"THE MATTER AND THE MANNER OF PREACHING": THE

INFLUENCE OF JEAN CLAUDE ON THE PREACHING

OF ANDREW FULLER

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A Dissertation

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Steele Bertram Wright

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APPROVAL SHEET

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For Brooke, my best friend and

fellow heir of the grace of life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

In his own day, Andrew Fuller was a monumental figure whose influence spread far beyond the quiet confines of his ministry in Kettering, England. As the years passed and one generation gave way to another, Fuller's impact largely faded from view. However, the last several decades have witnessed a revival in Fuller studies as many notable efforts have been taken to reintroduce him to a modern audience. My connection to Fuller has resembled the Particular Baptist pastor's own journey through the centuries. I was first introduced to him in a Baptist History course during my master's studies at Southern Seminary. While his life and ministry made a deep impression on me at the time, it was not until several years later that I returned to Fuller in my doctoral work and rediscovered him again for myself. I am indebted to Dr. Michael Haykin for encouraging me to take a second look at Fuller and directing me to his preaching as an area in need of further study. Through the course of my research, my admiration for Fuller has only grown as a man who devoted his life to the cause of Christ in the world and who so clearly embodied the truths he proclaimed.

I am also grateful for Dr. Hershael York and Dr. Michael Pohlman for their keen insights and wise counsel throughout this process. They were instrumental in my decision to pursue a doctoral degree at Southern Seminary and their expertise in the field of homiletics has sharpened my understanding of preaching in countless ways. Additionally, I am thankful for the elders and congregation of Lonsdale Community Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, for their willingness to provide me with the time to complete this dissertation alongside my pastoral responsibilities.

Most of all, I am deeply thankful for my wife, Brooke, who has been by my side from the very beginning. She has endured long hours of coursework, research, writing, and travel without ever wavering in her support or encouragement. She has been

a stabilizing grace in my life and my most faithful friend throughout this journey. Finally, my sweet daughter, Della, has been a constant source of joy and a welcome reminder of the value in recovering people like Andrew Fuller for future generations. I pray she will find great encouragement from many faithful saints of the past who will help her treasure Christ, the Savior of sinners, above all else.

<div align="right">Steele Bertram Wright</div>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On February 5, 1781, Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) recorded in his diary: "A pulpit seems an awful place!—An opportunity for addressing a company of immortals on their eternal interests—Oh how important! We preach for eternity. We in a sense are set for the rising and falling of many in Israel. And our own rise or fall is equally therein involved."[1] Nearly a decade earlier, Fuller ascended the pulpit for the first time at the age of seventeen. Having been entrusted with the morning's sermon only minutes before the service began, he spoke freely for about half an hour and was well received by his local congregation at Soham Baptist Church in Cambridgeshire. Although Fuller admitted his next attempt was far less successful, he continued to serve the congregation until they called him to be their pastor in the spring of 1775.

Fuller remained in Soham until 1782 when he accepted an invitation to pastor the Baptist Church in Kettering, Northamptonshire. Ultimately, Kettering was the setting where Fuller grew into the revered theologian and pivotal denominational leader as he is known today. Alongside his close friend, William Carey (1761–1834), Fuller championed the cause of global missions and co-founded the Baptist Missionary Society. In addition, he tirelessly defended orthodox Christianity against the objections of the Deists, Socinians, Sandemanians, Universalists and High Calvinists of his day, among

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[1] Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 1, *Memoirs, Sermons, Etc.*, ed. Joseph Belcher (1845; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1988), 25. Hereafter referred to as *Works*. I have retained the original grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in my citations of older documents. The long "s" scripts have been modernized and italics have been removed.

others.[2] While his reputation grew with every passing controversy, it was preaching, not polemics, that afforded Fuller the most delight in his ministry.[3] From 1782 until his death in 1815, he remained committed to his congregation, despite his many responsibilities elsewhere.

At the height of his ministry in Kettering, nearly a thousand people were said to be in attendance to hear Fuller preach.[4] The Sunday morning services included members as well as intrigued listeners from the surrounding villages. Alongside his regular ministry in his own pulpit, Fuller was a frequent preacher at associational meetings, ministers' meetings, ordinations, and funerals. During this time, he also maintained an active itinerant ministry, preaching in the villages around Kettering. Additionally, Fuller's work with the Baptist Missionary Society took him as far as Scotland, where he recorded preaching to crowds of four and five thousand people as he sought to raise money for the mission in India.[5] Though Fuller is primarily known for the work he produced in the study rather than the pulpit, he maintained a vibrant preaching ministry until the end of his life.

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[2] Michael Haykin, ed., *'At the Pure Fountain of Thy Word': Andrew Fuller as an Apologist*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004).

[3] Fuller's reluctance for controversy and preference for preaching may be seen in a letter to William Ward, dated Sep. 12, 1805. He reflected, "I have many irons, as we say, in the fire. Morris has nearly finished one of two Volumes of Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis. This will please you better I suppose than controversy; and I assure it does me. I have always engaged in such writings with reluctance." Andrew Fuller to William Ward, September 12, 1805, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller*, copied from Various Sources by Miss Joyce A. Booth, gathered by the Rev. Ernest A. Payne, scanned by Nigel Wheeler (Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford).

[4] Early in 1810, Fuller observed, "I preached a sermon to the youth last Lord's Day from first Thes. 2.19. I think we must've had nearly 1000. They came from all quarters." Fuller to William Carey, January 10, 1810, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[5] John Ryland Jr., *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope, Illustrated; in the Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller, Late Pastor of the Baptist Church at Kettering, and Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society, from its Commencement, in 1792*, 2nd ed. (London: Button & Son, 1818), 189.

Thesis

By his own admission, one of the most formative influences on Fuller's practice of preaching was Jean Claude's (1619–1687) *An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, which was first published in English by Robert Robinson (1735–1790) in 1778–1779. Fuller read Claude's *Essay* early in his ministry and eagerly commended it to his fellow ministers: "Those however who wish to pursue this inquiry, and to become acquainted with the different methods of constructing a discourse, will meet with ample information in 'Claude's Essay on the composition of a Sermon,' as well as from other publications of subordinate merit."[6] Additionally, one of Fuller's early biographers, J. W. Morris (1763–1836), credited Claude's *Essay* for supplying Fuller with "any just ideas which he entertained upon the subject."[7] Therefore, to understand Fuller as a preacher, one must also understand the impact of Claude's *Essay* in shaping his homiletical method.

This dissertation argues that Claude's influential *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon* supplied Fuller with a coherent homiletical method that he modified to fit his own theological convictions and ministerial context. To defend this thesis, the dissertation begins by introducing Claude's *Essay* and its impact on English Protestant homiletics. After laying this historical foundation, the dissertation establishes the connection between Fuller and Claude by reading Claude's *Essay* alongside Fuller's "Thoughts on Preaching, in Letters to a Young Minister" to compare and contrast their

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[6] Andrew Fuller, "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon: or, Plain and Familiar Thoughts, Addressed to a Young Minister from his Pastor," in *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons, Chiefly Selected from the Manuscripts of Two Eminent Divines of the Last Century, For the Use of Lay Preachers and Young Ministers* (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1838), 1:25.

[7] Morris wrote, "One of the first books that Mr. Fuller read, after entering on the ministry, and which he frequently recommended to others, was Claude's Essay on the composition of a Sermon; and to that work he acknowledged himself indebted, for any just ideas which he entertained upon the subject." J. W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, Late Pastor of the Baptist Church at Kettering, and Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society* (London: T. Hamilton, 1816), 69.

instructions.[8] With Fuller's homiletical context and sermonic method firmly in hand, the dissertation then turns to Fuller's preaching material to show how he moved from theory to practice and to demonstrate the extent to which he followed Claude's instructions in his own preaching.

The primary questions that the dissertation seeks to answer are: First, what is Fuller's method of sermon composition and biblical exposition? What are the similarities and differences between each method? Next, how did Fuller apply his methodology in his preaching? Third, to what extent does Fuller follow Claude's *Essay* in his preaching and to what extent does he supplement Claude's instructions with his own unique emphases? Finally, what role did Fuller's theological convictions and ministerial context play in his modifications of Claude's *Essay*?

Methodology

The present dissertation makes contributions to the fields of homiletics and history. As a Particular Baptist pastor and dissenter, Fuller traced his theological heritage to the Puritans who broke from the Church of England in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Additionally, Fuller was indebted to the Evangelical Revivals of the early and mid-eighteenth century. He later played a key role in the spread of evangelical theology among his fellow Particular Baptists. To establish the connection between Fuller's philosophy of preaching and each of these traditions, the dissertation consults his personal library as well as other relevant material in his writings.[9]

Although Fuller never produced a comprehensive homiletical manual, his "Thoughts on Preaching" provide a sufficient overview of his approach to the preparation

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[8] Jean Claude, *An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, 2 vols., trans. Robert Robinson (Cambridge: Francis Hodson, 1778–1779). Hereafter referred to as *Essay*. Fuller, "Thoughts on Preaching, in Letters to a Young Minister. Letters I–IV," in *Works*, 1:712–727.

[9] Andrew Fuller, "Appendices: A. Books in Fuller's Library, 1798," in *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 1, *The Diary of Andrew Fuller, 1780–1801*, eds. Michael D. McMullen and Timothy D. Whelan (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 215–237.

and delivery of sermons. The letters contain Fuller's advice on "the matter and the manner of preaching," which includes his instructions on biblical exposition, the content of sermons, the composition of sermons, and a few brief remarks on the abuse of allegory in preaching.[10] In these letters, Fuller exhibited a clear reliance on Claude's *Essay* while still supplying his own unique emphases.

Fuller's ministry in the pulpit consisted of what he termed the two general branches of preaching: sermons and expositions.[11] According to Fuller, sermons were either doctrinal or practical in nature. As the names suggest, doctrinal sermons expounded a particular doctrine in an effort to explain, defend, and apply it, while practical sermons offered clear and simple instructions regarding some aspect of the Christian life. Although Fuller's sermons were often built upon a single verse, his expositions covered a considerably larger amount of material to provide his congregation with a more comprehensive view of the Scriptures.[12]

The dissertation includes material from each of these three categories—doctrinal, practical, and expositional—to provide readers with a balanced view of Fuller's preaching. Fuller's three sermons on justification have been chosen to serve as an example of his doctrinal preaching.[13] For his practical preaching, the dissertation surveys dozens of sermons Fuller preached in various contexts including ordinations, funerals,

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[10] In full, "You request me to give you my thoughts on this part of your work somewhat more particularly. I will endeavour to do so, by considering what must be the matter and the manner of preaching, if we wish to do good to the souls of men." Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:714.

[11] He summarized, "The work of a Christian minister, as it respects the pulpit, may be distinguished into two general branches; namely, expounding the Scriptures, and discoursing on Divine subjects." Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:712.

[12] Of the 92 sermons listed in volume 1 of Fuller's *Works*, more than two thirds focus on a single verse. When Fuller preached expositionally, he often covered paragraphs or entire chapters in order to give his people a "more connected view of the scriptures than could be obtained merely by sermons on particular passages." Andrew Fuller, "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis, Interspersed with Practical Reflections," in *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 3, *Expositions, Miscellaneous*, ed. Joseph Belcher (1845; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1988), 1.

[13] Fuller, "Sermons XVII–XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:276–296.

associational meetings, and other occasions. Finally, Fuller's *Expository Discourses on Genesis* have been selected as a sample of his expositional preaching.[14] In summary, the dissertation will advance the current scholarship on Fuller's preaching by analyzing his homiletical style and the primary influences that shaped his ministry in the pulpit.

Significance

Although several studies have addressed Fuller's preaching to varying degrees, none have devoted exclusive attention to it. Additionally, contemporary accounts present conflicting views of his reception as a preacher, particularly as it relates to his style and presence in the pulpit. The present chapter reexamines Fuller's reception as a preacher, relative to his Particular Baptist context. The study also demonstrates Fuller's indebtedness to the Puritan and early evangelical traditions when constructing his own philosophy of preaching. Additionally, Fuller's own homiletical instructions provide modern observers with an excellent resource for understanding both his dependence on Claude and his own insights for preparing and delivering sermons. By examining Fuller's doctrinal, practical, and expositional preaching to see how his theology and methodology converge in his published sermon material, this dissertation also lays a foundation for future work.

Fuller's Reception as a Preacher

Fuller's early biographers discussed his preaching with measured but mixed conclusions. His close friend, John Ryland Jr. (1753–1825), offered few remarks on Fuller's preaching since the general style and tenor of his preaching, according to Ryland, was commonly known.[15] Morris commended his skill as an expositor but spoke more

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[14] Fuller's *Works* contain two published series of expositions: Genesis and Revelation. For the present study, see Fuller, "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis," in *Works*, 3:1–200.

[15] Ryland, *The Work of Faith,* 382.

critically of his style and presence in the pulpit.[16] Similarly, Fuller's son, Andrew Gunton Fuller (1799–1884), recognized that his primary gift resided not in his preaching, but in his skills as a theologian and apologist. However, Gunton Fuller still described his father's preaching as exceedingly interesting and instructive.[17] The ensuing discussion considers the reflections of these biographers alongside other contemporary accounts in hopes of offering a more complete assessment of Fuller's preaching.

His Early Preaching Ministry

During his first pastorate in Soham, Fuller moved away from the High Calvinistic theology of his youth toward an Evangelical Calvinism that later came to define his ministry.[18] High Calvinism, with its heavy emphasis on divine sovereignty, allowed little room for preachers to speak to the unconverted in their midst. These efforts were considered futile until there was evidence of the Spirit's work in a person's life. It was not until 1779 that Fuller, after much inner turmoil, began issuing calls specifically to the unconverted in his midst.[19] Unsurprisingly he was met with staunch resistance by some of his congregants.[20]

However, Fuller continued to preach with evangelical emphases and, as a result, people were converted. In time, he grew into a respected preacher while pastoring his small congregation in Soham. The evidence for this claim is twofold. First, he was invited to pastor the Baptist church in Kettering—a larger and more influential congregation—in part due to his preaching ministry. Having been without a pastor since

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[16] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 66–74.

[17] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:112.

[18] For a detailed account of Fuller's Soham pastorate and its attending challenges, see Peter J. Morden, ""Be reconciled to trying disciplines": Andrew Fuller's pastorate at Soham, 1775–1782," *Journal of Andrew Fuller Studies*, no. 1 (2020): 31–46.

[19] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:18.

[20] Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2015), 42.

the fall of 1779, Fuller preached at the church in Kettering on several occasions. As a result, "His character and talents were held by them in high estimation."[21] Though Fuller's Evangelical Calvinism proved a hindrance to his ministry in Soham, the resistance he experienced there would not follow him to Kettering.[22] After prolonged attempts to persuade him to leave Soham for Kettering, Fuller finally relented and agreed to accept the church's pastorate in the summer of 1782.

Second, Fuller's congregation in Soham expressed a deep appreciation for his preaching upon his departure to Kettering. During his ministry among them, Fuller had welcomed into the church thirty new members, around twenty of whom were converted under his preaching.[23] Though his pastorate in Soham was accompanied by many challenges, Fuller's heart was bound to his congregation and theirs to him. Their appreciation for his ministry—and his preaching in particular—is evidence of Fuller's influence on this small congregation. *The Baptist Magazine* captured their sentiments upon Fuller's removal to Kettering:

> We are all well satisfied with his preaching, and have no itching ears to hear any other preacher when we can hear him. This is fairly seen from some of our brethren, who live six or seven miles off, and have a convenience of hearing a great deal nearer. Some live about two miles off, where the gospel is preached. Yet these, with many others, scarcely ever miss coming all weathers. We think this shows love to him, and to what is delivered by him.[24]

Fuller matured in significant ways as a preacher during his seven years as the pastor of Soham Baptist Church. Their positive remarks concerning his preaching revealed a

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[21] "A Memoir of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society, Lately Deceased," *Baptist Magazine* 7 (1815): 268.

[22] Brewster suggests that Soham's refusal to expand their church to accommodate their growing attendance solidified Fuller's decision to move to Kettering. He observes, "If the church at Soham had been put off by Fuller's embrace of Evangelical Calvinism, his new congregation found Fuller all the more appealing because of it." Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, Studies in Baptist Life and Thought (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 28–29.

[23] "A Memoir of the Rev. Andrew Fuller," 271. The membership in Soham never exceeded forty-five members. See Morden, "Be reconciled to trying disciplines," 35.

[24] "A Memoir of the Rev. Andrew Fuller," 271.

church that was deeply appreciative of his work. Similarly, the eagerness of the congregation in Kettering to secure Fuller's services demonstrated their own respect for his ministry in the pulpit.

Though Fuller's ministry in Soham was important for his development, little more is known about his preaching during these years. Until recently, Fuller's sermon notes from this time period—written in his trademark shorthand—were illegible. With the help of a newly discovered key, fresh light has been shed on Fuller's preaching during his Soham years.[25] The first two of Fuller's sermons to be published from this period were his farewell sermons, delivered on the same Lord's Day in October 1782.[26] For his morning sermon, Fuller preached on Romans 8:28, while in his evening sermon, he expounded Philippians 1:6. These sermons confirm Morris's remarks concerning the influence of Claude's *Essay* in the early years of Fuller's preaching ministry.

Each sermon loosely followed Claude's advice on preaching by way of explication.[27] For his sermon on Romans 8:28, Fuller appeared to use the verse as his central proposition. He then proceeded to explain its meaning, show its relevance for the Christian life, and illustrate its truth with examples from both Scripture and experience, before concluding with several points of application.[28] Fuller took a slightly different approach in his sermon on Philippians 1:6. There, he began with a question: "Is the work begun?" and attempted to answer it by distinguishing God's work from man's work and

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[25] See "Student cracks theologian's baffling religious code," *BBC News*, last modified January 28, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-47028244.

[26] Stephen R. Holmes and Jonathan Woods, "Andrew Fuller's Soham Farewell Sermons: Context and Text," *Baptist Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2020): 2–16.

[27] See Claude, "Chap. V. Of Texts to be discussed by way of Explication," in *Essay*, 1:89–437.

[28] See Claude's advice to "1. Give the sense clearly and neatly. . . . 2. Shew how important in religion it is to be acquainted with the truth in hand. . . . 3. Illustrate either by reasons, or examples, or comparisons of the subjects with each other." Claude, *Essay*, 1:378–393.

by assuring his listeners that God was able to complete what he started.[29] Fuller again concluded by applying the truths he uncovered in the text for his listeners.

Nearly all the contemporary accounts of Fuller's preaching stem from his time in Kettering. Seven years into his ministry in Kettering, Fuller began his expositions through various books of the Bible.[30] In the preface to his *Discourses on Genesis*, Fuller described his pattern of preaching: "During the last fifteen years it has, as you know, been my practice to expound among you, on a Lord's day morning, some part of the Holy Scriptures, commonly a chapter."[31] As Fuller's influence grew over the course of his ministry, he preached many occasional sermons in which he explored both doctrinal and practical subjects. When compiling the available contemporary accounts of Fuller's preaching throughout his ministry, four general themes emerge: his plain style, solemn demeanor, pathetic disposition, and extemporaneous delivery.

His Plain Style

The first prominent feature of Fuller's preaching was its plain style. Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834) drew attention to the plain nature of Fuller's sermons when he described Fuller as a preacher who "greatly excelled in the simplicity of his compositions and the correctness of his illustrations."[32] Morris attributed this simplicity to the early influence of Claude's *Essay* on Fuller's preaching.[33] While Claude's *Essay* will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters, it is important to note here that Fuller followed Claude's advice to "clearly and purely" explain the text to his people so that it

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[29] Claude wrote, "There are sometimes texts of explication, in which we are obliged to explain some one great and important article consisting of many branches. . . . In this case you may either reduce the matter to a certain number of propositions, and discuss them one after another; or you may reduce them to a certain number of questions, and discuss them in like manner." Claude, *Essay*, 1:193–195.

[30] Ryland, *The Work of Faith,* 382.

[31] Fuller, "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis," in *Works*, 3:1.

[32] Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Burditt, 1830), 4:532–533.

[33] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 69.

may be "understood without difficulty."[34] In Fuller's own words, "A few well-chosen thoughts, matured, proved, and improved, are abundantly more acceptable than when the whole is chopped, as it were, into mince-meat."[35] For Fuller, sermons that elicited confusion—though they may contain much biblical truth—were far less beneficial than those that expounded on fewer themes with greater clarity.

According to F. A. Cox (1783–1853), another contemporary of Fuller, his preaching maintained a "plain, practical, and judicious" flavor.[36] Gunton Fuller, offered similar remarks: "His phraseology, though occasionally quaint, was, for the most part, clear, dignified, and emphatic."[37] The general impression one receives is that the clarity of Fuller's language and the simplicity of his structure allowed listeners to easily understand the sense of the text and the thrust of his sermon. Interestingly, Morris summarized the clear nature of Fuller's preaching alongside his ability to speak to the realities of the human experience. He wrote, "The simplicity of his ideas, their correspondence with truth and nature, and the luminous order in which they were arranged, produced the effect of enchantment; every one beheld the beauties contained in Scripture, and were surprised that he did not discover them before."[38] As a preacher, Fuller understood his responsibility to expose, not conceal, the truth of the text for his people. One way he accomplished this was by demonstrating that the world of the biblical authors was the same world inhabited by his audience.

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[34] Claude, *Essay*, 1:11.

[35] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

[36] Cox wrote, "Fuller was an extraordinary preacher; plain, practical, judicious, full of rich scriptural illustrations; in manner slow and solemn." F. A. Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society: From 1792 to 1842* (London: T. Ward, 1842), 1:267.

[37] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:112.

[38] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 70.

Fuller's ability to plainly connect the Bible to "truth and nature" may be seen in his sermon, "The Gospel the means of Universal Peace."[39] Based on the text of Malachi 4:5–6, Fuller argued that the gospel is the only true remedy for the suffering and divisions among mankind. To prove his point, he exposed the inability of every human endeavor to accomplish this purpose—be it education, common interests, government, or relationships. One need only look back through the contours of human history to see that although each of these human means have done much good, they have not cured every evil. Nor can they. So Fuller concluded, man may "attribute his misery to circumstances, and flatter himself that if they were different, all would be well; the cause, however, is in himself, and is, therefore, sure to accompany him in every situation and condition."[40] By locating the cause of human misery within the hearts of men, Fuller prepared his people to receive the solution that God alone has provided in the gospel. To use Morris's language, the simple idea that the gospel is the only sufficient remedy to mankind's problem corresponds to what is demonstrably true in the natural world.

