultivation of the affections is for greater usefulness.

The main difference between Fuller and Gill was not in the primary objective of the spirituality of the heart. The main difference was in the method. Gill was reluctant to offer the gospel to all, his style was more didactic, and he didn't plead with sinners in the same way Fuller did. Rather Gill believed that it was through teaching doctrine truthfully and carefully that this warm spirituality was achieved. Whereas both Gill and Fuller knew that true spirituality came through the head and heart, at times Gill emphasised a more rational appropriation of holiness. Still their final objective of eminent personal experience of communion with God differed little in form or substance. Both wanted to reach the hearts of their hearers. Also both connected the usefulness of the preacher directly with this personal spirituality. For Gill the divine power of the Word seemed to lay more in the declaration than in the exhortation, though in practice as Wills observed, "The brevity of Gill's exhortations differed little from the practice of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), the Northamptonshire pastor and missionary leader who promotes universal invitations. Fuller's sermons exhibited a rhetorical method fully as didactic as Gill's and used as little exhortation."⁴²

7.2.4 Comparison Between Fuller and John Brine

The other major figure for the early Baptists was the high Calvinist John Brine (1703-1765). His main emphasis in the charge usually took the form of detailed doctrinal expositions explicating the necessity of the Doctrines of Grace understood from a high-Calvinist perspective. He differs

⁴¹ Gill, Larwill, (1758), 15.

⁴² Wills, Fire that Burns, 204.

somewhat from Gill in that he did not believe it was the duty of sinners to put their trust in Christ, but like Gill was reticent to offer the gospel to all people.⁴³ Still even with his emphasis, these doctrines were to, “be embraced and held with the Heart, as made holy by the Operations of God’s Spirit upon it. The Head is not the Seat of evangelical Truths when they are received in a spiritual Manner, but the Soul, the Heart, and Mind.”⁴⁴ And his ultimate goal was a “warm affection to Christ.”⁴⁵ He also regularly warned that those who preach the gospel must live the gospel. The things the minister teaches must be mixed with faith and he must live out the truths he preaches.⁴⁶

7.2.5 Comparison Between Fuller and Others Prior to the Revival

In the remaining sermons prior to when the evangelical revival was thought to have significantly affected the Particular Baptists in 1770, there is a great deal of continuity with Fuller’s emphasis on eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness. For example in 1760 at the ordination of Joshua Wood, Isaac Mann describes the nature of the ministry of a pastor to his people to “labour with their affections, to draw them (the people) from the things below, and excite them to things above.”⁴⁷ And to pray for their pastor for their own maximum benefit, that he might have, “much holy warmth and pleasure in his meditation...”⁴⁸ so he could, “enjoy a large measure of the Spirit of God, and of the spirit of prayer and supplication, ...and lay all your cases before his heavenly

⁴³ Wills, *Fire that Burns*, 207.

⁴⁴ Brine, *Deacons* (1735), 5.

⁴⁵ Brine, *Deacons* (1735), 6.

⁴⁶ Brine, *Rist*, 12; Fuller uses a very similar phrase.

⁴⁷ Mann, *Wood*, 66.

⁴⁸ Mann, *Wood*, 92.

Father is a pertinent affectionate manner.”⁴⁹ His spirituality would enhance the spiritual affections making him more usefulness to the congregation.

In 1767 Samuel Stennett reiterates the standard Baptist teaching that example has a greater influence on the mind than precept and instructs the ordinand to “treat doctrines practically and duties evangelically.”⁵⁰ He states the goal of preaching is to “labour by all possible means to get at the hearts and feelings of those who hear you.”⁵¹ And to accomplish this, the ordinand is encouraged to, “enter yourself into the spirit of it, and be not content unless others feel it with you. Speak in the presence of God and as one who remembers he is to give an account. ...In a word, let your preaching be preceded [sic] and followed with your earnest cries to heaven for success.”⁵² Again the heart is the center of successful ministry. Stennett also distinguishes between natural and spiritual knowledge in relation to improving gifts and again connects spirituality with usefulness. He says, “And let me remind you of what I am well persuaded you are sensible, that an exact just and critical knowledge of the scriptures will be of little avail either to your comfort or usefulness, if it be not experimental and practical. Study therefore your own heart.”⁵³ This experimental religion comes through communion with Christ in prayer, reading and meditation.⁵⁴ Again the express purpose is the conversion of souls for he says, “And above all, as the grand object of preaching is the converting men from their sins, and the saving their souls; so as to deal properly with their understandings, consciences, and

⁴⁹ Mann, Wood, 93.

⁵⁰ Stennett, Evans, 46.

⁵¹ Stennett, Evans, 46.

⁵² Stennett, Evans, 47.

⁵³ Stennett, Evans, 51.