Additional evidence of Fuller's plain style appeared in the *Evangelical Magazine* in 1796. The magazine commended Fuller for his simplicity in its review of his sermon, "The Importance of a Deep and Intimate Knowledge of Divine Truth."[41] The review's conclusion is worth quoting at length: "Such are the faint outlines of a good sermon, evidently dressed in plain garment, buttoned like that of our puritanic forefathers, even down to the skirt; but of a manly form; a piercing aspect; a commanding voice; sweetened by the benevolence of its object."[42] The imagery used in this review is particularly striking for several reasons. The "plain garment" seems to refer to Fuller's

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[39] Fuller, "Gospel the means of Universal Peace," in *Works*, 1: 253–265.

[40] Fuller, "Gospel the means of Universal Peace," in *Works*, 1:259.

[41] "Review of Religious Publications: *The Importance of a Deep and Intimate Knowledge of Divine Truth*," *Evangelical Magazine* 4 (1796): 525–526.

[42] "Review of Religious Publications," 526.

use of language in his sermon. His plain speech covered his message like clothing covers the body. And yet, his sermon did not lack order. It was "buttoned like that of our puritanic forefathers." Fuller familiarized himself with the Puritans early in his ministry as he read the likes of John Owen (1616–1683) and John Bunyan (1628–1688), among others. The reviewer noticed that the buttons of his sermon—namely his outline— resembled the Puritan method. Like the Puritans before him, Fuller inquired into the meaning of his subject, established its importance, and applied it appropriately for his people in successive points. He employed this "puritanic" method "even down to the skirt," which referred to the loose end, or edge, of the garment.[43] According to this review, no portion of Fuller's sermon was left unattended or disjointed. Each heading had its place, and each word fulfilled its purpose.

Fuller's clear communication and simple reasoning in the pulpit contributed to his popularity—specifically among his younger listeners. Of the nearly one thousand people who gathered weekly in Kettering to hear Fuller preach, many were younger men, women, and children.[44] Moreover, aside from the regular corporate gatherings of the church, Fuller devoted time to the youth in his congregation. Beginning in the early 1790s, he preached a New Year's sermon addressed to the younger members. Ryland recalled how many of these young people attributed their "first serious impressions" of religion to these occasions.[45] In their review of one of Fuller's New Year's sermons, the *Missionary Magazine* commended his ability to speak plainly to his younger members: "It is pleasing to see an author, who has so ably and successfully combated the principles of Socinians and Deists, condescending to address youth with all the affection and

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[43] Samuel Johnson, "Skirt," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers*, 4th ed. (London: W. Strahan, 1773), 2:712.

[44] Morden, *The Life and Thought*, 150.

[45] Ryland, *The Work of Faith*, 383.

simplicity of the humblest Christian."[46] Indeed, Fuller's obscure beginnings, his lack of a prominent education, and his own personal hardships likely contributed to his ability to speak to the common listener with acute effectiveness.[47]

His Solemn Demeanor

Fuller's plain language in the pulpit was complemented by his solemn demeanor. "To declare the whole counsel of God," wrote Fuller, "in such a way as to save yourself and them that hear you—or, if they are not saved, to be pure from their blood—is no small matter."[48] For Fuller, the preacher must personally feel the weight of the task he has been given every time he steps into the pulpit. Cox described the "slow and solemn" manner with which Fuller would proceed through his text.[49] Undoubtedly, Fuller's theological commitments informed his preaching, not only in his content, but in his delivery as well. Ryland summarized the motivation behind Fuller's preaching in this way: "It's great and single object evidently was the glory of God in the advancement of his kingdom in the world, which included, and excited in him, the most earnest desires and endeavours for the good of souls."[50] For Fuller, nothing less than the glory of God and the salvation of the lost was at stake every time he entered the pulpit.

Perhaps most critical view of Fuller's preaching came from Morris, his one-time friend.[51] Though largely positive in his assessment, Morris described Fuller's

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[46] "Review of Religious Publications: *A New-Year's Gift for Youth*," *Missionary Magazine* 5 (1800): 33.

[47] For more on Fuller's background, see Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life" in *Works*, 1:1–62.

[48] Fuller, "Letter I: Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:712.

[49] Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society,* 1:267.

[50] Ryland, *The Work of Faith*, 382.

[51] Morris assisted Fuller in publishing his volume of expositions on Genesis. However, their relationship soured near the end of Fuller's life as Morris went bankrupt—an error that Fuller described as "the offspring of pride, folly, and extravagance." Later, Fuller recounted, "I have had an interview with poor Morris, and offered him free & full forgiveness if he would only acknowledge his sin; but I see no signs of contrition; all is self-justification." The rift between Morris and Fuller may partially explain the

presence in the pulpit as "imposing, grave, and manly; tending to inspire awe, rather than conciliate esteem."[52] Fuller's strong masculine demeanor undoubtedly contributed to his solemn and imposing presence in the pulpit.[53] Again Morris observed, "He had none of that eloquence which consists in a felicitous selection of terms, or in the harmonious construction of periods: he had a boldness in his manner, a masculine delivery, and great force of expression."[54] From Morris's perspective, Fuller's imposing presence combined with the grandeur of the God he preached to leave a serious impression on his listeners.

What he may have lacked in rhetorical eloquence, Fuller supplied through an "acute and vigorous understanding" of the biblical text, "a rich and fertile imagination," an "even flow of feeling," and an "awful sense of eternal realities."[55] Perhaps the most poignant example of the above description may be seen in one of Fuller's most famous sermons, "The Pernicious Influence of Delay in Religious Concerns," which he preached at a ministers' meeting at Clipstone on April 27, 1791.[56] Prior to this meeting, Baptist leaders had expressed a growing concern for revival, both at home and abroad, and began praying toward that end seven years earlier.[57] However, to this point, no specific action had yet been taken. In his sermon, Fuller called on his fellow ministers to put off the

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former's more critical comments of Fuller's preaching. Fuller to William Ward, June 10, 1810," in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller*, Angus Library; Fuller to William Ward, February 4, 1812, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[52] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 67.

[53] Morden, *The Life and Thought*, 14–15.

[54] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 67.

[55] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 68.

[56] John Sutcliff and Andrew Fuller, *The Clipston Sermons: A Key Moment in the History of Christian Missions*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and G. Stephen Weaver Jr. (Louisville: Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, 2016). See also Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:145–151.

[57] Sutcliff and Fuller, *The Clipston Sermons*, 17.

"procrastinating spirit that runs through a great part of our life" and commit themselves to labor for the spread of the gospel around the world.[58] He urged them,

> The apostles executed their commission with assiduity and fidelity; but, since their days, we seem to set down half contented that the greater part of the world should still remain in ignorance and idolatry . . . We have opportunities in abundance: the improvement of navigation, and the maritime and commercial turn of this country, furnish us with these; and it deserves to be considered whether this is not a circumstance that renders it a duty peculiarly binding on us.[59]

In the moments following the sermon, Morris recalled, "Every heart was penetrated with the subject; and the ministers retired, scarcely able to speak to one another. A scene of such deep solemnity has seldom been witnessed."[60] Cox recorded a similarly "profound impression" that Fuller's sermon, along with his friend, John Sutcliff's (1752–1814), left on those present at Clipstone that evening.[61] Indeed, the solemn urgency Fuller demonstrated in this particular sermon was a catalyst for the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society the following year.[62]

His Pathetic Disposition

Fuller's arduous spiritual journey prior to his conversion consisted of several years of conviction mixed with failed resolutions to improve before reverting to his sinful lifestyle once again. Reflecting on one such experience, Fuller lamented, "It was an enlightened conscience only that was on the side of God: my heart was still averse to every thing that was spiritual or holy. For several weeks I went on in this way; vowing and breaking my vows, reflecting on myself for my evil conduct, and yet continually

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[58] Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:145.

[59] Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:147.

[60] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 98.

[61] Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:16.

[62] For a full recounting of the evening's events, see Brewster, *Andrew Fuller*, 132–133.

repeating it."[63] Though Fuller feared this cycle would never end, he finally trusted Christ in November 1769. As is evident from his own account, what prompted Fuller to believe in Christ was not a stricter resolve to improve his spiritual state, but a complete change in his affections for God. He confessed, "Yet it was not altogether from a dread of wrath that I fled to this refuge; for I well remember that I felt something attracting in the Saviour."[64] Moreover, Fuller recalled, "My heart felt one with Christ, and dead to every other object around me. I had thought I had found the joys of salvation heretofore; but now I knew I had found them, and was conscious that I had passed from death unto life."[65]

Through his own conversion, Fuller learned firsthand the difference between Christianity as an intellectual exercise and Christianity as an affectionate experience. One should not be surprised to find that Fuller carried this distinction with him into the pulpit as he aimed not merely to inform people's minds but to inflame their hearts as well. Thus, the third general impression Fuller's preaching left on his contemporaries was his pathetic disposition. In Fuller's day, the term "pathetic" was used in relation to the affections.[66] Thus, a pathetic preacher was one who pleaded with and persuaded his listeners to respond to his message in heartfelt obedience.[67]

Speaking of Fuller alongside his friend Samuel Pearce (1766–1799), Ryland observed, "He had not the sprightly vivacity of Mr. Pearce; but a solemn tenderness and

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[63] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:4.

[64] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:6.

[65] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:6.

[66] Johnson, "Pathetick," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 2:319.

[67] The Scottish minister, John Erskine, offered these instructions: "A minister's style must be pathetic. The materials of this style are, bold and strong figures; nervous and tender reasoning; persuasion and entreaties, founded on the duty and interest of mankind; pressed with the utmost affection; as a man intreats his friend—as a father instructs his children." John Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel, With respect to their doctrine, method, style & delivery in preaching; with hints on other branches of the ministerial office* (London: J. Buckland, 1783).

pathos often attended his discourses: though it appeared to me, that there was more of the pathetic in earlier life, (when he had a large measure of affliction, as well as afterwards,) than in the latter part of his ministry."[68] The effects of numerous sufferings early in Fuller's ministry—including great financial hardship and the loss of several children at an early age—left an indelible mark on his preaching. It is interesting to observe with Ryland that Fuller continued to demonstrate a tender heart in the pulpit even as the sting of these sorrows passed. Though his pathetic disposition evolved over time, it remained an integral part of his preaching. In a letter to Carey dated May 5, 1808, Fuller divulged, "I have preached Christ with much fervour and concern for the salvation of souls, & have frequently been importunate for it in prayer: but I see little fruit at present."[69]

Morris concurred with this assessment, noting that his "general aspect was louring and cloudy, giving indications of a storm, rather than affording hopes of serenity."[70] Yet, he continued, "There was nothing boisterous, loud, or declamatory; no intemperate warmth, or allies of the passions; all was calm, pathetic, and argumentative, overcast with a kind of negligent grandeur. He was deeply impressed with his subject, anxious to produce a similar impression on his hearers."[71] According to Morris, Fuller's pathetic disposition was calm and measured. It enlivened his carefully reasoned arguments and further impressed his words upon his hearers.[72]

Additional evidence for Fuller's pathetic disposition is seen in his consistent resolve to delineate truth from error in his theology and in his preaching. Fuller sought to encourage a sincere devotion to Christ while he warned against the dangers of hypocrisy.

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[68] Ryland, *The Work of Faith*, 144.

[69] Fuller to William Carey, May 5, 1808, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[70] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 67–68.

[71] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 68.

[72] Contrary to contemporary use, "argumentative" did not necessarily carry a combative or angry connotation. Rather, it described the act of reasoning or making an argument. See Johnson, "Argumentation" and "Argumentative," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1:172.

For the preacher in particular, nothing could sink his ministry quicker than a theologically informed mind alongside a spiritually dead heart. Robert Hall Jr. (1764–1831) captured this distinguishing feature of Fuller's life: "Mr. Fuller's ministry was peculiarly adapted to detect hypocrites, to expose fallacious pretensions to religion, and to separate the precious from the vile."[73] One way he accomplished this end in his preaching was to exhort his listeners toward a genuine interest in Christ even as he cautioned them away from the perils of spiritual duplicity.

In one such sermon preached before his fellow ministers, Fuller urged them, "Beware that you do not preach an unfelt gospel."[74] He continued, "If you do, it will be seen, and you will be despised. It will be seen that, though you affect to be in earnest, you do not feel; and that you scarcely believe your own doctrine. We may get into a habit of talking for the truth, and pleading for holiness, and yet be dead ourselves; and if so, we shall be sure to be despised."[75] Having once possessed "an enlightened conscience" alongside a heart that was "averse to everything spiritual or holy," Fuller was deeply concerned that other ministers not succumb to the same error.[76] In this, Fuller's pathetic disposition revealed his unrelenting commitment to ensure that his listeners came to cherish the Savior for themselves.

His Extemporaneous Delivery

A fourth theme of Fuller's pulpit ministry was his habit of preaching without a manuscript. His extemporaneous delivery was as much a product of a general shift in preaching in the eighteenth century as it was a necessity due to his demanding schedule.[77]

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[73] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:108.

[74] Fuller, "Ministers Fellow Labourers with God," in *Works*, 1:489.

[75] Fuller, "Ministers Fellow Labourers with God," in *Works*, 1:489–490.

[76] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:4.

[77] Grant's reference to Downey's, *The Eighteenth Century Pulpit*, is instructive here. In his discussion on the Evangelical Revival, Downey concludes, "The carefully prepared manuscript and

Carrying little with him into the pulpit, Fuller relied only on a few shorthand notes to guide him through his sermons. For Fuller, this method served two simple purposes. It afforded him a clear understanding of each move in his sermon before he entered the pulpit, and it provided him with a resource to use in future preaching engagements.[78]

As Morris observed, "The composition of a sermon seldom cost Mr. Fuller much trouble; it was generally the easiest part of his labours. An hour or two at the close of the week would commonly be sufficient."[79] Gunton Fuller also referred to the lack of any elaborate preparations by his father before stepping into the pulpit.[80] Whether Fuller's extemporaneous delivery may be attributed to his own preferences or a lack of adequate preparation, he nevertheless employed this method judiciously. It afforded him more freedom in the pulpit to speak directly to his listeners. Moreover, he encouraged others to do the same.

An interesting anecdote concerning Fuller's commitment to extemporaneous preaching comes from his final trip to Scotland in 1813. On this trip, Fuller met a young Scottish minister named Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847). Recognizing Chalmers's giftedness as a preacher, Fuller quipped, "If that man would but throw away his papers in the pulpit, he might be King of Scotland."[81] After hearing Fuller preach and conversing with him on the topic, Chalmers committed to preach extemporaneously as Fuller had done.[82] Although Chalmers ultimately did not maintain the habit, he did "carry into the

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statuesque delivery gave way to a mode of address more extemporaneous and gesticulary." James Downey, *The Eighteenth Century Pulpit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 20, quoted in Keith S. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 87.

[78] Fuller, "Letter I: Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:714.

[79] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 70.

[80] Morden quotes Gunton Fuller's work, *Men Worth Remembering*, "it was not often that Mr. Fuller's preparations for the pulpit were elaborate." Morden, *The Life and Thought*, 152.

[81] William Hanna, *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854), 1:255.

[82] Hanna, *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers*, 1:253.

study that insatiable desire to effect a secure and effective lodgement of truth into the minds of others."[83] A similar desire motivated Fuller to preach with simple notes so as to directly impress the truth of the Scriptures onto the minds of his listeners.

In summary, these contemporary accounts of Fuller's preaching produce a generally positive impression. His plain style afforded him the opportunity to communicate divine truths in an accessible manner to people of all ages. His solemn demeanor impressed the seriousness of his subject onto his listeners as they contemplated eternal realities with him. His pathetic disposition engaged the mind, the heart, and the will of his listeners as he brought the gospel to bear on each reality of the human experience. Finally, his extemporaneous delivery allowed him to speak freely without a manuscript and directly to his audience. While some of Fuller's biographers were quicker to criticize more peculiar aspects of his sermon delivery, his listeners consistently held his preaching in high esteem.

Summary of the Research

In his bibliographic essay, Nathan Finn outlines the scholarly literature on Fuller from the mid-twentieth century forward.[84] Although scholars have produced a number of significant works on Fuller's life and ministry—including his theological contributions, his apologetic works, and his involvement with the burgeoning Baptist missionary movement—Fuller's preaching has received considerably less attention. However, with the newest publication of Fuller's works, the recent discovery of several hundred of his sermons, and the ability to now decipher his elusive shorthand, Fuller's

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[83] Hanna, *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers*, 1:256.

[84] Nathan Finn, "The Renaissance in Andrew Fuller Studies: A Bibliographic Essay," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 17, no. 2 (2013): 44–61.

preaching is sure to be the subject of more scholarly work in the future.[85] What follows is a review of the literature on Fuller's preaching to date with an assessment of the need for the present study.

T. Harwood Pattison (1903), Edwin Charles Dargan (1954), and David Larsen (1998) all include Fuller in their works on the history of Christian preaching.[86] After briefly discussing Fuller's contribution as a theologian, Pattison draws attention to his solemn demeanor and extemporaneous delivery in the pulpit.[87] Dargan describes Fuller as "an expository preacher as to method, and a solid preacher as to thought."[88] In his short assessment of Fuller's expositions of Genesis, Revelation, and the Sermon on the Mount, Dargan observes their plain, logical nature, scarce in detailed illustrations or "flights of eloquence."[89] Larsen's entry is brief, but he does comment on Fuller's habit of preaching expositionally each Lord's Day morning and delivering topical or textual sermons on Sunday evenings.[90] Each of these three works, written at the beginning, middle, and end of the twentieth century respectively, hold Fuller's preaching in high esteem and commend his skill as an expositor.

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[85] Recent re-publications of Fuller's sermons include Andrew Fuller, *Preaching*, Fuller Series (Peterborough, Ontario: H & E, 2018) and David E. Prince, *Preaching the Truth as It Is in Jesus: A Reader on Andrew Fuller* (Peterborough, Ontario: H & E, 2022).

[86] Old does not include Fuller in his seminal seven-volume work. See Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vols. 1–7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). For Pattison, Dargan, and Larsen's entries, see T. Harwood Pattison, "III. Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," in *The History of Christian Preaching* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1903), 286–87; Edwin Charles Dargan, "Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," in *A History of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 332–333; David L. Larsen, *The Company of Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 1:409–411.

[87] Pattison, *History of Christian Preaching*, 287.

[88] Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, 333.

[89] Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, 333.

[90] Larsen, *The Company of Preachers*, 1:410.

Harlice E. Keown's ThM Thesis, "The Preaching of Andrew Fuller" (1957), follows Pattison and Dargan's assessment.[91] Fuller was an important preacher who, according to Keown, ranks among the great Baptist preachers. However, Keown largely fails to substantiate this claim as his work suffers from a lack of a clear thesis and limited interaction with the primary source material.[92] He does place Fuller's sermons into categories such as polemical, consolatory, doctrinal, evangelical, and explanatory, but each of these choices requires more explanation than Keown provides.[93] Although the subject of this thesis pertains to the present study, Keown's work is limited in its contribution to the scholarship on Fuller's preaching.

The early 1980s marked the beginning of the resurgence in Fuller studies. As it relates to his preaching, Thomas R. McKibbens Jr. offers an assessment of Fuller in his *The Forgotten Heritage: A Lineage of Great Baptist Preaching* (1986).[94] McKibbens affirms several earlier accounts of Fuller's preaching that recognized him to be a popular preacher, even if he did not possess the same eloquence as some of his contemporaries.[95] Most significantly, McKibbens connects Fuller's theological convictions to his application of those convictions in his preaching.[96] Fuller's commitments to the authority

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[91] Harlice E. Keown, "The Preaching of Andrew Fuller" (ThM thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957).

[92] "The premise of this thesis is to show that Andrew Fuller was an able preacher whose preaching itself was worthy of notice." Keown, "The Preaching of Andrew Fuller," 1.

[93] After stating that Fuller preferred to preach expositional discourses, Keown then writes, "Mr. Fuller probably preached more subject sermons than any other kind." It's difficult to reach this conclusion since the vast majority of Fuller's sermons and expositions have not been preserved. See Keown, "The Preaching of Andrew Fuller," 51–52.

[94] Thomas R. McKibbens Jr., *The Forgotten Heritage: A Lineage of Great Baptist Preaching* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 48–52.

[95] McKibbens wrote, Fuller "had not the eloquence of Hall, the education of Ryland, or the linguistic skills of Carey, but he had a deep-running pulpit style that maintained steady growth in his Kettering church throughout his ministry." McKibbens, *The Forgotten Heritage*, 48.

[96] McKibbens, *The Forgotten Heritage*, 52.

of Scripture and the centrality of the atonement that permeated his theological writings were also present in his printed sermons and in his advice for young ministers.

James F. Stitzinger (1992) included Fuller in his brief survey of expository preaching that spanned from the biblical period to the modern day.[97] He identifies several notable exceptions to the topical preaching of the Evangelical Awakenings, including Fuller, Robert Hall Jr., John Brown (1784–1858), John Eadie (1810–1876), and Alexander Carson (1776–1844).[98] In his book, *Text-Driven Preaching* (2010), Jim Shaddix cites Stitzinger's earlier work and includes Fuller in his own history of text-driven preaching.[99] It is worth nothing that Fuller, and the preachers listed alongside him, employed both expositional and topical preaching throughout their pulpit ministries.

In the past decade, Fuller has been the subject of two important biographies— Paul Brewster's *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (2010) and Peter Morden's *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* (2015).[100] Although Brewster and Morden primarily focus on Fuller's work as a theologian, each author does include some short reflections on his preaching. Brewster situates Fuller's preaching within the context of his larger ministry as the place where his theology came to life. His discussion centers on Fuller's methods of preparation, his style and reception, and his itinerant ministry in surrounding villages.[101] For his part, Morden describes Fuller's preaching ministry in Soham, Kettering, and on the road in Scotland. Similar to Brewster, Morden's work

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[97] James F. Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," *Master's Seminary Journal* 3, no. 1 (1992): 5–32.

[98] Stitzinger, "History of Expository Preaching," 24.

[99] Shaddix writes, "The following 50 years featured other notable exceptions to topical preaching like the ministries of Andrew Fuller." Jim Shaddix, "A History of Text Driven Preaching," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, eds. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Matthews (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 46.

[100] Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller*; Morden, *The Life and Thought*. See also, Peter J. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003).

[101] Brewster, *Andrew Fuller*, 110–120.

focuses on Fuller's reception and his preaching style. Both Brewster and Morden conclude that Fuller was a popular preacher, even if he was not the most polished orator.