⁵⁴ Stennett, Evans, 52.

passions, on these interesting matters, makes study and preparations, in a dependence upon a superior influence, of very great importance.”⁵⁵

7.3 Conclusion

As the century progressed to the early nineteenth century the same basic duties and qualifications were described in these ordination sermons. Fuller’s emphasis on eminent spirituality and eminent usefulness was more closely mirrored by his contemporaries as the revival took hold. Especially in sermons from Caleb Evans in the West Counties there was a predominance of evangelical language and exhortations for enhanced ministerial usefulness through personal holiness. But there remained a strong continuity with the Particular Baptists of the earlier part of the century even when compared with those affected by high Calvinism. This close continuity 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.

The increased numerical growth of the Particular Baptists, as seen especially in the latter half of the eighteenth century, cannot be attributed principally to a radical reshaping of their pastoral theology. In fact, it has been demonstrated that there was extensive continuity between

⁵⁵ Stennett, Evans, 59.

the pastoral theology of Fuller and his forefathers like Nehemiah Coxe in the seventeenth century and even those with high Calvinists leanings in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Although it may be tempting to try and explain the more outward focus of these Baptists by describing a fundamental change in their essential pastoral theological priorities as the *raison d'être* behind their numerical growth, it does not fully reflect the reality of contemporary Baptists' ideals, and therefore hints of anachronism and historical *eisegesis*. For while it is true they were more evangelistically outward looking than many of their High Calvinist leaning brethren, this was likely more the result of return to the evangelical priorities of their seventeenth century Baptist forerunners for as we have seen they also emphasized the priority of the affections sin preaching as a necessity for the salvation of souls. The theological anomaly of the high Calvinist Baptists in the early part of the eighteenth century helped to accentuate this inward, "garden enclosed" mentality, which was precipitated through their reticence concerning the free offer of the gospel, which likely impacted their evangelistic efforts and most probably also their numeric growth. However, the main elements of Particular Baptist pastoral theology continued with great fidelity throughout the long eighteenth century.

Further, rather than a radical pastoral theological revamping, Fuller's demolition of High Calvinist dogma was in fact more of a renewal of earlier Baptist evangelical priorities and in this sense was more of a revitalization of pastoral theology within their tradition. It represented a return to the old ways albeit within the newly evolving context of a nascent shift from Enlightenment to Romantic ideals.

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. Yes they were men of their age, but they were also men whose central mandate had a passion to reshape contemporary society in light of their biblical worldview which was fundamentally countercultural. Their evangelism included a concern to establish God's kingdom on earth which was at conflict with the very emphasis of the times, namely, the authority of human rationalism. They believed that the success of the former objective was contingent on their fidelity to divine revelation. Their sole and absolute authority was the scriptures, which they were convinced was the God-breathed revelation of a sovereign and transcendent, all-wise, being. It is not as though they were immune from all societal influence, but it must be acknowledged that a major aspect of their calling was to resist these very forces by establishing an ideological counterattack with their own almost antithetical philosophical priorities.

Fuller's life and ministry demonstrated, especially through his many polemical publications battling many of the reigning philosophical dogmas of his day like Socinianism, that he understood his times and the theological dangers they posed to his Christian mandate. He spent a significant portion of his time and ministry battling them in print. With so much intellectual and personal moral effort extended to counter these societal pressures, it is hard to believe that he naively inherited its tenets to the point of radical revamping of his calling for the sake of an evangelistic pragmatism. For even though he emphasized as a central priority the salvation of souls, this goal was still subservient to the higher Particular Baptist priority to glorify God as the chief end of man. In other words, the *means* mattered as much, or more so than the *end*. If the means used for evangelism did not glorify God, then there would be great internal theological pressure to render that way unacceptable, resulting in abandonment. And because they believed that God had ordained the means, most often by using pious men to preach

the Word, any perceived deviation was unlikely to be internally viewed as effective in eternity. Above all their desire was to be a people conformed to a biblical worldview which inherently sought to resist the pressure of the reigning world view.

Another potential danger of suggesting Fuller as a significant agent of redefinition within the Calvinistic Baptist theological tradition as a result of enlightenment influence, is that it gives far too much credence to the authority of societal pressures on the church and in that sense is too simplistic. Because often those who argue this imply, or even outwardly declare, that the seeds of pastoral change are more dominant outside the church than within. But throughout its history the church has in fact sometimes successfully resisted the dominant and opposing priorities of contemporary worldviews quite effectively. She does not always substantially change her internal theological nature within a tradition based on these powerful societal forces and can even, in some cases – as during the Great Awakening – in fact, generate substantial biblical influence back in return.

That is not to say that culture had no influence on contemporary eighteenth century Baptists churches, or that there was no discontinuity whatsoever between these latter Baptists and earlier representations. There were certainly varying theological emphases that latter Particular Baptists seemed not to share with their theological fathers of the seventeenth-century. But the fundamental nature and goals of their theological priorities remained essentially the same, albeit perhaps expressed in what they felt were more contemporarily relevant terms, and perhaps with some accentuated emphases on what they thought was now more essential. For as the priorities of a culture change so does the emphatic expression of certain aspects of a fixed theological dogma which is inherently designed to communicate an unchanging message to an ever changing world.