The most comprehensive treatments of Fuller's preaching are those of Keith Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* (2013) and Nigel Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists: An Examination of Andrew Fuller's Ordination Sermons* (2021).[102] Wheeler investigates Fuller's pastoral theology through a selection of his ordination sermons. Particularly useful for the current study is Wheeler's chapter on "The Pastoral Theology of Andrew Fuller," in which he uses Fuller's sermons to draw conclusions concerning his theology of Scripture, preaching, and other pastoral duties.[103] Grant devotes a chapter of his work to Fuller's preaching.[104] He highlights three distinguishing characteristics of Fuller's style—plain, evangelical, and affectionate—and his study represents the most detailed treatment of Fuller's preaching to date.

Finally, Haykin and Croft's work, *On Being a Pastor: A Conversation with Andrew Fuller* (2019), employs Fuller's ordination sermons to encourage contemporary pastors to recover a biblical vision for pastoral ministry.[105] The most recent work on Fuller's preaching comes from David G. Norman Jr., who has written a brief but useful

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[102] Both Grant and Wheeler's works are published versions of their doctoral theses. See Keith Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 36 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013); Keith S. Grant, "'Very Affecting and Evangelical': Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology" (ThM thesis, Regent College, 2007). See also Nigel Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists: An Examination of Andrew Fuller's Ordination Sermons* (Peterborough, Ontario: H & E Academic, 2021); Nigel David Wheeler, "Eminent Spirituality and Eminent Usefulness: Andrew Fuller's (1754–1815) Pastoral Theology in His Ordination Sermons" (PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 2009).

[103] Wheeler, "The Pastoral Theology of Andrew Fuller," in *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists*, 129–166.

[104] Grant, "'Beware that you do not preach an unfelt gospel." Preaching: The *Application* of an Evangelical and Affectionate Pastoral Theology," in *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 77–104; Keith S. Grant, "Plain, Evangelical, and Affectionate: The Preaching of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," *Crux* 48, no. 1 (2012): 12–22.

[105] Michael A. G. Haykin and Brian Croft with Ian H. Clary, *Being a Pastor: A Conversation with Andrew Fuller* (Darlington, Co Durham: EP Books, 2019).

article on Fuller's commitment to Christ-centered preaching in his expositions on Genesis entitled, "Christ as the Criterion for Preaching: Andrew Fuller and the Abrahamic Narrative" (2021).[106]

As this overview suggests, the scholarly work on Fuller's preaching has tended to focus in one of two areas. Either scholars have simply described his preaching within the context of his larger ministry, or they have used his sermon material to draw out a particular strand of his theology. Thus, there remains a need to assess Fuller's preaching from a homiletical perspective by analyzing the structure, style, and content of his sermons and expositions.

Argument

The following chapter outline unfolds the argument of the dissertation. Chapter 1 introduced the thesis, methodology, and state of the current scholarship on Fuller's preaching, while also exploring some distinguishing marks of his pulpit ministry. Chapter 2 introduces Claude and details the significance of his *Essay* within the English Protestant homiletical tradition. Specific attention is also given to its widespread use among eighteenth-century Particular Baptists.

Chapter 3 demonstrates Fuller's reliance on Claude's *Essay* in his own instructions on preaching. This chapter argues that Claude served as a homiletical mentor for Fuller, providing him with a compelling vision for preaching and a clear method of sermon composition. While Fuller relied heavily on Claude's *Essay*, he also supplied his own unique emphases, which included both theological and methodological modifications to Claude's instructions.

Chapter 4 shows how Fuller's theology and methodology converge in his

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[106] David G. Norman, Jr., "Christ as the Criterion for Preaching: Andrew Fuller and the Abrahamic Narrative," in *Understanding Andrew Fuller: Life, Thought, Legacies*, eds. Nathan A. Finn, Jeff Robinson Sr., and Shane Shaddix (H & E Academic, 2021), 2:101–117.

doctrinal preaching.[107] This chapter examines Fuller's sermons on justification and argues that his explanation, defense, and application of the doctrine align with Claude's instructions on preaching by way of explication and proposition.[108] This chapter also highlights Fuller's own contribution to doctrinal preaching as a means of clarifying the truth, refuting error, and drawing application for his audience.

Chapter 5 examines Fuller's approach to practical preaching. The sermon material includes sermons Fuller preached on various practical subjects and occasions such as ordinations, funerals, ministers' meetings, and associational meetings, among others. This chapter argues that Fuller's practical preaching bore similarities to Claude's categories of preaching by way of observation and application. However, Fuller prioritized simplicity over an extended use of points and sub-points, which represents a slight contrast with Claude's model.

Chapter 6 explores Fuller's method and practice of expositional preaching. Fuller's expositions, which he described as "expounding the scriptures," do not have an exact parallel with the categories provided in Claude's *Essay*. Thus, Fuller's expositional preaching represents the widest divergence from the French preacher's method. In his expositions, Fuller remained within a single passage of Scripture and labored to instruct his congregation in its genuine meaning while also connecting it to the foundational truths of the gospel.

Finally, chapter 7 reviews each chapter and offers conclusions regarding Fuller's preaching and his use of Claude's *Essay*. The chapter summarizes the findings of

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[107] Other relevant materials that are useful for understanding Fuller's doctrinal preaching on justification include Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons on Various Important Subjects* (1765; repr., Edinburgh: M. Gray, 1785); John Gill, *The Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, Stated and Maintained. Being the Substance of Several Sermons Preached at the Wednesday's Evening Lecture near Cripplegate*. London: 1730; *A Defence of some important doctrines of the Gospel, in Twenty Six Sermons. Most of Which Were Preached in Lime-Street. By Several Ministers*, 2 vols. (London: A. Ward, 1732).

[108] Fuller's sermons on justification represent his mature understanding of the doctrine. In a letter to William Carey, written five years before Fuller's death, he stated, "Have got pretty forward in a volume of sermons, Three of which will be on justification." Fuller to William Carey, January 10, 1810, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

the present work and concludes that Fuller both adopted and modified Claude's *Essay* to suit his own theological convictions and ministerial context. Finally, this chapter reassesses Fuller's significance as a preacher and reflects on the impact of Fuller's doctrinal, practical, and expositional preaching for historians and homileticians today.

CHAPTER 2

"THE INESTIMABLE JOHN CLAUDE"
AND THE IMPACT OF HIS *ESSAY*
ON ENGLISH PREACHING

In 1820, a London publisher released a work entitled, *Daily Bread; or Meditations, Practical and Experimental, for every Day in the Year*, which contained the sermons of more than a hundred of "the most eminent and popular" ministers of the last half century.[1] Among the ministers included in the volume were prominent Baptist pastors Samuel Pearce, John Ryland Jr., and Andrew Fuller, alongside numerous other key figures.[2] After noting the assortment of styles and methods found within the sermons, the editor commented, "This variety may not only have a pleasing effect on general readers, in preference to their proceeding from a single pen; but may be particularly useful to Ministers and Students, who will find examples of all the methods of treating a text, recommended in the celebrated Treatise of M. Claude."[3] In the forty years since its arrival in the English-speaking world, Claude's "celebrated Treatise," *An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, had become one of the leading manuals on preaching for many evangelical and dissenting ministers throughout England. Claude's instructions were so

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[1] T. Williams, ed., *Daily Bread; or Meditations, Practical and Experimental, for every Day in the Year, by more than one hundred of the most eminent and popular Ministers of the last half Century, and a few other writers*, 2nd ed. (London: W. Simpkin), 1822.

[2] The volume contains twenty-seven sermons by Fuller, the most of any preacher. Other notable eighteenth-century preachers include Richard Cecil (1748–1810), Phillip Doddridge (1702–1751), William Jay (1769–1853), John Newton (1725–1807), and Edward Parsons (1762–1833).

[3] *The Baptist Magazine* in 1820 was keen to note the editor's comments regarding Claude's *Essay*, which had become a prized work among Baptists. See "Review: *Daily Bread; or Meditations, Practical and Experimental, for every Day in the Year, by more than one hundred of the most eminent and popular Ministers of the last half Century*," *Baptist Magazine* 12 (1820): 329. Similarly, Old concludes, "It apparently became a favorite homiletic guide among Baptists." Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 6, *The Modern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 730.

woven throughout the fabric of their sermons that his *Essay* may be described as one of the key homiletical threads that bound them all together. As a result, younger ministers who wished to learn how to compose sermons of their own were expected to consult Claude's manual for themselves.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the influence of Claude's *Essay* on English Protestant homiletics during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Among the groups most impacted by his *Essay* were the Particular Baptists, who not only profited from Claude's instructions, but also played a pivotal role in circulating them. First, the chapter provides an overview of Claude's life and ministry. In his own day, Claude was one of the leading Huguenot pastors in France and a staunch defender of the Reformation. However, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 dealt a fatal blow to the Protestant cause, forcing preachers like Claude into exile. Were it not for the posthumous publication of his *Essay* by his son, Isaac, Claude's legacy might well have been confined to his own generation. Next, the chapter provides necessary historical context for Claude's *Essay* and compares and contrasts his homiletical approach with his English Puritan contemporaries. The Puritans exerted considerable influence on both the theology and the preaching of later dissenting pastors in England, and Claude's *Essay* was neither identical to nor entirely incompatible with their approach. Following this discussion, the chapter then turns to Robert Robinson's translation of Claude's *Essay* and surveys its popularity among Particular Baptists, who resonated with Claude's instructions and Robinson's own material. Finally, the chapter explores the reception of Claude's *Essay* among the established church.

Claude's Life and Legacy

Jean Claude: Pastor, Polemicist, Preacher

The story of the Reformation in France is one of triumph, tumult, and tragedy.[4] From its earliest days, the French Protestant cause was met with staunch resistance by the Catholic establishment. While the labors of fellow Frenchmen, John Calvin (1509–1564) and Theodore Beza (1519–1605), provided French Protestants with a firm theological foundation for their movement, they often lacked the political support needed to secure their freedom. What followed was a steady stream of persecution, religious conflict, and civil violence—of which the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in the fall of 1572 is the most notable example.[5] In the ensuing years, violence continued until Protestants were given a lifeline in 1598 when Henry IV signed the Edict of Nantes. The Edict established peace between both sides and boldly claimed to be "the principal foundation of the union and tranquility of the State."[6] However, the idyllic future that Henry IV promised was never fully realized as the persecution of Protestants continued throughout the seventeenth century.

The son of a minister, Jean Claude was born in 1619 during this period of ongoing turmoil.[7] He was educated at Montauban, a bastion of Protestantism in Southern

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[4] On the French Reformation, see G. De Félice, *History of the Protestants of France, From the Commencement of the Reformation to the Present Time*, trans. Henry Lobdell (New York: Edward Walker, 1851); Eugène et Émile Haag, *La France Protestante*, (Paris: Joël Cherbruliez, 1846–1858); George A. Rothrock, *The Huguenots: A Biography of a Minority* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979); Geoffrey Treasure, *The Huguenots* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Stephen M. Davis, *The French Huguenots and Wars of Religion: Three Centuries of Resistance for Freedom of Conscience* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021). For an extensive list, see Treasure, in "Further Reading," *The Huguenots*, 441–450.

[5] On the significance of the massacre, De Félice writes, "There would have been, perhaps, in our day, with the increase of the population, five or six millions of Protestants in France. St. Bartholomew, by its murders, emigrations, and abjurations, has given them a wound from which they have never recovered." De Félice, *History of the Protestants of France*, 222.

[6] De Félice, *History of the Protestants of France*, 273.

[7] On Claude's life, see Abel-Rodolphe de Ladevèze, *The Life and Death of Monsieur Claude, the Famous Minister of Charenton in France*, ed. Thomas Dring (London, 1688). Robinson and Townsend utilized Ladevèze in their respective introductions to Claude's *Essay* and his *Defence of the Reformation*. See Robert Robinson, "The Life of Monsieur Claude," in Claude, *Essay*, 1:ix–lxviii; John Townsend, "A Sketch of the Life of the Rev. John Claude, including Some Observations on the Spirit of Popery," in *A Defence of the Reformation: in answer to a book [by P. Nicole] entitled Just Prejudices against the Calvinists: written in French by the reverend and learned Monsieur Claude, Minister of the Reformed*

France, and assumed his first pastorate upon his graduation in 1645. From 1645 through 1665, Claude pastored churches in La Treyne (1645–1646), St. Afrique (1647–1655), Nîmes (1655–1661), and Montauban (1661–1665). During this period, Claude proved himself to be a capable preacher and began tutoring students in homiletics and exegesis.[8] In addition to his pastoral duties, Claude penned several important works in which he defended the Reformed faith and exposed the errors of his Catholic rivals.[9] As his reputation grew, so too did his opposition. Claude was removed from his pulpit in Nîmes when, as the moderator of the synod, he refused the Catholic governor's request to reunite Protestant and Catholic churches in the province. His pastorate in Montauban ended similarly when the city revoked his right to preach due to his ongoing theological debates concerning the Eucharist and the legitimacy of the Reformation.

Claude tried in vain to overturn his banishment from Montauban. However, his labors as an apologist drew the attention of other influential Protestants in France. In 1666, Claude was called to pastor the church at Charenton, in Paris, where he "was placed at the pinnacle of the reformed church of France."[10] There, Claude continued his apologetic work and gained even greater prominence as a preacher. Given its influence throughout France and the interest it engendered among foreign visitors, the pulpit in Charenton "required the whole application of an ordinary Minister."[11] As a result, Claude

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Church at Charenton; and faithfully translated into english, by T. B. (London: Manufactory for the Employment of the Deaf and Dumb, 1815), ix–lxxx; J. Wesley White, "Jean Claude (1619–1687): Huguenot Pastor and Theologian," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 19 (2008):195–205. French sources include: Eugène Haag and Émile Haag, eds., *La France protestante ou Vies des Protestants français* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1966), 3:473–477; J. Le Brun, "La spiritualité de Jean Claude (1619–1687)" in *La révocation de l'Édit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies 1685*, ed. J. A. H. Bots (Amsterdam: APA-Holland University Press, 1986), 119–139.

[8] Bayle notes, "He made some private Lectures to the Students, so well fitted for the use of the Pulpit, and the understanding of the Scripture, that they were of great use." Pierre Bayle, "Claude (John)," *An Historical and Critical Dictionary* (London: C. Harper, 1710), 2:996.

[9] See White, "Jean Claude," 199–201.

[10] Robinson, "Life of Monsieur Claude," in *Essay*, 1:xxi.

[11] Ladevèze, *Life and Death of Monsieur Claude*, 21.

printed few sermons during this time. Concerning Claude's preaching, Ladevèze remarked, "We may nevertheless judge by those he has published, that his talent lay no less for preaching than for the closet, and I hope his son will print a small tract, which his father did compose of the manner of explaining the holy writ in the pulpit, so just and so fine, that upon reading it, people will be throughly [*sic*] persuaded, that Monsieur Claude was a great master in that matter."[12] The tract to which Ladevèze referred was Claude's *Essay*, which his son, Isaac, would later publish.

The years of tumult and occasional triumph for the Huguenots ended in 1685 when King Louis XIV signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Having been singled out by name and told to leave the country within twenty-four hours, Claude was left with no choice. Now in his mid-sixties, he departed France and found refuge in the Netherlands, where he received a warm welcome from William of Orange and his wife, Mary. Claude spent his final days in the same town where his son, Isaac, was a minister, before his death two years later on January 13, 1687.

Claude and the Changing Face of Seventeenth-Century Homiletics

In 1688, Isaac published the first of five volumes of Claude's works, entitled *Les Oeuvres Posthumes de Mr. Claude*.[13] Claude's *Essay*, or *Traité de la composition d'un sermon*, appears in this first volume. According to Isaac, Claude developed the *Essay* because no one had, to that point, produced a similar work that outlined the various rules for sermon composition.[14] Additionally, Claude never intended his work to serve as a comprehensive treatment of pastoral ministry, but as a detailed homiletical guide for

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[12] Ladevèze, *Life and Death of Monsieur Claude*, 21–22.

[13] Jean Claude, *Les Oeuvres Posthumes de Mr. Claude*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Chez Pierre Savouret, 1688).

[14] Preface to *Les Oeuvres Posthumes de Mr. Claude*, 1:9.

those who desired further instructions in the art of preaching.[15] Evidence for the early

widespread circulation of Claude's *Essay* appears in the work of one of Claude's

contemporaries, the Swiss pastor, Jean Frédéric Ostervald (1663–1747). Ostervald

studied under Pierre Allix (1641–1717) in Paris during Claude's pastorate at Charenton.[16]

After his ordination, Ostervald returned to Switzerland where he pastored the church in

his hometown of Neufchatel from 1699 until his death in 1747. In a series of lectures

given to students preparing for ministry in the early decades of the eighteenth century,

Ostervald interacted with Claude's *Essay* at great length.[17] Though he was quite critical

of Claude's work, his initial comments demonstrate the already wide-ranging influence of

the *Essay*:

> Lastly, Mr. Claude is the author which has written the most largely about Preaching, in his Essay on the Composition of a Sermon. This is a good work, but there are however, some faults in it; and I would not advise a person to follow it entirely. As that work is in every one's hands, it may be proper to examine it a little, that it may not be taken for a perfect model.[18]

Ostervald critiqued Claude for his lack of emphasis on the preacher's personal piety and

what he believed to be Claude's insufficient treatment of sermon application.[19] The fact

that Ostervald sensed the need to interact with Claude's *Essay* since it was "in every

one's hands" is evidence for its significance in the decades immediately following

Claude's death.

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[15] Preface to *Les Oeuvres Posthumes de Mr. Claude*, 1:10.

[16] It is possible that he also studied under Claude. See Thomas Stevens, "The Translator's Preface," in Jean Frédéric Ostervald, *Lectures on the exercise of the sacred ministry. By the late J. F. Ostervald, Professor of Divinity, and Pastor of the Church of Neufchatel in Swisserland,* trans. Thomas Stevens, (London: J. F., 1781), x.

[17] According to Stevens, the first copy he found of Ostervald's lectures was published in Amsterdam in 1737 in the original French. Stevens, "The Translator's Preface," in *Lectures on the exercise of the sacred ministry*, xxvi.

[18] Ostervald, "Lecture I," in *Lectures on the exercise of the sacred ministry*, 21–22.

[19] Additionally, Ostervald critiqued Claude for what he thought to be the overly complex nature of Claude's method: "He multiplies heads more than he ought need to do. . . . He loads his sermons too much." Ostervald, "Lecture I," in *Lectures on the exercise of the sacred ministry*, 22–23.

Despite Claude's fame as a preacher, few of his sermons have survived to the present day.[20] This lack of printed sermon material may be attributed to the tumultuous period in which he lived and the busy schedule he maintained, particularly during his Charenton pastorate. As a result, modern scholars have often overlooked Claude's place in the history of preaching.[21] In the sixth volume of his important work, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the History of the Christian Church*, Old admits, "As my research progresses, I am discovering that Jean Claude and Robert Robinson's translation and his commentary are very important. I regret not having given them more attention in my earlier studies."[22] Dargan, Larsen, and Edwards each point to Claude's importance in their works on the history of preaching, but their discussions are relatively brief.[23]

Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Alexandre Rodolphe Vinet (1797–1847) identified Claude's *Essay* as a key point of transition between the ancient and the modern era of homiletics, as Claude introduced the idea that a sermon could treat a particular subject found within a text in the form of propositions.[24] In recent years, two dissertations have followed Vinet's assessment and sought to reestablish Claude's place in the history of homiletics. The first is J. Denny Autrey's "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude and His Influence on Homiletics" (2013) and the

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[20] See White's discussion of Claude's published works and his preaching. White, "Jean Claude," 199–205.

[21] An important earlier work that recognized Claude's significance was Alexandre Rodolphe Vinet's history of Protestant preaching in France. Vinet devoted a chapter to Claude. See Alexandre Rodolphe Vinet, *Histoire de la prédication parmi les réformés de France au dix-septième siècle* (Paris: Chez les éditeurs, 1860).

[22] Old, *Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*, 6:730.

[23] Edwin Charles Dargan, *The Art of Preaching in the Light of its History* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), 148–152; Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 124–127; David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 1:208–209; O. C. Edwards Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 1:452–455.

[24] Vinet wrote, "L'idée qui ressort de l'ensemble du livre est que le sermon proprement dit, tel que nous le comprenons aujourd'hui, n'esistait pas alors; mais Claude l'entrevoit et l'inaugure, pour ainsi dire, quand il parle des sujets traités par voie de propositions. Il marque ainsi la transition de l'ancienne forme de la prédication à la nouvelle, du sermon sur un texte au sermon sur un sujet." Vinet, *Histoire de la prédication*, 349.

second is Adrian R. Coetzer's "Homiletics at a Crossroads: Situating Jean Claude (1619–1687) as a Significant Point of Transition Between Neo-Classical and Early Modern Preaching" (2022).[25] Autrey argues that Claude's *Essay*—with its emphasis on clarity, simplicity, and the selection of shorter sermon texts—represents a bridge between the church's preaching through the Reformation and the current era of expository preaching. The preaching of the church fathers and many of the early reformers was characterized by the selection of longer passages and sermons that included both exposition and application without necessarily maintaining a narrow or unified focus. According to Autrey, "Claude's method brought greater clarity to the exposition of a text" and his sermon structure "altered the art of exposition, producing a more focused method of expressing a subject."[26]

Building on Autrey's work, Coetzer argues similarly but narrows his assessment by identifying Claude as a homiletical hinge between neo-classical preaching and early modern preaching.[27] As the name suggests, neo-classical preaching applied the rules of ancient rhetoric to homiletics. According to Coetzer, Claude's *Essay* introduced three innovations that aided the transition between neo-classical preaching and the modern era. They were his emphasis on simplicity and clarity in preaching, the adoption of the propositional sermon born out of a synthesis of the biblical text, and a sermon structure influenced by the rules of ancient rhetoric.[28] Both Autrey's and Coetzer's

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[25] J. Denny Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude and His Influence on Homiletics," (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013); Adrian R. Coetzer, "Homiletics at a Crossroads: Situating Jean Claude (1619–1687) as a Significant Point of Transition Between Neo-Classical and Early Modern Preaching," (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022).

[26] Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude," v–vi.

[27] Coetzer writes, "Jean Claude cannot be confined to one period or category. Instead, he needs to be understood as a man whose life and ministry represent a point of transition. This dissertation will focus on situating Jean Claude as a man of both the neo-classical and early-modern periods." Coetzer, "Homiletics at a Crossroads," 3.

[28] See Coetzer, "Chapter 5: Situating Jean Claude in the Shift," in "Homiletics at a Crossroads," 103–141.

studies identify Claude—and his *Essay* in particular—as playing a pivotal role in the evolution of Protestant preaching from the Reformation to the present day.

Perhaps the most comprehensive work outlining the significance of Claude's *Essay* for English Protestant homiletics is Rolf Lessenich's *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)*.[29] Regrettably, neither Autrey nor Coetzer offer significant interaction with Lessenich.[30] In his work, Lessenich analyzed Claude's *Essay* alongside other significant seventeenth-century preaching manuals that influenced the neo-classical period of the eighteenth century. Seeking to rid their pulpits of both intellectual extravagance and empty enthusiasm, neo-classical preachers combined simple logic with measured passion all for the purpose of practical instruction.[31] Lessenich offered this useful observation:

> They endeavoured to present solid, uncontroversial truths with lucid perspicuity, to dress their thoughts in the most elegant words and phrases without the harshness of philosophical and theological terms, to be artistic and learned, yet so well to conceal art and learning as to meet both their obligation to artistic and their obligation to Christian simplicity, for all the rules of composition and delivery had a profane and sacred foundation. Reason and Scripture seemed to concur in keeping the preacher from the extremes of dryness, meanness, ecstasy, and affectation, both in his composition and in his delivery.[32]

Preachers like Claude happily employed the tools of Greco-Roman rhetoric in their sermons; nevertheless, they understood that the two were not equal. Rhetoric was the

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[29] Rolf P. Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)* (Köln, Germany: Böhlau-Verlag, 1972).

[30] Edwards provides a succinct summary of Lessenich in his introduction to eighteenth-century preaching. See Edwards, "The Theory and Message of Eighteenth-Century Preaching," in *A History of Preaching*, 400–405. Grant interacts with Lessenich in his chapter on Fuller's preaching. See Keith Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 36 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 79–84.

[31] Lessenich succinctly summarized, "The promotion of practical piety was the ultimate end of all neoclassical preaching." In his work, Lessenich appears to minimize the importance of doctrine among eighteenth-century preachers, tending to overlook those within the dissenting Baptist and evangelical traditions. Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 90.

[32] Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 234.

servant of homiletics.[33] Claude enforced this point when he reminded his readers, "The pulpit was erected to instruct the minds of men in religious subjects, and not to gratify curiosity, to inflame the heart, and not to find play for imagination."[34] Lessenich proceeded to use Claude's *Essay* as a primary guide for explaining the four types of neoclassical sermons: the explicatory, observatory, applicative, and propositional sermon.[35] While there is much to commend in Lessenich's work, Holmes and Wood rightly criticize his tendency to reduce "all eighteenth-century preaching to a sort of Anglican broad churchmanship" that emphasized morality at the expense of doctrine.[36]

"For the benefit of a person dear to him":
Isaac Claude and the Composition of the
Essay

Using John Wilkins's (1614–1672) *Ecclesiastes: Or, A Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching* as a point of reference, Lessenich maintained that Claude wrote his *Essay* later in his life during his Charenton pastorate. He wrote, "The fashionable book, studied then as a guide, was *Wilkin's Ecclesiastes*, which was first published in 1646, and had run through six editions before this essay of Mr. Claude was written."[37] The sixth edition of Wilkins's work appeared in 1675, which indicates that Claude wrote his *Essay* around this time. Whether Claude used any of the material he complied while tutoring students in homiletics earlier in his ministry is unknown.

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[33] After mentioning several famous French preachers, including Claude, Sturtevant concluded, "these men boldly seized upon the treasures of Grecian and Roman eloquence, and made them subservient to the Christian cause. To this may be traced the superiority which the French school obtained." S. T. Sturtevant, preface to *The Preacher's Manual, or, lectures on preaching: containing all the rules and examples necessary for every species of pulpit address*, 2nd ed. (London: Richard Baynes, 1834), 1:ii.

[34] Claude, *Essay*, 2:13.

[35] See Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 82–95.

[36] Stephen R. Holmes and Jonathan Woods, "Andrew Fuller's Soham Farewell Sermons: Context and Text," *Baptist Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2020): 2–16.

[37] See Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 52n44.

Similar to Lessenich, Robinson believed Claude wrote the *Essay* in the mid 1670s. After discussing his publication of *The Parable of the Wedding-Feast* in 1676, Robinson wrote, "About this time, Mr. Claude's only son, Isaac, returned from studying in the best academies in France, to his father, under whose tuition he might be prepared for the pulpit. For this purpose Mr. Claude drew up the following essay."[38] Later in the second volume, Robinson clarified this point: "Mr. Claude died on the 13th of January, 1687, leaving this piece in manuscript, which, we have supposed, vol. i. preface, p. 24, was written before 1676, that is to say, about the middle of the reign of Charles II."[39] Interestingly, Robinson's comments arrive in the context of Claude's criticism of English preachers and their custom to enter immediately into the explanation of their text without any introduction. This indicates that Claude viewed his *Essay*, at least in part, as a correction to other forms of preaching in his own day.

Following Robinson and Lessenich, Autrey cites Isaac's entry into the ministry as the reason why Claude wrote the *Essay*. To support his position, Autrey points to the preface of *Les Oeuvres Posthumes de Mr. Claude* (1689) which reads, "Mr. Claude composed it (*Essay*) sometime ago for the benefit of a person dear to him, and in whose progress he could not have taken a greater interest."[40] Curiously, Coetzer dates the *Essay* to after Claude's exile to the Netherlands in 1685. However, he does not provide any substantial support for this date. He writes, "Shortly after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Claude was sent into exile. Soon, Jean Claude wrote his *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, mainly for his son, who in turn published it posthumously in 1686 as part of a collection of works by his father."[41] Thus, the weight of the evidence

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[38] Robinson, "Life of Monsieur Claude," in *Essay*, 1:xxiv.

[39] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 2:457n4.

[40] Preface to *Les Oeuvres Posthumes de Mr. Claude*, 1:ix. See Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude," 84–85.

[41] Coetzer, "Homiletics at a Crossroads," 103.

remains with Robinson, Lessenich, and Autrey. In summary, Claude's *Essay* appears to be the product of a lifelong devotion to the subject of preaching, compiled for the express purpose of instructing his son, Isaac, and others in training for the ministry.[42]

This section has sought to establish Claude's role as a key figure in the evolution of seventeenth-century Protestant homiletics. Although Claude was a beloved pastor and preacher in his own day, ultimately his *Essay* would prove to be the work that cemented his place in the history of homiletics.[43] However, Claude and his French contemporaries were not the only ones seeking to reshape the homiletical landscape of their day. By the time Claude assumed his first pastorate in the 1640s, Puritan preaching in England was at its height. While the Huguenots of France and the Puritans of England occupied different contexts and each faced unique challenges, they nevertheless shared a similar theology and philosophy of preaching. The ensuing discussion on Claude's *Essay* and Puritan preaching will not only illuminate the French author's work, but it will also provide a more complete view of the theological and homiletical streams that would influence Fuller a century later.

Claude and the Puritans: Continuity and Discontinuity

Peter Ramus (1515–1572)[44]

In the preface to his work, *Peter Ramus and the Educational Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, Frank Pierrepont Graves includes Peter Ramus alongside such notable names as Erasmus, Luther, and Descartes as "milestones that mark the pathway of progress from medievalism."[45] Ramus was a French philosopher, professor,

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[42] Although by the time of his death, some parts of the *Essay* were more complete than others.

[43] The contents of his *Essay* will be explored in more detail in chapter 3.

[44] In French, Pierre de la Ramée. In Latin, Petrus Ramus.

[45] Frank Pierrepont Graves, *Peter Ramus and the Educational Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), vii.

mathematician, and logician whose most significant contribution was his modification of ancient philosophy's five-fold divisions of discourse—invention, arrangement, memory, style, and delivery—to include only dialectic (logic) and rhetoric. While dialectic and rhetoric could not be separated in practice, Ramus believed the two must be distinguished in theory.[46] Ramus unfolded his approach to logic in his 1543 work entitled *Training in Dialectic*.[47] In the same work, he announced Omer Talon (1510–1562) would complete the complementary work on rhetoric, which appeared as *Training in Oratory* in 1545.[48]

For Ramus, logic was the key to all knowledge.[49] It consisted of two parts— invention and judgment. Invention included the discovery of "raw materials" and judgment involved the arranging of those materials into a coherent argument.[50] Once invention and judgment were complete, the next step was to define and divide the subject matter and so move from general knowledge to specific principles.[51] Through this method, Ramus established a pathway for complex subjects to be both systematized and simplified. The implications for preaching come into focus when one understands the Bible as containing the "raw materials" that preachers then gather, organize, and present for their listeners.

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[46] Ong, Walter J. *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 270.

[47] In Latin, *Dialecticae institutions libri XV*. In 1555, Ramus republished the work and titled it simply, *Dialectique*. See Craig Walton, "Ramus, Petrus," in *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 770–771.

[48] Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 270–271.

[49] Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 33. Sprunger concurs, "To Ramus logic was the beginning of knowledge. The logician possessed a key opening all the secrets of the arts." Keith L. Sprunger, "Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 59, no. 2 (April 1966): 135.

[50] Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 176–190.

[51] See Sprunger, "Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology," 135.

Rhetoric consisted of elocution, or style, and pronunciation, or delivery.[52]

However, neither Ramus nor Talon ever fully developed the latter aspect of rhetoric. As a

result, Ong notes that Ramist rhetoric focused primarily on the nature of the composition,

not on ancillary aspects of delivery, such as voice and gesture.[53] Out of Ramist rhetoric

came what would be known as the plain style, which was marked by simple structure,

clear logic, and a straightforward use of language. The plain style of composing a

discourse flowed from Ramus's desire to "bring the world of learning to the 'plain man'

by using the vernacular, and by more closely correlating the rigor of philosophy with the

memorable and persuasive powers of rhetoric."[54] Ramus found Cicero's division of styles

between high, middle, and low to be unnecessary when the plain style could accomplish

all of these at once.[55] From Ramus emerged the basic ingredients of preaching in the

plain style, which both the English Puritans and French Huguenots developed in the

ensuing decades.[56]

Points of Continuity

William Perkins (1558–1602) is generally credited with introducing the plain

style into English preaching through his work, *The Arte of Prophecying* (1592).[57] Perkins

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[52] Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 272–273.

[53] Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 273.

[54] Walton, "Ramus, Petrus," in *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 771.

[55] Ong elaborates, the Ramist plain style "is certainly not the high or grand style, nor is it the low or the middle style. It is the phoenix which rises from the holocaust of all three styles, the verbal counterpart of the coming visualist universe of "objects," voiceless and by that very fact depersonalized." Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 213.

[56] For a study on the development of the plain style in the Christian tradition, see Peter Auksi, *Christian Plain Style: The Evolution of a Spiritual Ideal* (Montreal, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

[57] The work was first published in Latin in 1592 and then in English in 1606. For an introduction to Perkins, see John Brown, "Lecture III: The Cambridge Puritans," in *Puritan Preaching in England: A Study of Past and Present* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), 67–95. In his history of preaching, Edwards credits Wilkins with introducing the plain style into Puritan preaching half a century after Perkins. While Wilkins advanced the plain style, Perkins was the first to introduce it. For his discussion on Perkins, see Edwards, *A History of Preaching*, 362–364. On Wilkins, see Edwards, *A History of Preaching*, 397–400. For an introduction to Protestant preaching in England, see Horton Davies,

likely encountered Ramist teaching as a student at Cambridge in the 1580s. After tracing

the influence of Ramus on Perkins's thought, Perry Miller writes, "The Puritan form of

the sermon, which was first advanced by Perkins and then expounded in Puritan manuals,

was altogether congenial to Ramist ways of thinking, and hence there is good cause to

suppose that Perkins arrived at it by pondering the question of form in the light of

Ramus's logic and rhetoric."[58] For Perkins, the form of the sermon followed the basic

pattern of Ramist logic. He instructed preachers to begin by selecting a biblical text as the

ground of the sermon and explaining its meaning. Next, preachers were to organize, or

collect, the various doctrines found within the text. Finally, the sermon concluded with

the application of those doctrines to the listeners according to their situation.[59] Later

Puritan manuals followed a similar outline. *The Directory for Public Worship* (1645)

advised preachers to select a text of Scripture as the subject of the sermon, to raise

doctrines from the text, and to bring them home to special use, or application.[60] In his

work, *Ecclesiastes: Or, A Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching* (1646), Wilkins

employed the terminology of explication, confirmation, and application to describe the

same basic approach.[61]

Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Fox, 1534–1690 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Larissa Taylor, ed., *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). For an introduction to Puritan preaching, see Bruce R. Bickel, *Light and Heat: The Puritan View of the Pulpit and The Focus of the Gospel in Puritan Preaching* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1999); Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Princeton, NJ: Soli Deo Gloria, 1948); Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1939).

[58] Miller, *The New England Mind*, 339.

[59] In chapter VI, "Of the right Dividing of the word," Perkins wrote, "Right cutting of the word is that, whereby the word is make fit to edifie the people of God. . . . The partes thereof are two: Resolution or partition, and Application." William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying: Or a Treatise Concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of Preaching* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607), 90–91.

[60] *A Directory For the Publique Worship of God Throughout the three Kingdomes of England, Scotland, and Ireland.* (London: T. R., 1651), 20–22. See also Davies, *Worship of the English Puritans* and Rosamund Oates, "Sermons and Sermon-Going in Early Modern England," *Reformation* 17, no. 1 (2012): 199–212.

[61] See John Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching as it fals under the rules of Art* (London: M. F., 1646).

The spread of Ramism in France may be attributed to his influence on the universities and his conversion to Protestantism near the end of his life. Ramus served as the principal of the College of Presles and a professor in the College of France.[62] There he disseminated his ideas through both his writings and his teaching. Following his conversion in the early 1560s, Ramus lost the support of the Catholic leadership in Paris and endured great hardship before his tragic death in 1572 during the events of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. By 1600, Ramist thinking had made its way into Protestant universities including Montauban, where Claude would later receive his own training in philosophy.[63] Therefore, it is likely Claude encountered Ramism directly through his own education and perhaps indirectly through Perkins.[64]

Claude's sermon structure loosely resembled that of his Puritan contemporaries and further demonstrates the continuity between their appropriations of the plain style. Claude identified five parts to the sermon—exordium (introduction), connection, division, discussion, and application. Of these five, the exordium, discussion, and application were primary. While the Puritans varied in their use of an introduction, Claude believed it was necessary to prepare the hearts and minds of the listeners to receive the preacher's words.[65] In the discussion, Claude advised preachers to understand the meaning of the text then determine how to compose the sermon, either by explication, resolving what is unclear, or observations, confirming what is clear. While Claude

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[62] Graves, *Peter Ramus and the Educational Reformation*, 13.

[63] Bayley identifies "la rhetorique de Talena," referring to Omer Talon's work, in the rules for the college at Montauban. See Peter Bayley, *French Pulpit Oratory, 1598–1650: A Study of Themes and Styles, with a Descriptive Catalogue of Printed Texts*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 21. On Claude's education in philosophy at Montauban, see Ladevèze, *Life and Death of Monsieur Claude*, 2.

[64] Autrey writes, "The influence of Ramus's perspective can be linked to Jean Claude's approach through the development of plain-style preaching evident in Perkins's work. Claude's simple plain-style preaching is linked to the Ramist movement through Perkins, but the style of preaching of Claude was distinctly different than that of the early Puritans." Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude," 74.

[65] Claude, *Essay*, 2:451.

identified application as an essential aspect of the sermon, he did not expand on the varying situations of the listeners as Perkins did.

Further continuity between Claude's and the Puritan's plain style appears in their advice for preachers to use clear, simple language in the pulpit. Both shared a disdain for cumbersome language that they believed burdened the hearers. While Perkins allowed for ministers to make use of art and philosophy in their sermon composition, he urged that these "be hidden from the congregation, not ostentatiously paraded before them."[66] Echoing Paul's words in 1 Corinthians, *The Directory for Public Worship* also advised ministers to speak "plainly, that the meanest may understand, delivering the truth, not in the enticing words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and Power, lest the Crosse of Christ should be made of none effect."[67] Claude similarly warned that "there must not be too much genius" in the pulpit, which tended to dazzle the audience rather than sanctify the conscience.[68] For both Claude and the Puritans, the power of preaching resided in the truth of the Scriptures, communicated plainly and forcefully to the hearts and minds of the people. Therefore, care must be taken on the part of the preacher not to pollute his message with too much of his own ingenuity.

A final point of connection between Claude and the Puritans was their belief that application, or practical instruction, should be the ultimate aim of the sermon. *The Directory* advised ministers "not to rest in general doctrine . . . but to bring it home by special Use, by application to his hearers."[69] Moreover, Wilkins described application as the "life and soul of a Sermon; whereby these sacred truths are brought home to a mans particular conscience and occasions, and the affections ingaged [*sic*] unto any truth or

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[66] Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 79.

[67] *Directory For the Publique Worship of God*, 24.

[68] Claude, *Essay*, 1:25.

[69] *Directory For the Publique Worship of God*, 22.

duty."[70] Similar aims are found in Claude's instructions: "The understanding must be informed, but in a manner, however, which affects the heart; either to comfort the hearers, or to excite them to acts of piety, repentance, or holiness."[71] From this point, it is evident why the plain style was so appealing to both Claude and the Puritans. It sought to remove unnecessary distractions and uncover the true meaning of Scripture so that the listener might receive it and respond accordingly.

Points of Discontinuity

The first major point of discontinuity between Claude and the Puritans was Claude's emphasis on the overarching unity of the sermon. Indeed, Autrey sees this as his most significant contribution to the practice of preaching. Autrey writes, Claude's "sermon structure is a strong response to the preaching of early Reformers, Counter-Reformation preaching, and the preaching of the Puritans and Huguenots of his own day. He emphasized the importance of proper biblical interpretation through a unified theme or subject in the sermon that is extracted from the text."[72] Whereas neither Perkins, *The Directory*, nor Wilkins argued for the articulation of a single unifying theme to bind the doctrines of the text together, Claude believed this should be done whenever possible. "One of the greatest excellencies of a sermon," he wrote, "is the harmony of its component parts." [73] Such harmony enabled listeners to walk away from the sermon with a complete understanding of both the text and its subject.

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[70] Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching*, 14.

[71] Claude, *Essay*, 1:22–23.

[72] Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude," 188.

[73] Continued: "The first leads to the second, the second serves to introduce the third; that, they which go before, excite a desire for those, which are to follow: and, in a word, that the last has a special relation to all the others, in order to form in the hearers minds, a complete idea of the whole. This cannot be done with all sorts of texts, but with those only, which are proper to form such a design upon." Claude, *Essay*, 1:63–64.

When comparing Claude's approach with the Puritans, Autrey appears to overstate his case. He contends, "Puritan plain style was more concerned with lifting doctrine from the text to support their theological system, whereas Claude's approach and Huguenot preaching was more concerned with a true reflection of the text in order to teach the full council [*sic*] of God."[74] While some Puritan preaching may fit this description, Perkins, *The Directory*, and Wilkins each instructed preachers to give priority to the meaning of the biblical text before drawing out its doctrinal implications.[75] When deducing doctrines from a particular text, Perkins reminded preachers that their "collections ought to be right and sound, that is to say, derived from the genuine and proper meaning of the Scripture. If otherwise, wee shall draw any doctrine from any place."[76] Nevertheless, Autrey correctly identifies the central place the Puritans afforded to doctrine within their sermons. As evidence of Autrey's point regarding Claude, the French preacher cautioned his readers against preaching sermons that were "overcharged with doctrine," which ran the risk of being excessively tedious or dry, barren, and scholastic.[77]

Other differences between Claude and the Puritans come into view upon closer examination. The prominence Claude gives to the Exordium (Introduction), as mentioned above, was not shared by his Puritan contemporaries. Miller attributed this to the Puritan emphasis on divine sovereignty, which led them to condemn the exordium because "it was first of all unnecessary to true believers who should be sufficiently regardful of the

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[74] Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude," 74.

[75] Perkins: "Interpretation is the Opening of the words and sentences of the Scripture, that one entire and naturall sense may appeare." Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 30; *Directory*: "In raising Doctrines from the Text, his care ought to be, First, that the matter be the truth of God. Secondly, that it be a truth contained in, or grounded on that Text, that the hearers may discern how God teacheth it from thence." *Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, 21; Wilkins: "The Doctrine being mentioned (if there be any necessity) we may briefly clear the inference of it, by shewing its necessary dependence on the Text." Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching*, 12.

[76] Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 96.

[77] Claude, *Essay*, 1:26. Claude's views on doctrinal preaching are discussed in chapter 4.

preacher without any artificial capturing of their attention, and because, secondly, it offended their concept of nature."[78] However, Claude spoke disapprovingly of English preachers who began their sermons with an immediate explanation of the text. He reasoned, "Surely the hearer is not suddenly able to comprehend their explications, having yet neither emotions nor preparation."[79]

Claude's critique exposed one of the differences between the temperament of French and English preachers in the seventeenth century. Whereas French preaching tended to place a greater emphasis on the preacher's abilities to engage the emotions of his audience, English preaching often relied more on the use of reason and sustained argumentation to engender a response from the listeners. In his lectures on rhetoric, the Scottish minister and lecturer, Hugh Blair (1718–1800), offered these remarks, "A French sermon, is for most part a warm animated exhortation; an English one, is a piece of cool instructive reasoning. The French preachers address themselves chiefly to the imagination and the passions; the English, almost solely to the understanding."[80] While these differences can be exaggerated, they do help explain Claude's belief that the sermon must begin and end by addressing the affections of the listeners, either to prepare them to receive truth or to leave them with a sense of the gravity of the truth that has been conveyed.[81]

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[78] Miller, *The New England Mind*, 340.

[79] Claude, *Essay*, 2:456–458.

[80] Interestingly, Blair envisioned a *via media* between French and English preaching as the "model of a perfect sermon." Hugh Blair, *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres. By Hugh Blair, D. D. One of the Ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University, of Edinburgh. In three volumes.* (Dublin: Messrs, 1783), 2:312.

[81] On the introduction: "The principal design of an Exordium is to attract or excite the affections of the audience-to stir up their attention-and to prepare them for the particular matters, of which we are about to treat." Claude, *Essay*, 2:461. On the conclusion: "A conclusion should be diversified. I mean, we should not be content to move one single christian passion, many must be touched, and a proper length of discourse assigned to each, in order to stir up the passion. Too long time, however, must not be spent: but, when the effect is evidently produced, pass to another passion." Claude, *Essay*, 2:499.

Claude's *Essay* among the Baptists

The English Calvinistic Baptists emerged out of the Puritan movement of the early seventeenth century as various groups departed from the Church of England to establish their own congregations.[82] By the middle of the century, a growing number of congregationally governed churches rejected the practice of infant baptism and embraced believer's baptism. These "baptistic congregationalists" formed the foundation of the group that would come to be known as the Particular Baptists.[83] The following discussion traces the influence of Claude's *Essay* among the Particular Baptists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Robert Robinson (1735–1790)

Robert Robinson served as the pastor of the St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church in Cambridge from 1761 until his death in 1790.[84] He first encountered Claude's *Essay* in 1766.[85] Immediately recognizing its value, Robinson translated the *Essay* into English for his own personal edification. In the ensuing years, he supplemented Claude's material with his own notes and various quotations from other authors. During this time, Robinson also began sharing the French preacher's work with other dissenting ministers who persuaded him to publish the *Essay*. His intentions to fulfill this request date back to as early as 1770. After lamenting the current state of preaching in a letter to a fellow

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[82] Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage* (Peterborough, Canada: H & E, 2019).

[83] Bingham convincingly argues that the term "baptistic congregationalists" best describes early baptists. See Matthew C. Bingham. *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[84] B. Flower, "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson," in *Miscellaneous Works of Robert Robinson, Late Pastor of the Baptist Church and Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Cambridge; in Four Volumes: To Which are Prefixed Brief Memoirs of His Life and Writings* (Harlow: B. Flower, 1807), 1:ix–clvi. For a brief biography of Robinson and his preaching, see Charles Smyth, *The Art of Preaching: A Practical Survey of Preaching in the Church of England 747–1939*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1940), 179–180.

[85] In the 1778 advertisement for Volume One of his translation of Claude, Robinson recalled, "Twelve years ago I first met with this essay, and I immediately translated it for my own edification, adding a few critical notes from various authors." Robinson, "Advertisement," in Claude, *Essay*, 1:vi.

minister in Hauxton, Robinson wrote, "I believe Mr. Claude is in the press: the printer

has promised me the revisal of the first sheet several weeks."[86] A year later, Robinson

had not yet received the revisal. Commenting to the same minister, "As to Mr. Claude, a

London printer has had it a year and an half: I am at a loss to know his drift; he neither

prints it, nor returns it; he says it will always be saleable, as Mr. Claude's reputation is

established; but the expence will be one hundred pounds or more. I intend to write for it

again, and insist on the copy."[87] However, it would be another seven years before the

entire translation would finally go to print.

Robinson's linguistic proficiency as well as his interest in French preaching are

also seen in his four-volume translation of the French pastor, Jacques Saurin's (1677–

1730) sermons, which was published between 1775–1782.[88] As the list of subscribers

indicates, both dissenting and established ministers took great interest in Robinson's

translation of Saurin.[89] Prominent Baptists such as Hugh Evans (1712–1781), Caleb

Evans (1737–1791), John Collett Ryland (1723–1792), and John Ryland Jr. are listed

among those who supported the work. Therefore, by the time Claude's *Essay* appeared in

1778, Robinson already had a widely established reputation as a proficient editor and

translator.[90]

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[86] Robinson, "Letters. To the Same. Hauxton, May 19, 1770," in *Miscellaneous Works of Robert Robinson*, 4:301.

[87] Robinson, "Letters. Hauxton, May 2d. 1771," *Miscellaneous Works of Robert Robinson*, 4:303.

[88] *Sermons, Translated from the original French of The late Revd. James Saurin, Pastor of the French Church at the Hague*, 4 vols., trans. Robert Robinson (Cambridge, 1775–1782).

[89] "List of Subscribers," in *Sermons on the Attributes of God. Translated from the original French of the late Revd. James Saurin, Pastor of the French Church at the Hague*, trans. Robert Robinson (Cambridge: Fletcher & Hodson, 1775), 55–68.

[90] Despite this fact, Flower complained that Robinson's translation of Claude was not more widely circulated during his lifetime. He wrote, "Mr. Robinson's edition although a large one, two thousand copies, has not met with the reception a work of such sterling merit deserved. During his life time its sale was slow: after his death it fell into different hands, and the paltry art sometimes practised of printing new title pages, with the words second, and third edition, was adopted. Copies are at length become scarce; and if the tutors of dissenting academies, the students under their care, and preachers in general are duly sensible of the value of the work, it will not be long before another edi-is [*sic*] is called for." Flower, "Memoirs," in *Miscellaneous Works of Robert Robinson*, 1:lxxvii.

**Robinson's Translation and Its Reception
among Particular Baptists**

According to Robinson, his primary purpose for publishing Claude's *Essay* was to aid his fellow dissenting ministers who "have not enjoyed the advantage of a regular academical education."[91] In the years immediately following its publication, Robinson's translation was well-received within Particular Baptist circles. As previously mentioned, Fuller encountered Claude's *Essay* early in his ministry, whether this was before its initial publication in 1778 or after is uncertain. Fuller knew Robinson and sought his advice prior to his decision to leave his congregation in Soham.[92] Thus it is possible Robinson provided Fuller with an early copy of his translation.

As early as 1780, John Collett Ryland acknowledged the value of Claude's *Essay* in a sermon given at the Annual Meeting of the Bristol Education Society entitled, *The Wise Student and Christian Preacher*.[93] The printed version of Ryland's sermon contains a note that the editor indicated should have been placed "under the head of a bad and good sermon":

> Read an essay on the Composition of a Sermon, by the celebrated Claude, translated from the French by the Rev. Mr. Robinson of Cambridge. The translator has illustrated the whole by a vast variety of notes, containing remarks, censures and praises of preachers; and in a word such a rich abundance of matter as must instruct and entertain, not only students and preachers, but all persons who have any taste for religion and literature.[94]

Ryland's comments are significant given that they come from one of the most prominent Baptist pastors of that time and they express appreciation both for Claude's *Essay* and Robinson's notes. While Ryland believed Cotton Mather's (1663–1728), *Student and*

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[91] Robinson, "Advertisement," in Claude, *Essay*, 1:iii.

[92] In a letter to a friend in the fall of 1781, Fuller wrote, "We then agreed that I and an officer of the church should take the letters from all parties on the subject, and lay them before Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, and that which he should judge duty in the case we would follow." Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life" in Fuller, *Works*, 1:29.

[93] John Ryland, *The Wise Student an d Christian Preacher: A Sermon Preached at Broad-Mead, August 28, 1780, Being the Day of the Annual Meeting of the Bristol Education Society* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1780).

[94] Ryland, "Notes Omitted," in *Wise Student and Christian Preacher*, 43.

Preacher, was the most valuable resource for those entering into the ministry, he acknowledged Claude's *Essay* was the most thorough treatment on the subject of sermon composition.[95]

An additional example of the significance of Claude's *Essay* in the years following its translation is found in Fuller's *Memoirs* of his late friend, Samuel Pearce.[96] In a letter to a younger minister, Pearce assumed a certain level of familiarity with Claude's *Essay* when he offered him advice on preaching: "Labour to render your ideas transparent to yourself. Never offer to introduce a thought which you cannot see through before you enter the pulpit.—You have read in Claude that the best preparative to preach from a subject is to understand it."[97] Pearce received his own ministerial training at the Baptist Academy at Bristol under the leadership of Caleb Evans.[98] Evans saw to it that students at the academy were introduced to the languages, logic, and rhetoric as part of their ministerial training.[99] Sixteen years prior to Pearce's arrival in 1786, Evans had founded the Bristol Education Society to further support the work of the Academy. A

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[95] John Ryland, "To the Gentleman, and other several Christians, in London and the Country, who have the Cause of Christ, and the Honour of the Christian Ministry at Heart," in *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher. Intituled, Manuductio ad Ministerium; or, Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry.* [. . .] *Republished by John Ryland, A. M. of Northampton* (London: Charles Dilly, 1781), xiv; Ryland, "Notes and Observations on the several Sections of Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher," in *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher*, 175.

[96] Samuel Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce, A. M. minister of the gospel in Birmingham; with extracts of some of his most interesting letters*, ed. Andrew Fuller (Clipstone: J. W. Morris, 1800).

[97] Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce*, 284.

[98] Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce*, 76. On the influence of the Academy, see Norman S. Moon, *Education for Ministry: Bristol Baptist College, 1679–1979* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1979); Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century Baptist Ministers Training at Bristol Academy, 1690–1791* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 2006); Ruth Gouldbourne and Anthony Cross, *The Story of Bristol Baptist College* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 2022); David William Bebbington, "The Significance of Bristol Baptist College," *Baptist Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2022): 149–166.

[99] Norman S. Moon, "Caleb Evans, Founder of The Bristol Education Society," *Baptist Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (January 1971): 183.

1795 catalogue of the Society's library contains an impressive list of philosophical, theological, historical, and other works, among which Claude's *Essay* is included.[100]

Robinson's translation was especially well-received by his fellow Baptists for a number of reasons. For one, Robinson published the *Essay* on their behalf. He understood the unique challenges many Baptists faced who, like Fuller, had not received any formal education. For those who did have the privilege of attending the Baptist Academy at Bristol, Robinson hoped "that the Essay might be of great advantage also to their pupils."[101] While he was translating Claude's work, Robinson relied on the help of several key connections, two of which were benefactors to the Bristol Education Society. Thus, Robinson's translation represents one of the few homiletical guides published by a Baptist minister for Baptist ministers.

Additionally, Robinson portrayed "the inestimable John Claude" as a passionate preacher who endured unrelenting pressure from the established church in his day.[102] It is reasonable to suggest that Baptists saw something of themselves in Claude, who Robinson viewed as a champion of religious liberty.[103] Moreover, in his "A Brief Dissertation on the Ministration of the Divine Word by Publick Preaching," affixed to the second volume Claude's *Essay*, Robinson placed dissenting ministers at the pinnacle of faithful gospel proclamation.[104] One of the primary reasons for this, Robinson suggested, is because "it is essential to the ministration of the divine word by publick preaching, that

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[100] Bristol Education Society, *An alphabetical catalogue of all the books in the library, belonging to the Bristol Education Society*, (Bristol: W. Pine and Son, 1795), 9.

[101] Robinson, "Advertisement," in Claude, *Essay*, 1:vii.

[102] Claude, *Essay*, 1:lvi.

[103] Upon describing Claude's arrival at the Charenton church, Robinson wrote, "Paris was the source of all ecclesiastical mischiefs, that afflicted the provincial churches; and Charenton was the place, to which they repaired for advice. . . . Religious liberty was that to the episcopal clergy, which Mordecai had formerly been to the stately Haman." Robinson, "Life of Monsieur Claude," in *Essay*, 1:xxii.

[104] Smyth is quite critical of Robinson here. He comments, "his zeal for the conversion of sinners was second only to his passionate adherence to the principle of 'religious liberty.'" Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, 180.

preachers be allowed to form principles of their own, and that their sermons contain their real sentiments, the fruits of their own intense thought and meditation."[105] For Robinson, Claude served as a worthy model and mentor, one whose life embodied the central truth that the pulpit belongs to God and not to any human institution.

Broader Reception and Usage

Robinson's translation received mixed reviews from those outside Particular Baptist life. Among evangelicals, the work was generally well-received. For example, the Scottish pastor, John Erskine (1721–1803), relied heavily on Robinson's translation in his tract entitled, *Simplicity Recommended to ministers of the Gospel*.[106] Erskine relayed Claude's advice that sermons be simple and straightforward in their method, style, and delivery. Picking up on this connection, *The Bristol and Bath Magazine* observed that "the author is considerably indebted to Robinson's translation of Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon; from which he has, however, in general, selected with judgment, very candidly acknowledging his source."[107] Additionally, the Anglican minister, George Gregory (1754–1808), also relied on Robinson's translation in his own "Thoughts on the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon," published in 1787. Gregory cited Claude's *Essay* both positively and negatively, generally agreeing with the French preacher's rules while disagreeing with those elements he believed to be overly complex.[108]

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[105] Robinson, "A Brief Dissertation on the Ministration of the Divine Word by Publick Preaching," in Claude, *Essay*, 2:lxi.

[106] The work was originally published anonymously and later attributed to Erskine. See John Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel, With respect to their doctrine, method, style & delivery in preaching; with hints on other branches of the ministerial office* (London: J. Buckland, 1783).

[107] "The Reviewer's Sentiments on a little new Publication, called *Simplicity recommended to Ministers of the Gospel, with respect to their Doctrine, Method, Style and Delivery, in Preaching. With Hints on other branches of Ministerial office*," in *Bristol and Bath Magazine: or, Weekly miscellany* 1 (1782–1783): 2:401.

[108] Gregory wrote, "In truth, I do not know any thing more disgusting than insisting too much on the definition of single terms. M. Claude, who appears in general to have had very just notions of preaching, errs greatly against simplicity in this respect." George Gregory, *Sermons, by G. Gregory,*

More critical comments regarding Robinson's translation tended to focus on his extensive notes, which many believed to be an unnecessary distraction.[109] Additionally, Robinson's disdain for the established church did little to endear him to those inside the institution he so vehemently condemned.[110] The 1797 *Evangelical Magazine* offered their appreciation for Robinson's work even as they disagreed with his approach. They remarked:

> Most of our clerical readers are well acquainted with Mr. Robinson's translation of Claude's Essay. It is, in many points of view, a work of considerable merit, and has probably contributed much to the improvement of our pulpit discourses. At the same time we are constrained to acknowledge, that it might have been productive of more good, had not the translator introduced it to the public under the pressure of an enormous mass of notes. . . . Nor are these the only objections to which they are liable; for, as they were avowedly compiled for Dissenting Ministers, and abound in acrimonious reflections on the Established Church, they have a tendency to strengthen the educational prejudices too evidently entertained, even by some of God's faithful servants of different communities, against each other; but which good men should endeavour, by all the means in their power, to weaken, and, if possible, remove.[111]

The reviewer went on to celebrate the publication of what he believed to be a superior edition of Claude's *Essay*, namely that of the Anglican Minister, Charles Simeon (1759–1836).

F. A. S. Author of Essay Historical and Moral, &c. To which are prefixed, thoughts on the composition and delivery of a sermon (London: J. Johnson, 1787), xxvii.

[109] Sturtevant thought Robinson's notes "prevented its obtaining that general circulation which such a work would otherwise have deserved." Sturtevant, preface to *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:iii.

[110] *The Critical Review's* response to Robinson is indicative of the attitude of some toward dissenting churches: "At present a better taste prevails; and many of the author's precepts will be thought superfluous by those, who have had an academical education. . . . With regard to his not finding as many examples, as he expected, of the vices censured by M. Claude, in the writings of the dissenters, it may be observed, that the rhapsodies, which have been preached in barns, if published, have been soon swept out of the literary world." "Robinson's Translation of Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon," *The Critical Review: or, Annals of Literature* 48 (1779): 43–44.

[111] "Review of Religious Publications: *Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon. Formerly translated from the French by the Rev. Robert Robinson. With an Appendix, containing One Hundred Skeletons of Sermons; several being the Substance of Sermons preached before the University. By the Rev. Charles Simeon, M. A. Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. Very large Octavo*," *Evangelical Magazine* 5 (1797): 169.

Claude's *Essay* among the Wider English Pulpit

Charles Simeon (1759–1836)

If Robinson introduced Claude's *Essay* to the English-speaking world, Charles Simeon popularized it. Simeon began serving the Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge in 1783, seven years before Robinson's death in 1790.[112] When he first encountered Claude's *Essay* some ten years after his entrance into the ministry, Simeon was pleased to find "that all the chief rules, which he prescribes for the composition of a sermon, had not only been laid down by myself, but practised for some years. This shews that his rules are founded in nature."[113] From that point forward, Simeon adopted Claude's *Essay* as his personal homiletical guide and began using it in his own lectures on preaching.[114]

Similar to Robinson, Simeon believed Claude's *Essay* needed to be adapted for his English audience.[115] While Simeon accepted Claude's basic rules for sermon composition, he did not find Claude's illustrations—or Robinson's notes—particularly useful. As a result, Simeon included his own sermon skeletons alongside Claude's *Essay* to illustrate how to preach with unity, perspicuity, and simplicity.[116] He further explained:

> The directions given in the Essay itself cannot fail of being helpful to every one who will study them with care : but there appears to be something further wanted :

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[112] Autrey suggests that Robinson gave Simeon a copy of his translation in 1792. However, Robinson died in 1790. Elsewhere he notes that Simeon retranslated Robinson in 1789. Smyth simply mentions that Simeon came across Robinson's work, with no explanation of the circumstances. See Autrey, "Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude," 193, 161; Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, 179.

[113] Simeon's comment is intriguing given the previous discussion of Claude and Ramism. A key Ramist principle was that nature contained all the necessary materials, which the rhetorician—or in this case the preacher—needed to organize and present in a coherent manner. Charles Simeon, *Memoirs of the life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M. A., Late Senior Fellow of King's College, and Minister of Trinity Church, Cambridge. With a Selection From His Writings and Correspondence,* ed. William Carus, 3rd ed. (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1848), 61.

[114] Simeon, *Memoirs of the life of the Rev. Charles Simeon*, 61.

[115] Sturtevant expressed his gratitude for Simeon's additions: "The author also acknowledges that he is under great obligations to Mr. Simeon, for without his copious works it would have been extremely difficult to have collected a full supply of examples of the several kinds of sermonizing." Sturtevant, preface to *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:viii.

[116] Simeon, preface to *Horæ Homileticæ: or discourses (principally in the form of skeletons) now first digested into one continued series, and forming a commentary upon every book of the Old and New Testament; to which is annexed an improved edition of a translation of Claude's essay on the composition of a sermon. in twenty-one volumes* (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1832), 6.

something of an intermediate kind between a didactic Essay like Claude's, and a complete Sermon; something, which may simplify the theory, and set it in a practical light. . . . A scheme, or Skeleton of a discourse, is that species of composition to which we refer.[117]

Simeon published his first edition of Claude's *Essay* in 1796, which contained an appendix of one hundred sermon skeletons.[118] In total, Simeon published twenty-one volumes under the title *Horæ Homileticæ*. For the next forty years, Simeon used Claude's *Essay* as he taught homiletics to younger ministers. Simeon's penchant for training preachers led Smyth to conclude he was "almost the first man in the history of the English pulpit since the Middle Ages to appreciate that it is perfectly possible to teach men how to preach, and to discover how to do so."[119] Further, Smyth surmised that Simeon's edition of Claude's *Essay* was "the first direct and significant impact of the French upon the English pulpit."[120]

However, as has already been shown, Robinson's translation should take priority when searching for the first signs of French influence on English preaching. *The Monthly Review* captured some of the early tension that existed between the two editions in their 1797 review of Simeon's work:

> With all the singularities of that publication, we cannot persuade ourselves that many readers will think that Mr. Simeon's edition, which omits almost every thing that was properly Mr. Robinson's own, is preferable to the former. Mr. Robinson was often eccentric, and sometimes coarse and rude: but he was a writer of too much native genius, as well as too honest and worthy a man, to deserve to have his works curtailed in the manner in which they are treated in this publication.[121]

Other reviews, such as *The Evangelical Magazine*, drew the opposite conclusion. Referring to Robinson's notes, they wrote, "Though they abound in striking quotations, collected with labour and care, yet they sometimes divert the attention of the reader,

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[117] Simeon, *Memoirs of the life of the Rev. Charles Simeon*, 144.

[118] Simeon, *Memoirs of the life of the Rev. Charles Simeon*, 143.

[119] Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, 175.

[120] Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, 181.

[121] "Monthly Catalogue, *Religious and Polemical*," *Monthly Review* 23 (1797): 463.

without instructing him, and excite his laughter where seriousness would be more becoming."[122] Thus, while Robinson's work warrants first place when tracing the influence of Claude's *Essay* on English preaching, the popularity of Simeon's editions in subsequent decades does confirm the latter half of Smyth's conclusion.[123]

Subsequent English Editions

Following Simeon's 1796 publication, Claude's *Essay* appeared in numerous other works in subsequent decades. Evangelicals and Baptists on both sides of the Atlantic recognized the value of Claude's *Essay* and endeavored to make it accessible to ministers with and without a formal education. The ensuing discussion shows the ongoing influence of Claude's *Essay* well into the nineteenth century, further demonstrating the importance of earlier Particular Baptists and evangelicals who read and distributed Claude's *Essay* in their own day.

Thomas Hannam reproduced select portions of the *Essay* in *The analytical compendium; or, outlines of sermons. With an essay on the composition of a sermon. Extracted from various authors* (1799).[124] Similar to Robinson, Hannam designed his work to aid those ministers "whose situations afforded not the opportunity of reading more voluminous works."[125] A year later, Edward Williams (1750–1813) published *The Christian Preacher, or, discourses on preaching, by several eminent divines, English and foreign, revised and abridged; with an appendix on the choice of books* (1800).[126] First

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[122] "Review of Religious Publications: *Claude's Essay*," 169.

[123] For later reflections on Simeon's impact, see J. I. Packer, "Expository Preaching: Charles Simeon and Ourselves," *Churchman* 74, no. 2 (1960): 94–100.

[124] Thomas Hannam, *The analytical compendium; or, outlines of sermons. With an essay on the composition of a sermon. Extracted from various authors* (Leeds: Edward Baines, 1799).

[125] Hannam, preface to *The analytical compendium*, ii.

[126] Edward Williams, *The Christian Preacher, or, discourses on preaching, by several eminent divines, English and foreign, revised and abridged; with an appendix on the choice of books* (Halifax, England: Holden and Dowson, 1800).

published in England, an American edition appeared a decade later in Philadelphia in 1810. The seventh chapter contains an abridged version of Claude's *Essay*. Acknowledging the importance of both Robinson's and Simeon's editions, Williams carefully reminded his readers, "The design of this abridgment is not to supersede the original volumes of Mr. Robinson, or the later edition of Claude, by Mr. Simeon, but rather to promote the circulation of their chief excellencies."[127]

Another American publication arrived in Boston in 1819 when Ebenezer Porter (1772–1834) published *The Young Preacher's Manual, or, A collection of treatises on preaching*.[128] At this point in time, Robinson's and Simeon's translations were more expensive than most young ministers could afford. Seeking to remove this financial obstacle, Porter included Claude's *Essay* in his publication and encouraged his readers, "In this Essay . . . the judicious student will find many valuable thoughts on preaching, and more, it is presumed, than can be found elsewhere, in the same number of pages."[129]

In 1820, a condensed summary of Claude's *Essay*, entitled "Rules for the Composition of a Sermon," appeared in the appendix to an anonymous publication, *The Preacher's Manual: containing I. Two essays on lay-preaching and on the ministerial character: II. Simplicity recommended to ministers of the gospel; third edition: III. Letters on preaching*.[130] Claude's "Rules" were compiled by John Eyre (1754–1803), an evangelical clergyman whose involvement with *The Evangelical Magazine* contributed greatly to its success among both established and dissenting ministers. Alongside Claude's "Rules" were instructions from other notable English preachers such as Phillip

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[127] Williams, preface to *The Christian Preacher*, xix.

[128] Ebenezer Porter, *The Young Preacher's Manual, or, A collection of treatises on preaching* (Boston: Charles Ewer, 1819).

[129] Porter, preface to *The Young Preacher's Manual*, v–vi.

[130] Sheva, *The Preacher's Manual: containing I. Two essays on lay-preaching and on the ministerial character: II. Simplicity recommended to ministers of the gospel; third edition: III. Letters on preaching* (London: Richard Baynes, 1820).

Doddridge (1702–1751), Cotton Mather, John Newton (1725–1807), William Cowper (1731–1800), and Isaac Watts (1674–1748).

The 1822 edition of *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* referred to several works that either reproduced Claude's *Essay* or relied heavily on its instructions. They were *The Christian Preacher's Assistant*, *Sketches of Sermons*, and *The Preacher: or Sketches of Original Sermons*.[131] Affixed to *The Preacher* was "a familiar Essay on the Composition of a Sermon." Despite sharing the same title, this "familiar Essay" was not Claude's work, but that of Andrew Fuller, who composed the "Essay" to assist lay preachers and younger ministers. The work enjoyed two subsequent publications in the United States in 1838 and 1842.[132] It appears in Fuller's *Works* as "Thoughts on Preaching, in Letters to a Young Minister."[133] *The Magazine* offered a brief review of each work before concluding: "The most improving use of Sketches of Sermons is to examine them in connexion with the rules of composition laid down by Claude and others."[134]

S. T. Sturtevant and the Claudian Scheme

Alongside the other works mentioned above, the 1822 *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* reviewed a fourth work, this one being from the London Baptist pastor, S. T. Sturtevant (d. 1843). Sturtevant published his *Letters and*

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[131] *The Preacher: or Sketches of Original Sermons; chiefly selected from the Manuscripts of two eminent Divines of the last century, for the use of Lay Preachers and Young Ministers. To which is prefixed, a familiar Essay on the Composition of a Sermon* (Baynes, 1822). See "Review of Religious Publications," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 30 (1822): 483–484.

[132] *The Preacher; or, Sketches of Original Sermons, Chiefly Selected from the Manuscripts of Two Eminent Divines of the Last Century, for the use of lay preachers and young ministers. To which is prefixed, a familiar Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1838); *The Preacher; or, Sketches of Original Sermons, Chiefly Selected from the Manuscripts of Two Eminent Divines of the Last Century, for the use of lay preachers and young ministers. To which is prefixed, a familiar Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1842).

[133] Fuller, "Thoughts on Preaching, in Letters to a Young Minister. Letters I–IV," in *Works*, 1:712–727.

[134] "Review of Religious Publications," 484.

Conversations on preaching in 1822, which was subsequently revised and expanded in 1828 in two volumes as *The Preacher's Manual*.[135] While he acknowledged his appreciation for several older works on preaching, Sturtevant selected Claude's *Essay* as the basis for his own since it was "the only work that has survived the lapse of time, and that has preserved its reputation."[136] Building on Claude's rules, Sturtevant adapted and expanded it as Simeon had done before him. Dargan pointed to Sturtevant's work as an example of the ongoing impact of Claude's *Essay* in the middle of the nineteenth century.[137]

Interestingly, Sturtevant believed Claude's *Essay* began exerting its influence in the British Isles in Edinburgh in the mid 1700s, through Blair's preaching and lectures on rhetoric. Blair, he supposed, read Claude in the original French, and proceeded to follow his rules in his own sermons and lectures.[138] Indeed, Sturtevant referred to Blair as "Claude's great disciple" and attributed much of Blair's reputation as a preacher to Claude's principles.[139] Sturtevant's comments warrant further examination in a future study. A brief look at the headings of Blair's lectures on rhetoric does reveal some notable similarities to Claude's instructions.[140]

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[135] S. T. Sturtevant, *Letters and conversations on preaching: including Rules for the Composition of Sermons, in which the Principles of the celebrated Claude are illustrated, by Outlines of Discourses and Quotations from the best Authors* (London: R. Baynes, 1822); S. T. Sturtevant, *The Preacher's Manual; a Course of Lectures on Preaching, in which Claude's Principles, as laid down in "Letters and Conversations on Preaching" are more fully developed, and illustrated by numerous examples, with a view to assist the least educated class of Preachers* (London: R. Baynes, 1828–1829).

[136] S. T. Sturtevant, preface to *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:iii.

[137] Dargan, *The Art of Preaching*, 201.

[138] Sturtevant, preface to *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:iii. An example of this may be seen in Blair's insistence on the unity of a sermon. He wrote, "Unity indeed is of great consequence in every composition. . . . What I mean by unity is, that here should be some one main point to which the whole strain of the sermon shall refer. It must not be a bundle of different subjects strung together, but one object must predominate throughout." Blair, *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres*, 2:299.

[139] Sturtevant, *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:399

[140] See Blair's lecture on eloquence. Hugh Blair, *Heads of the lectures on Rhetorick, and belles lettres, in the University of Edinburgh, 1767* (Edinburgh, 1767) and Blair, "XXIX. *Eloquence of the Pulpit*," in *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres*, 2:290–321.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the impact of Claude's *Essay* on English preaching through a careful interaction with the primary source material. As has been shown, Robinson's translation was well received and widely read among Particular Baptists, who relied heavily on Claude's instructions when composing their own sermons. At the same time, Robinson's convictions concerning religious liberty, his disdain for the established church, and his copious notes, prevented his translation from reaching a wider audience. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the role Particular Baptists played in the evolution of modern homiletics through their use and distribution of Claude's *Essay*. Simeon's edition, with its appended sermon skeletons, began the trend of printing Claude's *Essay* alongside sermons or other works, a practice that continued well into the 1830s. Even as late as 1870, the renowned American Baptist preacher and seminary founder, John Broadus (1827–1895), described Claude's *Essay* as the most influential Protestant preaching manual of the last century and a half, exerting a wide influence on both sides of the Atlantic.[141]

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[141] While he was critical of Claude's "stiff and uniform" plan, Broadus affirmed its significance when he wrote, "Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon was for a century and a half the favorite Protestant text-book. The editions of Robert Robinson and Charles Simeon are well known." John A. Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: Sheldon, 1876), 174. See also John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Smith, 1871), 33. McGlon notes the usage of Claude's *Essay* and Fenelon's *Dialogues on Eloquence* in American Baptist seminaries in the mid 1800s. See Charles Addis McGlon, "Speech Education in Baptist Theological Seminaries in the United States, 1819–1843" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1951), 107.

CHAPTER 3

THE PREACHER AND HIS SERMON: ANDREW
FULLER'S READING OF JEAN CLAUDE

Behind every preacher is a theology that informs his pulpit ministry and a

methodology that guides it.[1] Without question, the most formative theological shift that

occurred in Fuller's early years of ministry came when he exchanged the High Calvinism

of his youth for an Evangelical Calvinism that would characterize his ministry for the rest

of his life.[2] Recognizing such a change would "affect the whole tenor of my preaching,"

Fuller resolved not to raise the issue in the pulpit until his judgment was settled.[3] By the

late 1770s, he solidified his position and began openly issuing calls to the unconverted.[4]

From that point forward, Fuller's homiletical theology was driven by the conviction that

sinners are commanded to come to Christ and preachers are obligated to invite them.

This theological shift was one of two pivotal moments early in Fuller's

ministry that shaped his preaching for years to come. A primary argument of this

dissertation is that the second was his reading of Claude's *Essay*. Therefore, what

Evangelical Calvinism did for Fuller's homiletical theology, Claude's *Essay* did for his

methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to compare Fuller's instructions on

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[1] This chapter is an expanded version of an article published in *The Journal of Andrew Fuller Studies*. See Steele B. Wright, "The preacher and his sermon: Andrew Fuller's reading of Jean Claude," *Journal of Andrew Fuller Studies*, no. 3 (2021): 35–48.

[2] For background to this debate, see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and "The Modern Question": A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 1 (1965): 101–123. See also Peter J. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003).

[3] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:13, 18.

[4] Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2015), 43

preaching with Claude's to demonstrate the continuity between the two preachers and to highlight the areas where Fuller diverged from his French counterpart. The present chapter lays the methodological foundation for Fuller's preaching before exploring his sermon material in subsequent chapters.

By focusing on Fuller's use of Claude's *Essay*, this thesis does not claim that the French preacher was his only influence. Indeed, Fuller alluded to "other publications of subordinate merit" that young preachers might consult alongside Claude.[5] Nevertheless, within Fuller's writings, there is limited evidence related to the influence of other writers on his homiletical method. The only other author Fuller referenced by name in his "Thoughts on Preaching" was Jonathan Edwards. Referring to Edwards's preaching, he wrote, "Look over the table of contents to his *Thirty-three Sermons*, and you will find the title of each sermon throw an amazing light upon the text. The sentiment expressed in the title he calls the doctrine of the text; and all he says is to illustrate, establish, or improve it."[6] While Fuller conceded that Edwards's sermons were not to be imitated in every respect, he did commend them for their unified design and singular focus.

A brief survey of Fuller's 1798 library reveals two general works on oratory, Cicero's *Brutus, or history of famous orators*, and *The Art of Speaking*, a contemporary publication by James Burgh that outlined various rules on public speaking.[7] The library

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[5] Andrew Fuller, "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon: or, Plain and Familiar Thoughts, Addressed to a Young Minister from his Pastor," in *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons, Chiefly Selected from the Manuscripts of Two Eminent Divines of the Last Century, For the Use of Lay Preachers and Young Ministers*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1838), 1:25.

[6] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720. The work appears in Fuller's 1798 library as "Edwards, Jonathan *Practical Sermons, never before Published* (Edinburgh, 1788). "Edwards's xxxiii Ser. No. 50.""

[7] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero's Brutus, or history of famous orators: also, his Orator, or accomplished speaker. Now first translated into English, by E. Jones* (London: B. White, 1776); James Burgh, *The art of speaking. Containing, I. An essay; in which are given rules for expressing properly the principal passions and humours, which occur in Reading, or public Speaking* [. . .] *with Notes of Direction referring to the Essay*, 5th ed. (London: T. Longman, 1781).

also contained a copy of Gilbert Burnet's (1643–1715) *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care*, Cotton Mather's *Student and Preacher*, which was republished in 1781 by John Collett Ryland, and David Jennings's (1691–1762) *Christian Preaching, and Ministerial Service*.[8] Mather and Jennings were standard reading for many eighteenth-century dissenting ministers, with Mather serving as a guide in the realm of pastoral theology and Jennings in homiletical theology.

Based on his study of eighteenth-century Particular Baptist ordination sermons, Wheeler concludes that Fuller's pastoral theology—and specifically his vision for preaching—showed a great deal of continuity with his Particular Baptist peers.[9] In his discussion of their homiletical method, Wheeler focused on their plain delivery and simple style.[10] He observed, "Their style of preaching was described as "judicious, methodical, scriptural, plain, and experimental," adapted to the state and conditions of the people, and delivered with boldness and earnestness."[11] Grant arrives at a similar conclusion following a more detailed discussion of Fuller's historical context. He points to the general movement in English literature and rhetoric toward a more simple, plain prose, which evangelical preachers adapted for use in the pulpit.[12]

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[8] Gilbert Burnet, *A discourse of the pastoral care. Written By the Right Reverend Father in God, Gilbert, Lord Bishop of Sarum* (London: R. R., 1692); Cotton Mather, *Dr. Cotton Mather's student and preacher. Intituled, Manuductio ad ministerium; or, directions for a candidate of the ministry. [. . .] Republished by John Ryland, A. M. of Northampton* (London: Charles Dilly, 1781); David Jennings, *Christian Preaching, and Ministerial Service, Considered in a Sermon [. . .] To which is added, A Charge Delivered on the same Occasion. By P. Doddridge, D. D.* (London: J. Brackstone, 1742).

[9] See Nigel Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists: An Examination of Andrew Fuller's Ordination Sermons* (H & E Academic, 2021), 129–166.

[10] Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists*, 114.

[11] Wheeler quotes Benjamin Wallin's ordination sermon, *A Charge and Sermon together with an Introductory Discourse and Confession of Faith Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Abraham Booth Feb. 16, 1769, in Goodman's Fields* (London: G. Keith, 1769). See Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists*, 114–115.

[12] Keith Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 36 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 78.

While others have noted the importance of Claude's *Essay* for Fuller, no study has examined that work alongside Fuller's homiletical instructions and sought to compare the two.[13] Therefore, the primary texts this chapter considers are Robinson's two-volume translation of Claude's *Essay* and Fuller's "Thoughts on Preaching," located in the first volume of his *Works*.[14] The present chapter advances the argument of the dissertation by showing specific points of continuity and discontinuity between Fuller's and Claude's instructions on preaching. The first section establishes the historical connection between Fuller and Claude's *Essay*. The second section examines Claude's *Essay* alongside Fuller's "Thoughts on Preaching" under two key headings: "The Principal Ends of Preaching" and "The Composition of the Sermon."

Encountering Claude's *Essay*

Fuller was midway through his ministry at Soham Baptist Church when Robert Robinson first published his translation of Claude's *Essay* in 1778–1779.[15] Morris noted that Fuller read a copy of the *Essay* soon after entering the ministry in the spring of 1775. Whether he acquired the *Essay* before its publication or shortly after is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, Morris's comments are worth quoting at length: "One of the first books that Mr. Fuller read, after entering on the ministry, and which he frequently recommended to others, was Claude's Essay on the composition of a Sermon; and to that work he acknowledged himself indebted, for any just ideas which he entertained upon the

[13] See Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 79–85; Stephen R. Holmes and Jonathan Woods, "Andrew Fuller's Soham Farewell Sermons: Context and Text," *Baptist Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2020): 2–16; Peter J. Morden, ""Be reconciled to trying disciplines": Andrew Fuller's Pastorate at Soham, 1775–1782," *Journal of Andrew Fuller Studies* 1, no. 1 (2020): 31–45. In his work on preaching, Old laments the lack of attention he gave to Robinson's translation of Claude's *Essay*, given its influence among Baptists. See Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 6, *The Modern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 730.

[14] Andrew Fuller, "Thoughts on Preaching: Letters I–IV," in *Works*, 1:712–727. An earlier version of these letters was published as "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon: or, Plain and Familiar Thoughts, Addressed to a Young Minister from his Pastor" in *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons*.

[15] The first volume of Robinson's translation was published near the end of 1778 with the second volume appearing the following year.

subject."[16] As Grant notes, Fuller's dependence on Claude's *Essay* was "not unique, representing, as it did, something of a consensus in eighteenth-century Protestant homiletics."[17] The Particular Baptists contributed to this consensus as much as any other group, since they were the target audience for Robinson's initial translation and they frequently recommended it to others. Given Fuller's early acquaintance with the *Essay* and his growing reputation among his peers, one may conclude that Fuller also played an important role in the widespread use of Claude's *Essay* among Baptists in the decades to come.

The present work assumes that Fuller used Robinson's translation as his primary source for Claude's *Essay*, rather than Simeon's later edition. The reasons for this are threefold. First, Fuller encountered Claude's *Essay* early in his ministry—likely between the late 1770s and early 1780s—and Simeon did not publish his first edition until 1796. Second, Fuller knew Robinson and sought his advice prior to accepting his pastorate in Kettering.[18] As a young Baptist minister with little formal education, Fuller epitomized the type of reader Robinson aimed to serve with his translation. Finally, Fuller consulted Robinson's translation on several occasions throughout his writings. One example may be seen in his 1793 publication, *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared*, in which Fuller approvingly cited Robinson's description of the benefits of Calvinistic preaching and its role in the "revival of practical godliness."[19] While Fuller may have read Simeon's edition in his later years, the present work assumes

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[16] J. W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, Late Pastor of the Baptist Church at Kettering, and Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society* (London: T. Hamilton, 1816), 69.

[17] Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 80.

[18] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:28–29.

[19] Andrew Fuller, *The Calvinistic and Socinian systems examined and compared, as to their moral tendency; in a series of letters addressed to the friends of vital and practical religion, especially those amongst Protestant dissenters*, 6th ed. (London: W. Harrod, 1793), 29.

that Robinson's translation was Fuller's primary tool for reading and interpreting Claude's *Essay*.

Further evidence related to Fuller's reading of Claude's *Essay* is found in an 1839 work entitled, *The history of Dissenters, during the last thirty years*, written by the congregational minister, James Bennett (1774–1862).[20] The work includes a short biographical account of Fuller's life in which Bennett observed that Fuller "reversed the usual process of popularity" since his prominence as an author preceded his popularity in the pulpit.[21] Bennett continued, "He had, indeed, studied to supply the want of education for the ministry, by carefully reading Claude's 'Essay on the Composition of a Sermon;' and though his manner was not attractive, those who had been instructed by his books, were anxious to hear his living voice."[22] Like many ministers without a formal education, Fuller relied on his connections with other pastors to supply him with material for his own personal edification. Reflecting on this aspect of Fuller's legacy, John Broadus concluded, "Fuller was a very noble example of the 'self-made' theologian and preacher, but he made himself with the help of the great scholars who had preceded him—as self-made men commonly must do."[23] Thus, Claude's *Essay* warrants a place alongside other important works—such as Taylor's *The Modern Question* and Edwards's *Freedom of the Will*—that had a formative effect on Fuller in the early years of his ministry.[24]

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[20] James Bennett, *The history of Dissenters, during the last thirty years, (from 1808 to 1838)* (London: William Stevens, 1839).

[21] Bennett, *The history of Dissenters*, 474

[22] Bennett, *The history of Dissenters*, 474–475.

[23] Broadus mentions Fuller within his discussion of John Owen. See John A. Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: Sheldon, 1876), 206.

[24] Abraham Taylor, *The modern question concerning repentance and faith, examined with candour in four dialogues; [. . .] and repentance unto life, and faith unto salvation, are proved at large to be the duty of sinners* (1742); Jonathan Edwards, *A careful and strict enquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that freedom of will, which is supposed to be essential to moral agency, vertue and vice, rewrd and punishment, praise and blame* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1754).

Fuller never intended to provide a comprehensive homiletical manual in his own letters on preaching. Rather, he set out to answer the inquiries of interested ministers who were engaged in village preaching and lacked any formal homiletical training. As the editor of *The Preacher* commented, Fuller simply sought to "provide them with a staff, when they walked into the vineyard."[25] The title of Fuller's work, which first appeared in *The Preacher* and which he later expanded, was an "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon: or, 'Plain and Familiar Thoughts, Addressed to a Young Minister, from his Pastor.'" For those preachers who were eager to learn more than Fuller himself could provide, he directed them to Claude's *Essay*. He wrote, "Those however who wish to pursue this inquiry, and to become acquainted with the different methods of constructing a discourse, will meet with ample information in 'Claude's Essay on the composition of a Sermon,' as well as from other publications of subordinate merit."[26] What Fuller gave by way of introduction, Claude could supply in full. That Fuller's essay bore the same title as Claude's further illustrates the French preacher's influence upon his own thinking.

The remainder of this chapter seeks to show that Claude's *Essay* served as Fuller's primary homiletical guide for developing his own method of sermon composition. Along with Claude, Fuller counseled preachers to build their sermons upon a single subject, which they deduced from a careful study of the biblical text. Next, he showed them how to explain, establish, and apply the truth of the passage while employing simple language, clear logic, and a unified design. Though Fuller relied heavily on Claude's *Essay*, he nevertheless retained a distinctly evangelical flavor in his own instructions as he emphasized the personal spirituality of the preacher, the essential

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[25] Preface to *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons*, v.

[26] Fuller, "Essay," in *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons*, 25.

role of the person and work of Christ within the sermon, and the free offer of the gospel to the unconverted.

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The Principal Ends of Preaching
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Claude: Instruct, Please, Affect

Woven throughout the fabric of Claude's *Essay* is a clear vision for preaching that guides his practical instructions. Claude expressed this vision simply through what he termed "the principal ends" of preaching—to instruct, please, and affect the listeners.[27] This preaching triad is not original to Claude, as its roots trace back through the early church to the ancient rules of rhetoric.[28] With this context in mind, Claude first advised preachers to instruct their listeners in the truth of the text. However, this instruction extended beyond simply explaining its meaning. "For preaching," according to Claude, "is not only intended to give the sense of scripture, but also of theology in general; and, in short, to explain the whole of religion."[29] Thus, preaching is both an exegetical and a theological exercise.

Alongside their efforts to instruct people in the ways of God, preachers should also seek to please them. The language of "pleasing" the hearers may strike some modern readers as strange. In today's context, preaching to please evokes thoughts of amending the message for the sake of acceptance. However, this is not how Claude, nor Robinson, understood the idea. For them, it simply referred to the preacher's efforts to delight or

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[27] Claude wrote, "A sermon should instruct, please, and affect; that is, it should always do these as much as possible." Claude, *Essay*, 1:26. Later, in his discussion on the Exordium (Introduction), he expanded, "There are three principal ends, which a preacher should propose, to instruct, to please, and to affect." Claude, *Essay*, 2:473.

[28] Specifically, Augustine and Cicero, who both relied on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. See O. C. Edwards Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 1:452–455.

[29] Claude, *Essay*, 1:5.

satisfy his audience.[30] The apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:2 supply further context for the term, when he spoke of having "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."[31] While ministers should not pander to the preferences of their audiences, they should aim to please them by removing any obstacles that lie between the text and their ability to comprehend it. In this way, pleasing was a form of genuine persuasion. Again, Claude counseled, "The preacher must not always labour to carry the people beyond themselves, nor to ravish them into extacies: but he must always satisfy them, and maintain in them an esteem and an eagerness for practical piety."[32] When the mind is pleased at the prospect of godliness, the heart is drawn toward it. As a result, preachers' efforts to instruct and please lead them to the final aim—to affect.

Only when the affections have been reached is the preacher's task complete. For "the pulpit was erected to instruct the minds of men in religious subjects, and not to gratify curiosity, to inflame the heart, and not to find play for imagination."[33] Instruction must necessarily move from the mind to the heart, since it is the aim of preachers to unite people in one heart and one soul to God.[34] Commenting on the difference between a bare explanation of the biblical text and the kind of impassioned preaching that truly moves people, Claude exclaimed:

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[30] Samuel Johnson, "Please," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers* 2 vols., 4th ed. (London: W. Strahan, 1773), 2:374.

[31] All Bible translations are taken from the King James Version.

[32] Claude, *Essay*, 1:13. An illustration later made famous by Jonathan Edwards also comes to mind here. On the difference between engaging in speculative knowledge and being satisfied by divine truth, Edwards wrote, "He that has perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt it." See Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 272.

[33] Claude, *Essay*, 2:13.

[34] Claude, *Essay*, 2:237–238.

> Every body can read scripture with notes and comments to obtain simply the sense: but we cannot instruct, solve difficulties, unfold mysteries, penetrate into the ways of divine wisdom, establish truth, refute error, comfort, correct, and censure, fill the hearers with an admiration of the wonderful works and ways of God, inflame their souls with zeal, powerfully incline them to piety and holiness, which are the ends of preaching, unless we go farther than barely enabling them to understand scripture.[35]

In summary, preachers must explain the essential meaning of the biblical text and they must bring that meaning to bear on the congregation so that their hearts and minds are impressed with the truth. Only when the listeners have been instructed, pleased, and affected by the message are the ultimate ends of preaching then fulfilled.

Fuller: The Glory of God in the Advancement of His Kingdom

Ryland succinctly captured Fuller's vision for preaching when he reflected on his late friend's ministry in the pulpit: "Its great and single object was the glory of God in the advancement of his kingdom in the world, which included, and excited in him, the most earnest desires and endeavour for the good of souls."[36] The theology that permeated Fuller's writings and energized his missional endeavors also animated his preaching. Thus, for Fuller, the "principal work" of the Christian pastor consisted in declaring the whole counsel of God so as to "save yourself and them that hear you—or, if they are not saved, to be pure from their blood."[37] Fuller's expectation that ministers declare the whole counsel of God echoed Claude's earlier exhortations for preachers to explain the whole of religion.

A more thorough articulation of Fuller's vision for preaching is found in "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-Matter of Them" of his "Thoughts on Preaching." After a brief survey of various New Testament passages summarizing the ministry of the

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[35] Claude, *Essay*, 1:5.

[36] John Ryland Jr., *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope Illustrated in the Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller*, 2nd ed. (London: Button & Son, 1818), 382.

[37] Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:712.

apostles, Fuller offered four concluding observations.[38] The first two answer the question, "What must every sermon do?" First, every sermon should have an errand, or a singular purpose, that will result in eternal salvation if it is obeyed.[39] For the unbeliever, the errand is a summons to repentance and faith. For the believer, it is an exhortation to persevere in godliness. It is possible, Fuller supposed, to fill the preaching hour "without imparting any useful instruction, without commending myself to any man's conscience, and without winning, or even aiming to win, one soul to Christ."[40] But such an effort would prove futile. For a sermon without an errand is like a traveler without a destination. In this passing comment, Fuller echoed Claude's three principal ends—to instruct, please, and affect—while placing a unique emphasis on the evangelistic nature of the sermon.

In addition to preaching with an errand, Fuller argued that every sermon should also contain a portion of the doctrine of salvation by the death of Christ.[41] Though Christ is not the primary theme of every text, he must be present in every sermon.[42] While Wheeler correctly notes the Christ-centered nature of Fuller's preaching ministry as a whole, he appears to overstate his case when he writes, "Fuller believed that Christ should be the main subject of every sermon."[43] Believing Christ should be present in every sermon is not necessarily the same as believing Christ should be the main subject of every sermon, as Fuller himself stated, "I do not mean to be the apologist for that

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[38] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:715.

[39] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:715.

[40] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:716.

[41] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:716.

[42] Elsewhere Fuller warned, "We need not follow those who drag in Christ on all occasions. . . . Still less need we see him prefigured by every thing in which a heated imagination may trace a resemblance." Nevertheless, he continued, "The sacred scriptures are full of Christ, and uniformly lead to him." Fuller, "Letters on Systematic Divinity: Letter VII. The uniform bearing of the Scriptures on the Person and Work of Christ," in *Works*, 1:702–703.

[43] Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists*, 140.

fastidious disposition apparent in some hearers, who require that every sermon shall have Christ for its immediate theme, and denominate every thing else legal preaching."[44] Thus, it is more accurate to say that Fuller believed every sermon should center upon a single truth—deduced from a careful study of the biblical text—and that preachers should labor to connect that truth to the doctrine of the cross whenever possible.

In a sermon entitled "Faith in the Gospel a Necessary Prerequisite to Preaching It," Fuller was both clear and careful when he articulated his position on the place of Christ within the sermon:

> Every sermon, more or less, should have some relation to Christ, and bear on his person and work. This is the life of all doctrine, and it will be our own fault if it is dry. Do not consider it as one subject among others, but as that which involves all others, and gives them an interest they could not otherwise possess. Preach not only the truth, but all truth, "as it is in Jesus." However ingenious our sermons may be, unless they bear on Christ, and lead the mind to Christ, we do not preach the faith of the gospel.[45]

"The preaching of Christ will answer every end of preaching," Fuller summarized elsewhere, for "this is the doctrine which God owns to conversion, to the leading of awakened sinners to peace, and to the comfort of true Christians."[46] Fuller's consistent, yet careful, approach to preaching Christ will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6. In summary, the entire corpus of his writings reveals a sustained focus on Christ as the principal end of both the written and the preached Word.[47]

Fuller's next two observations addressed the nature of preaching as a whole. As preachers proclaim the gospel, they should not imitate the orator, "whose attention is

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[44] Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190.

[45] Fuller, "Faith in the Gospel," in *Works*, 1:516.

[46] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:504

[47] For Fuller's specific instructions on Christ-centered interpretation and preaching, see Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:501–502; Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190–191; Fuller, "Letters on Systematic Divinity: The uniform bearing of the Scriptures on the Person and Work of Christ," in *Works*: 1:702–704; Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:714–717.

taken up with his performance," but the herald, "whose object is to publish, or proclaim, good tidings."[48] Here, Fuller's third reflection resembles Claude's exhortation that preachers be both simple and grave. For "the pulpit is the seat of good natural sense; and the good sense of good men."[49] Preachers' words, remarked Claude, "Should not be proposed in scholastic style nor common guise, but seasoned with a sweet urbanity, accommodated to the capacities of the people, and adapted to the manners of good men."[50] Lost in the circus of his discourse, the orator either speaks beyond his people or below them, while the herald announces his message with a singular focus that was unconcerned with trivial things. In a sermon to fellow ministers, Fuller followed Claude's sentiments: "Though the pulpit is not a place for affected pomposity, neither is it the place for mean and low language."[51] The herald speaks with plainness and perspicuity, simply aiming to deliver his message, rather than dazzle his audience.

Fuller's fourth and final observation paired the obligation of declaring the gospel with "earnest calls, and pressing invitations, to sinners to receive it, together with the most solemn warnings and threatenings to unbelievers who shall continue to reject it."[52] As a young preacher, Fuller followed in the footsteps of his former pastor, the High Calvinist, John Eve (d. 1782), who he admitted "had little or nothing to say to the unconverted."[53] Growing increasingly dissatisfied with this approach, Fuller began issuing calls to the unconverted once he was convinced that God did not oppose the use

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[48] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:716.

[49] Claude, *Essay*, 1:21.

[50] Claude, *Essay*, 2:14.

[51] Fuller, "Ministers should be concerned not to be Despised," in *Works*, 1:489.

[52] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:717.

[53] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:2. Reflecting on the High Calvinism of his early years, Fuller wrote, "The effect of these views was, that I had very little to say to the unconverted, indeed nothing in a way of exhortation to things spiritually good, or certainly connected with salvation." Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:15.

of means, such as preaching, in the conversion of sinners. With the publication of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* in 1785, Fuller's position on this matter was publicly confirmed and the force of his argument reverberated throughout every corner of Particular Baptist life.[54] Even as he urged preachers to freely offer the gospel to unbelievers, Fuller maintained a firm grip on the sovereignty of God as the determining factor in their conversion. "Though we invite men," Fuller wrote, "it is not on their pliability that we must rest our hopes, but on the power and promise of God."[55] Pressing invitations may be one of the primary weapons at the preacher's disposal, but "it is only through God that they become mighty to the pulling down of strong holds."[56]

Interestingly, Claude lamented the abuses of divine sovereignty in his own day through the preaching of those he called "insidious sophisters."[57] According to Claude, such preachers concluded that "since the conversion of men is by the almighty power of God, it is needless to preach his word" and "that it is in vain to tell a sinner, it is his duty to turn to God, as without efficacious grace."[58] While Claude addressed the free offer of the gospel in a passing illustration, Fuller situated it in a place of prominence in his instructions, an indication that the controversy of his day warranted a special emphasis in his preaching.

The Composition of the Sermon

With Fuller's and Claude's visions for preaching firmly in view, attention will now be given to each of their specific homiletical guidelines. What follows is a general

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[54] For the wider impact of this work, see Peter J. Morden, "Baptist and Evangelical: Andrew Fuller and *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*," *Bulletin of the Strict Baptist Historical Society* 38 (2011): 1–20.

[55] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:717.

[56] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:717.

[57] Claude, *Essay*, 2:153.

[58] Claude, *Essay*, 2:153.

outline of Fuller's instructions to younger ministers regarding the process of sermon composition, beginning with the preacher's personal piety and concluding with various important aspects of sermon delivery. Though priority is given to Fuller's method, Claude's *Essay* will be read alongside it to further illuminate points of continuity and discontinuity between the two preachers.

Cultivate a "spiritual frame of mind"

When Fuller described the pulpit as "an awful place," he understood both the gravity and the priority of preaching in the life of the Christian minster.[59] No preacher should enter the pulpit nor the study without fear and trembling. For this reason, Fuller opened his instructions by reminding his readers, "That which greatly aids in the composition and delivery of a sermon is spirituality of mind."[60] He continued, "Without this we shall get no good ourselves, and be likely to do but little good to others. The first thing, therefore before we sit down to study, should be to draw near to God in prayer."[61] Echoing the apostle Paul's words to the church in Corinth, Fuller understood biblical interpretation to be a spiritual exercise that demanded a spiritual approach if one was to see the truth in all its beauty.[62] Speaking to fellow ministers, he stated plainly, "A spiritual state of mind is the best expositor, and more is discovered with it, in a few verses, than in whole chapters without it."[63] For Fuller, preachers may make use of every

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[59] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:25.

[60] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:717.

[61] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:717–718.

[62] See 1 Cor 2:13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

[63] Fuller, "Habitual Devotedness," in *Works*, 1:507.

human gift and talent available to them, but if they neglect to enter into "a spiritual frame of mind" they will never truly understand the Scriptures.[64]

Fuller's initial instructions to draw near to God in prayer flow from his theology of preaching and his doctrine of the Scriptures. In his first letter on "Expounding the Scriptures," Fuller observed, "A humble sense of our own ignorance, and of our entire dependence upon God, has also a great influence on our coming at the true meaning of his word."[65] Both the invitation and the warning are clear. Preachers are invited to gaze upon the grandeur of God before they analyze the intricacies of his Word. At the same time, they should not approach the Bible like a professor opening a textbook, merely searching for something to say. Rather, they must do so as students relying on the Spirit of God to lead them into all truth.[66]

Fuller elaborated on this point elsewhere when he reminded ministers that they must approach the study of divine truth as Christians first and preachers second: "Study the Scriptures minutely, and for yourself, and pray over your study. This will make it your own . . . Read and think, not merely as a minister, but as a Christian."[67] Those who simply examine the Scriptures for the sake of instructing others are like surgeons who become so familiar with the shedding of blood that they lose all sensitivity to it.[68] Even as he counseled others, Fuller recognized the tendency within his heart to forget his own advice. "I want an unction from the Holy One," Fuller confessed after an arduous season

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[64] Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:713.

[65] Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:713.

[66] Mather spoke similarly, "About the way of studying a sermon, I exhort you, that all be with a spirit of piety, and therefore very prayerfully, carried on. . . . Some celebrated preachers have piously declared, they never durst preach a sermon to others, till they have got some good by it themselves. To feel what you speak, how wondrously will it qualify you to be a lively speaker!" Mather, *Dr. Cotton Mather's student and preacher*, 110–111.

[67] Fuller, "Habitual Devotedness," in *Works*, 1:507.

[68] Fuller, "Qualifications and encouragement," in *Works*, 1:142.

of preaching.[69] He continued, "I find a perpetual proneness to read and study rather as a minister than as a Christian; more to find out something to say to the people than to edify my own soul."[70] Fuller's recognition of his own personal failures and his longing for spiritual renewal only confirm the importance he placed upon this initial step in sermon preparation.

When speaking of the preacher's personal piety, Fuller made explicit what is largely implied throughout Claude's *Essay*. Aside from Claude's remark that the preacher must not be "a novice in divinity," he afforded less attention to this preliminary step than to the ensuing areas.[71] As noted previously, Claude's lack of emphasis on the preacher's personal spirituality was one of the earliest complaints against his work. However, the absence of any prolonged discussion on this topic should not be taken to indicate that Claude placed no value on the preacher's spiritual life. Perhaps Claude found it unnecessary to include given that he was producing a homiletical manual, not a comprehensive guide to pastoral ministry. Nevertheless, Fuller's careful attention to the minister's spirituality as a prerequisite for preaching is a notable divergence from Claude's instructions.

Gain a Clear Idea of the Text's "genuine meaning"

Both Fuller and Claude approached the Scriptures with the assumption that every text has an objective meaning that the author intended to communicate to his original audience and which preachers must now labor to uncover for themselves. When choosing a passage, preachers must be careful not to distort the author's meaning, either

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[69] Andrew Fuller to Unknown, July 3, 1788, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller*, copied from Various Sources by Miss Joyce A. Booth, gathered by the Rev. Earnest A. Payne, scanned by Nigel Wheeler (Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford).

[70] Fuller to Unknown, July 3, 1788, *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[71] Claude, *Essay*, 1:93.

by carrying their sermon text too far or cutting it too short. Here, Claude offered a simple word of advice: "When the complete sense of the sacred writer is taken, you may stop; for there are few texts in Scripture, which do not afford matter sufficient for a sermon; and it is equally inconvenient to take too much text, or too little; both extremes must be avoided."[72] It should be noted that the sermon examples found in Claude's *Essay* are typically confined to a single verse, usually from a New Testament epistle. While fewer in his examples, Fuller's texts are similarly taken from a single verse, as are the large majority of his published sermons.[73]

After selecting the text, Fuller advised preachers to "read it in connexion with the context, and endeavour by your own judgment to gain a clear idea of its genuine meaning."[74] Before preachers turn to outside help, they must first deal with the text on its own terms. For Fuller, this consisted of careful and sustained meditation on the passage at hand. Citing Fuller, Sturtevant wrote, "The method itself is to obtain the chief part of a sermon by meditation. The mind will never know its own resources, unless properly exercised; the habit of thinking closely will present many things to it which would not otherwise have been thought of, and the more the invention is exercised, the more fertile it will become."[75] Meditation is essential for preachers to ensure originality in their sermons and avoid imitation.

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[72] Claude, *Essay*, 1:4.

[73] Fuller devoted every Lord's Day morning to expounding larger portions of Scripture, usually a chapter. His rules for these expositions differed from his rules for sermons, though the meaning of the text assumed priority in both cases. For Fuller's reflections on the benefits of expositional preaching, see Fuller, "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis, Interspersed with Practical Reflections," in *Works*, 3:1.

[74] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:718.

[75] The quote does not appear in the Sprinkle edition of Fuller's *Works*. See S. T. Sturtevant, *The Preacher's Manual, or, lectures on preaching: containing all the rules and examples necessary for every species of pulpit address*, 2nd ed. (London: Richard Baynes, 1834), 1:38–39.

When meditating on a preaching passage, Fuller counseled his readers to "examine the force of each word or term of importance."[76] For Claude, as for Fuller, difficult terms must be explained so as to ease any burdens caused by the text in the minds of the hearers.[77] Again, Fuller advised, "Endeavor to understand a subject before you speak of it."[78] On this point, Fuller and Claude were in complete agreement, though his French counterpart offered a stricter warning: "No man will be so rash as to put pen to paper, or begin to discuss a text, till he has well comprehended the sense of it."[79] While understanding the meaning of the text may not guarantee a successful sermon, it does place preachers on the path toward accuracy and clarity in their composition.

Provide the Sermon with
"a unity of design"

Once the meaning of the text is well established, preachers should then turn their attention to sermon design. As previously noted, Claude's most significant contribution to homiletics was his attempt to unify the sermon around a central theme or subject found within the text.[80] While the sermon may have several constituent parts—each of which illuminate the meaning of the passage—the hearer should be able to easily perceive "a perfect body, or a finished building; for one of the greatest excellencies of a sermon is the harmony of its component parts."[81] Claude conceded that some texts lend themselves to a unified design more easily than others. Nevertheless, preachers are

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[76] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:718.

[77] Claude, *Essay*, 1:100.

[78] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

[79] Claude, *Essay*, 1:89.

[80] Old observed, "Claude is evidently concerned that each sermon make one point, and that a sermon have a unity of thought." Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 4, *The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 446.

[81] Claude, *Essay*, 1:63.

responsible for determining the nature of the text and selecting the proper mode of sermon composition.

Claude outlined four potential options for preachers to choose from when designing their sermons: explication, observation, application, or proposition.[82] The sermon text determined which method the preacher would select for dividing his discourse. Claude advised, "the first thing, that I would have such a man do, is to observe the nature of his text, for there are doctrinal, historical, prophetical, and typical texts."[83] The explicatory sermon was best suited for those texts that contained difficult subjects or terms, which needed to be explained to remove any lingering confusion.[84] Claude's instructions on explicatory sermons fill nearly the entirety of his first volume as he explored the particulars of explaining terms, things, intricate subjects, important matters, texts with many parts, expressions peculiar to Scripture, and propositions.

Those texts or subjects that were easier to understand were discussed using the observational method. In the observational sermon, preachers made various theological observations that "instruct the mind" and "inflame the heart" of their listeners.[85] These theological observations could either be speculative or practical. Speculative observations explored the mysteries of the faith while practical observations dealt with basic Christian morality.[86] In both cases, preachers designed their observations with a specific purpose in mind so as to avoid making only "poor, dry, spiritless, observations."[87] Claude labelled explicatory and observational methods as textuary sermons "because, in effect, they keep

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[82] For a helpful discussion of Claude's four categories, see Rolf P. Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)* (Köln, Germany: Böhlau-Verlag, 1972), 84–96.

[83] Claude, *Essay*, 1:94.

[84] Claude, *Essay*, 1:99.

[85] Claude, *Essay*, 2:13.

[86] Claude, *Essay*, 2:13.

[87] Claude, *Essay*, 2:19.

to the text without digression, they regard it as the subject-matter of the whole discussion."[88] In each of these methods, the text determined the design and direction of the sermon.

The third method for discussing a text was through continued application. In the applicative sermon, Claude counseled preachers to reduce the text immediately to practice.[89] Passages that present simple commands and need no explanation—such as exhortations to holiness, repentance, or self-examination—fall into this category. Claude's instructions on applicative sermons are relatively brief and the majority of this section contains illustrations designed to illuminate this method.[90] The fourth and final option for preachers to use is the propositional sermon. In this method, preachers focus on subjects—formally stated as propositions—that arise from within the text.[91] Whereas in the first two categories, the text was the field in which preachers went to work, in the final two, the text is the home from which they set out on their journey.[92]

To what extent Fuller followed Claude's four categories is difficult to determine. Although he did not reproduce them exactly, he did carry several of Claude's principles with him into his own instructions. Fuller defined a sermon as "a discourse on some Divine subject, or a train of interesting thoughts on some sacred theme."[93] For him, sermons handled a variety of both doctrinal and practical subjects.[94] As the names

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[88] Claude, *Essay*, 2:325.

[89] Claude, *Essay*, 2:325.

[90] Somewhat ambiguously, Claude advised preachers, "Always remember on this rule, that in using this method something searching, and powerful must be said, or it would be better let alone." Claude, *Essay*, 2:331.

[91] Claude, *Essay*, 2:396.

[92] Claude supplied the first image when speaking of textuary sermons that regard the text "as the subject-matter of the whole discussion, or, if you please, as the field, which they have to cultivate, or to reap." Claude, *Essay*, 2:325.

[93] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

[94] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:714.

suggest, doctrinal sermons expounded on a particular doctrine of Scripture in an effort to define, defend, and apply it, while practical sermons offered clear and simple instructions regarding some aspect of the Christian life. John Wilkins, and Edwards after him, employed doctrinal and practical categories similarly. At this point, it appears the Puritan tradition forms the more immediate background to Fuller's delineation of sermon subjects as either doctrinal or practical. For Wilkins, sermons contained either doctrinal or practical applications. Doctrinal applications contained a set of clearly defined propositions that were to be known and believed while practical applications focused on particular virtues or vices that were to be either practiced or avoided.[95] Although Fuller outlined three possible ways for preachers to approach the process of sermon design— topical, textual, or compound—only the topical approach is explained at length. In the preface to Fuller's letter on the topical method, the editor lamented that two other essays on the "Mixed and Applicatory mode of Composition" had been lost.[96] What Fuller might have said regarding these subjects remains a mystery.

Whether he was expounding doctrinal or practical subjects, Fuller shared Claude's burden that sermons must have a unity of design, referring to it as "the principal object" that must be pursued "by whatever means it may be attained."[97] He wrote that the preacher, "if he would interest a judicious hearer, must have an object at which he aims, and must never lose sight of it throughout his discourse. . . . It is this that nails the attention of an audience."[98] Reflecting on Fuller's preaching as a whole, J. W. Morris observed, "'Unity of design' was apparent in all his discourses; there were no vagrant

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[95] John Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching, as it fals under the rules of Art* (London: M. F., 1646), 15–17.

[96] Preface to *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons, Chiefly Selected from the Manuscripts of Two Eminent Divines of the Last Century, For the Use of Lay Preachers and Young Ministers* (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1838), v.

[97] Fuller, "Essay," in *The Preacher; or Sketches of Original Sermons*, 25.

[98] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:719.

sentiments, nothing foreign or irrelevant; and, though his preaching exhibited a rich variety of remark, all was made to bear upon the point, and to facilitate the end he had in view."[99] This end—or errand, as Fuller described it—referred to the primary truth, or subject, preachers should bring before their audiences in every sermon.

For the topical sermon, Fuller counseled preachers to ask, "What important truth is it that the text contains, and which I feel impressed upon my own mind, and wish to impress upon that of the congregation?"[100] To arrive at this truth, preachers were to collect all their thoughts on the text and reduce them to a point.[101] This point, which Fuller recognized was formerly called the doctrine, comprised the primary subject of the discourse. Following Lessenich's work, Grant connects Fuller's topical approach to Claude's applicatory and propositional sermons.[102] As will be shown in subsequent chapters, Fuller also appropriated Claude's instructions on explicatory and observational sermons within his topical approach.

Fuller acknowledged that it was common to "divide in a textual way, i.e. to propose to discourse first upon one part or branch of it; secondly, upon another."[103] After supplying an example of this approach which amounted to a phrase-by-phrase discussion of a single verse, he concluded, "I cannot say I approve of this method. It is not, properly speaking, a sermon."[104] Fuller's reasoning was simple. While it may offer some useful observations, the textual approach often failed to identify a single leading truth as the

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[99] Morris, *Memoirs of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 69–70.

[100] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720.

[101] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720.

[102] Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 84. See also Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 84.

[103] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

[104] On dividing in a textual way, Fuller wrote: "The above process, I think, should be brought into the introduction and explication of the text, and should be done in about five minutes." Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

theme of the entire discourse. Given that this approach was not often sufficient for an entire sermon, Fuller advised preachers to make textual observations briefly in the introduction and explication of the text before moving on to the principal subject of the discourse.[105]

At this point, it appears Grant is incorrect to equate the textual approach with Fuller's expositions and his topical approach with his sermons. He writes, "Following the general categories used by Claude and others, Fuller distinguished between expositions, characterized by 'expounding the scriptures,' and sermons, described as 'discourses on Divine subjects,' the latter including both doctrinal and practical discourses. Or in other phrasing, he referred to them as 'textual' and 'topical' approaches to preaching."[106] For Fuller, expositions and sermons formed two separate branches of the pastor's pulpit ministry. Properly speaking, the topical and textual approaches were both options for composing a sermon. As noted above, Fuller preferred the former over the latter. It seems that Fuller employed a largely different approach to his expositions, which amounted to a running commentary on a larger portion of Scripture that contained a mixture of both explanation and application. Thus, Fuller's topical and textual approaches to sermon composition appear to contain elements of each of Claude's four categories—explicatory, observational, applicational, and propositional.

Develop the "parts of the whole"

Once the sermon's structure is complete, the next step is to develop its content. On this point, both Fuller and Claude stressed the importance of clarity and plain speech.

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[105] Fuller appears not to follow his own advice in his sermon, "The qualifications and encouragement of a Faithful Minister illustrated by the character and success of Barnabas." The outline of the sermon is a phrase-by-phrase discussion of Acts 11:24 with no apparent central theme or subject binding them all together. This sermon was preached in 1787 and the date of Fuller's "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon" is unknown. If his instructions on preaching were written later, it may reveal an evolution in Fuller's thought. See Fuller, "Qualifications and encouragement," in *Works*, 1:135–144.

[106] Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 84.

Fuller advised his readers not to aim for fine composition in the pulpit, which tends only to appeal to a few listeners and does not profit the majority. On the contrary, preachers should "use sound speech and good sense."[107] Elsewhere, Fuller contended, "To preach the gospel as we ought to preach it requires, not the subtilty of the metaphysician, but the simplicity of the Christian."[108] Here, Fuller followed the plain style of preaching laid down by the Puritans and Claude before him. Using similar language, Claude instructed his readers: "The pulpit is the seat of good natural sense, and the good sense of good men."[109] In this context, the word "sense" refers not to the meaning of the biblical passage as seen previously, but to soundness of mind, understanding, and human reason.[110] While preachers may plunder the depths of the biblical languages and explore the intricacies of philosophy in their studies, they must remain in the realm of common discourse in the pulpit—proclaiming God's Word with simplicity, clarity, and plain speech.

An essential element of plain-style preaching is the recognition that most listeners are ordinary people. "Embarrassment and obscurity," Claude warned, "are the most disagreeable thing in the world in a gospel-pulpit."[111] With sympathy for his audience, he continued, "It ought to be remembered, that the greatest part of the hearers are simple people, whose profit, however, must be aimed at in preaching: but it is impossible to edify them, unless you be very clear."[112] For Claude, clarity served the principal ends of preaching since it enabled the mind to grasp the truth. With matched enthusiasm, Fuller exhorted his readers: "A few well-chosen thoughts, matured, proved,

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[107] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:717.

[108] Fuller, "Nature of the Gospel," in *Works*, 1:496.

[109] Claude, *Essay*, 1:21.

[110] Johnson, "Sense," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 2:650.

[111] Claude, *Essay*, 1:11.

[112] Claude, *Essay*, 1:11.

and improved, are abundantly more acceptable than when the whole is chopped, as it were, into mince-meat."[113] Speaking similarly in a letter to a fellow minister, Fuller reflected, "I need not say to you, that selection of thoughts is essential to a good Sermon or book. Herein is the difference between good and bad preachers: the latter take all that offers; the former select only the best."[114] If clarity is the objective, how does the preacher arrange his thoughts so that his sermon does not become a jumbled mob of ideas?[115]

To answer this question, Fuller referred his readers to the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, whose practice it was when preaching on a particular doctrine to illustrate, establish, and improve it. Edwards was heavily influenced by the English Puritans who followed a similar method of doctrine, reason, use.[116] In the first section of the sermon, preachers illustrate, or explain, the subject they have derived from the text. They accomplish this by offering several remarks in which the aim is to uncover the truth for their people. Second, preachers establish their subject by offering various "evidences by which this important truth is supported."[117] Finally, they conclude by improving, or applying, the doctrine at hand. By crafting the sermon in this way, preachers help their people to answer three critical questions of the text: "What? Why? What then?"[118]

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[113] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

[114] Fuller to William Newman, January 4, 1813, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[115] Fuller, "Letter III: The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:719.

[116] Grant notes Edwards's reliance on Wilkins's *Ecclesiastes*. See Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 86.

[117] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:721.

[118] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

For his part, Claude outlined the sermon in three sections: the exordium (introduction), discussion, and application.[119] Explanations or observations on the text occupied the majority of the discussion, depending on which approach the preacher had previously selected, while the application was reserved for practical instructions based on the truth that had been taught. For Claude, no sermon was complete until the truth was applied. On this point, Lessenich observed, "The promotion of practical piety was the ultimate end of all neoclassical preaching, including the explicatory and the observatory sermons."[120] Even though Claude argued strongly for the prominence of application within the sermon, he offered surprisingly few instructions on how to develop it.

Both Claude and Fuller believed that the sermon's doctrinal truth gave substance to practical piety and practical piety was the proof that the truth had taken root. Urging his own fellow ministers to preach with both of these in mind, Fuller wrote, "If you preach doctrinally, some may call you an Antinomian; if you preach practically, others may call you a legalist. But go on, my brother: this is a kind of dirt that won't stick. Preach the law evangelically, and the gospel practically."[121] Only when the twin realities of biblical truth and practical obedience have been clearly presented to the people may preachers rest assured that they have been faithful to their charge.

**Preach the Gospel "faithfully,
firmly, earnestly,
affectionately"**

While diligent preparation and careful composition are of utmost importance, no sermon is complete until it has been preached. Fuller recognized the tendency in some preachers to neglect any focus on sermon delivery, supposing "it is the matter, and not

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[119] Claude does mention two more parts: connection and division. Given that each of these are extremely short, he only "properly reckons" three. Curiously, he does not include the conclusion as one of his five parts to the sermon, even though he affords an entire chapter to it. Claude, *Essay*, 1:1–2.

[120] Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 90.

[121] Fuller, "Intimate and Practical Acquaintance," in *Works*, 1:485.

the manner of preaching, that God blesses."[122] Such views may appear to honor God by taking the focus away from the preacher's abilities, but in reality, they undermine the very way God has designed the pulpit to function. Fuller found evidence for this in Paul's prayer in Colossians 4:4 for God to make it clear to him how he ought to speak the mystery of Christ.[123] He concluded that it was not simply the matter of a minister's preaching (what he says) but also the manner of his preaching (how he says it) that God blesses in the preaching event.

When Fuller instructed ministers not to imitate the orator, but the herald, he made it plain that their primary task was not to perform for their audience, but to proclaim their message. He wrote, "There is in the one an earnestness, a fulness of heart, a mind so interested in the subject as to be inattentive to other things, which is not in the other."[124] An overemphasis on eloquence, exquisite composition, and the minutest aspects of voice and gesture tended to distract the preacher from his chief responsibility. While uneducated hearers may not be the most reliable critics, the effect the sermon produced on them was, for Fuller, "the best criterion of its real excellence."[125] Similarly, Claude found all "long trains of arguments" and "metaphysical investigations" to be "mere creatures of fancy" that should be avoided at all costs.[126] Such adventures in the pulpit may impress certain listeners with the preacher's talents, but they often failed to impress upon them the truth of his message.

Although Fuller warned ministers about the perils of pulpit oratory, he did not discard it entirely. In his sermon titled, "Ministers should be concerned not to be

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[122] Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:510.

[123] "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Col 4:4).

[124] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:716.

[125] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:717.

[126] Claude, *Essay*, 2:15–19.

Despised," Fuller offered similar cautions before reminding his listeners that "useful learning and an impressive delivery should by no means be slighted; but they must not be affected."[127] At this point, Fuller carefully distinguished between affectionate preaching and affectation in preaching. Affectation was the critical error of those who were consumed by their performance in the pulpit. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) likened it to an "artificial show, elaborate appearance, or false pretense."[128] Rather than cultivate true affections for God and his word, affected preachers contrived whatever emotions were necessary to engender a response from their listeners. Instead, Fuller implored his listeners: "Cultivate the affectionate. Not indeed an affectation of feeling, but genuine feeling. Christ wept over sinners, so must we."[129] Unlike affected preachers, affectionate preachers proclaimed the gospel with an earnestness that flowed from the sincerity of their heart and the seriousness of their charge.

For Claude, as for Fuller, the pulpit was no place for triviality. Some of his first words to preachers were that they be wise, sober, and chaste. They must be wise, as opposed to those "impertinent people, who utter jests, comical comparisons, quirks and extravagancies."[130] Their wisdom must be accompanied by sobriety, which Claude referred to as one of the most excellent virtues a preacher could possess. For sobriety was opposed to those "rash spirits, who would penetrate all, and curiously dive into mysteries beyond the bounds of modesty."[131] Such mysteries included vain speculations about the minutiae of biblical doctrines that extended beyond human reason. Fuller argued similarly in his fourth letter on preaching regarding the abuse of allegory in the pulpit. He decried those whose sermons abounded in scriptural language but were devoid of

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[127] Fuller, "Ministers should be concerned not to be Despised," in *Works*, 1:489.

[128] Johnson, "Affectation," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1:108.

[129] Fuller, "Ministers should be concerned not to be Despised," in *Works*, 1:496.

[130] Claude, *Essay*, 1:14.

[131] Claude, *Essay*, 1:15.

scriptural religion.[132] "If your preaching be such as God approves, and if you study to show yourself approved of him," Fuller observed, "it will lead the people to admire your Saviour rather than you, and render him the topic of their conversation."[133]

While Fuller denounced the excesses of pulpit eloquence and rhetorical flourish, he also lamented those preachers who erred in the opposite direction—merely seeking to deliver the truth without any concern for how it was presented. "You may preach even the gospel dryly," he conceded. However, "it must be preached faithfully, firmly, earnestly, affectionately. . . . Manner is a means of conveying truth. A cold manner disgraces important truth."[134] Like many of his contemporaries, Fuller urged ministers to preach with an evangelical warmth that drew the audience in and an evangelistic zeal that compelled them to respond.

Lessenich observed the tendency in English preachers to be more dispassionate in their delivery than their French counterparts.[135] In his instructions on preaching doctrine, Claude warned against proposing any point in a "dry, barren, scholastic manner, which will deprive it of all its beauty and efficacy."[136] Like Fuller, Claude understood the manner of the preacher's delivery could either clarify the truth or conceal it. On the other end, Claude counseled preachers to ensure their emotions matched both the mood of the text and the moment in their sermon. For example, the sermon's introduction "must always participate in the Spirit of the subject, that you mean to discuss, in order to

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[132] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Abuse of Allegory in Preaching," in *Works*, 1:727.

[133] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Abuse of Allegory in Preaching," in *Works*, 1:727.

[134] Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:510.

[135] Lessenich wrote, "Voltaire remarked that a pathetic discourse by Bourdaloue would seem ridiculous to an English audience which expected a clam tract rather than a passionate declamation." Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*, 61. In favor of the English disposition, Sturtevant wrote, "In general the French eloquence and the English have very distinct characteristics: one seems to be chiefly formed upon the philosophy of the passions, the other is plain and homely, yet powerfully appeals to the conscience and the understanding; and we do not hesitate, as Englishmen, on which to fix our regards, or which example to follow." Sturtevant, *The Preacher's Manual*, 2:513.

[136] Claude, *Essay*, 1:26.

dispose your hearers for it."[137] Solemn subjects warranted a sober disposition to prepare people to receive the seriousness of the message. In a similar way, Claude believed the sermon's conclusion should be both lively and animating, with three particular dispositions, or emotions, from which the preacher may choose to accomplish this end— the violent, the tender, and the elevated.[138] While Fuller did not offer equally specific instructions on the emotions, as Claude did, he remained convinced that ministers must proclaim the gospel with a "holy, affectionate zeal" born out of their listeners' desperate need for the gospel of Christ.[139]

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the influence of Claude's *Essay* on Fuller's homiletical method and to show the areas of continuity and discontinuity between the two preachers. Fuller shared Claude's vision that preachers should instruct, please, and affect their hearers. In addition to these three principal ends, he emphasized the need to preach Christ in every sermon and to freely offer the gospel to the unconverted. One discerns a profound sense of urgency in Fuller's instructions as he considered the glory of the gospel against the backdrop of human sin. Alongside this overarching vision for preaching, Claude's deep concern for unity and clarity permeated Fuller's own writings as he encouraged preachers to explain, establish, and improve the subject in doctrinal sermons and to inquire and enforce it in practical sermons.[140] As his primary homiletical guide, Claude's *Essay* supplied Fuller with a coherent method of sermon composition—one that he adapted to suit his own theological convictions and ministerial context.

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[137] Claude, *Essay*, 2:467.

[138] Claude, *Essay*, 2:489–491.

[139] Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:510.

[140] Chapters 4 and 5 explain each method in greater detail.

CHAPTER 4

DOCTRINAL PREACHING: FULLER'S
SERMONS ON JUSTIFICATION

In his account of Fuller's life, John Ryland Jr. recalled a story of his late friend's first visit to Oxford University. Raised in a rural community in east Cambridgeshire, Fuller was foreign to the grandiose display of architecture that decorated one of England's most esteemed universities. When his traveling companion requested they stop and admire the beauty of their surroundings, Fuller responded, "Brother, I think there is one question which, after all that has been written on it, has not yet been well answered." Perplexed by this strange comment, his friend urged him to proceed. "The question," continued Fuller, "is What is justification?" For "that inquiry is far more to me than all these fine buildings."[1] Ever the one to speak his mind, Fuller's comments illustrate his simple devotion to the discovery of biblical truth and the immense value he placed on doctrinal subjects.

Perhaps the quickest route to Fuller's keen theological mind is through his polemical works. Written to combat various theological errors such as High Calvinism, Socinianism, Sandemanianism, and Deism, among others, Fuller rigorously examined the Scriptures to defend biblical orthodoxy against those who threatened it.[2] For these contributions, A. C. Underwood (1885–1948) crowned Fuller "the soundest and most

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[1] John Ryland Jr., *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope Illustrated in the Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller*, 2nd ed. (London: Button & Son, 1818), 371–372.

[2] Volume 2 of Fuller's *Works* contain the largest portion of his theological writings. See Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 2, *Controversial Publications*, ed. Joseph Belcher (1845; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle).

creatively useful theologian the Particular Baptists have ever had."[3] However, Fuller's deep and abiding concern for theological truth may not only be seen through these writings, but also through his printed sermon material on doctrinal subjects.

The argument of the present chapter is that in his doctrinal preaching, Fuller clothed his theological acumen in homiletical simplicity so that people might be plainly instructed in the truth and implored to receive it. Claude's *Essay* supplied Fuller with valuable insights for preaching doctrinal subjects through his instructions on explicatory and propositional sermons, which reveal the French preacher's concern for doctrinal simplicity, a unified design, and plain logic. While he followed Claude's advice in several key areas, Fuller also modified Claude's instructions to suit his own theological and ministerial context. He placed a heavier emphasis on the centrality of the cross, arguing that preachers must demonstrate the relationship between their primary doctrine and the work of God in salvation. In addition to sound logic and biblical proofs, Fuller used a kind of redemptive reasoning with which he proved his doctrine by showing its consistency with God's plan of salvation throughout all of Scripture. Finally, Fuller's doctrinal preaching also served an apologetic purpose in that he used the occasion to demonstrate the supremacy of the Christian faith over and against its rivals.

First, this chapter examines Claude's counsel for preaching doctrine, which is found within his general instructions on sermon composition as well as his specific rules related to explicatory and propositional sermons. Claude did not create an exclusive category for doctrinal sermons, therefore his instructions related to this subject must be drawn from various parts within his *Essay*. Next, the chapter situates Fuller in his historical context by providing a brief survey of doctrinal preaching within the Puritan, Particular Baptist, and wider evangelical traditions. Finally, the chapter outlines Fuller's

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[3] A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1947), 166.

approach to doctrinal preaching before examining his three published sermons on the doctrine of justification by faith.

Claude's *Essay*: Doctrinal Preaching

According to Claude, the selection of a text preceded the selection of a subject, or doctrine. Only when a text has been selected and the meaning thoroughly understood may preachers then proceed to develop the thematic focus of their discourse. Both the meaning of the text and the identification of a subject are essential to faithful preaching. Claude expressed this conviction in the opening pages of his *Essay*: "Some say, preaching is designed only to make Scripture understood . . . but this is a mistake; for preaching is not only intended to give the sense of Scripture, but also of theology in general; and, in short, to explain the whole religion."[4] With this foundation in mind, Claude proceeded to offer general advice for preaching doctrinal subjects followed by more specific instructions related to sermon composition.

"Agreeable and affecting":
General Observations on
Doctrinal Preaching

Claude situated his initial instructions on doctrinal preaching within his warning for preachers to "avoid excess; *Ne quid nimis*."[5] He proceeded, "A sermon must not be overcharged with doctrine, because the hearers memories cannot retain it all, and by aiming to keep all, they will lose all."[6] The fact that Claude's first words on doctrinal preaching were a warning reveals something of the French preacher's context and concerns. He appeared to be reacting against what he perceived to be an excessive use of doctrine within sermons such that listeners' minds were overburdened with the material

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[4] Claude, *Essay*, 1:5.

[5] *Do not do too much*. Claude, *Essay*, 1:25.

[6] Claude, *Essay*, 1:26.

and unable to profit from what was said. Instead, Claude counseled, "The doctrinal part, which is instructive, should always be proposed in an agreeable and affecting manner."[7]

Writing near the end of the seventeenth century, Claude adopted the plain style of the English Puritans but departed from them in his efforts to simplify the sermon's structure and unify it around a central theme. Referring to Claude's comments, Robinson noted, "To be overcharged with doctrine is the great fault of Dr. Owen's, and Dr. Goodwin's sermons; and it is attended with all the inconveniences mentioned by Mr. Claude."[8] Discerning the appropriate amount of doctrine to include within a sermon is necessarily subjective. Preachers' personal preferences as well as their cultural and historical contexts are contributing factors that cannot be ignored. Evidence for this appears more than a century later when Claude was accused of not following his own advice, even by those who greatly admired his work. After quoting this particular rule, Sturtevant remarked, "Most of Claude's doctrinal and explanatory discourses are overcharged."[9] These critiques notwithstanding, Claude's central concern remains; preachers must work to simplify and clarify the doctrinal portions of their sermons if they are to truly instruct, please, and affect their listeners.

One of the primary ways preachers can avoid an excessive use of doctrine is to strive for simplicity when dividing sermons into their constituent parts. Claude counseled preachers to aim for two or three divisions, and never to exceed four or five. Such a practice would ensure that preachers select only those points of doctrine that are essential to the discourse. Sermons that surpassed this number tended to puzzle the audience rather than please them. With his characteristically colorful language, Robinson illustrated Claude's point: "A good sermon, like a good peach, is indeed a composition of rich

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[7] Claude, *Essay*, 1:26.

[8] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 1:27n3.

[9] S. T. Sturtevant, *The Preacher's Manual, or, lectures on preaching: containing all the rules and examples necessary for every species of pulpit address*, 2nd ed. (London: Richard Baynes, 1834), 1:13.

materials, which the maker has properly associated to bring it to its present flavour: but which the eater may relish, and, from which he may derive nourishment, without being obliged to learn chymistry."[10] Not only will listeners relish sermons with few divisions, but they will also profit from those whose divisions contain simple terms.[11] By aiming for simplicity when designing their sermons, preachers are able to discuss complex subjects without unnecessarily alienating their listeners.

"One great and important article":
Specific Instructions on
Doctrinal Preaching

Following these general remarks, Claude provided more specific instructions on doctrinal sermons in his rules concerning the explicatory and propositional methods of composing a discourse. While the observational method was useful for those texts that required little explanation, the explicatory method was reserved for those dealing with more intricate subjects.[12] Claude advised, "When you have a point of doctrine to treat of, you must have recourse to explication."[13] Through explication, preachers labored to make complex subjects comprehensible for their listeners by explaining difficult terms found within the text. Once the terms were understood, preachers then proceeded to explain the things, or subjects, that those terms described. At this point, they had several options at their disposal. They might begin by refuting the various errors that had arisen on account of their doctrine or they may plainly state the truth of it for their audience.[14] After this,

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[10] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 1:43n1.

[11] Claude, *Essay*, 1:82.

[12] Here, Claude distinguished between plain subjects and more difficult ones. He wrote, "When we treat of a plain subject, common and known to all the world, it is a great absurdity to take the way of explication, and when we have to treat of a difficult or important subject, which requires explaining, it would be equally ridiculous to take the way of observations." Claude, *Essay*, 1:98–99.

[13] Claude, *Essay*, 1:98.

[14] Claude, *Essay*, 1:105–106.

Claude encouraged preachers to dilate, or widen, their subject by connecting it to other related doctrines.[15]

Some texts required preachers to explain "one great and important article consisting of many branches."[16] Claude listed predestination and converting grace as examples of doctrines whose explanations could take preachers in any number of directions. When dealing with subjects such as these, Claude counseled preachers to define the doctrine then confirm it by various proofs.[17] One way of proving a doctrine's truthfulness was to reduce it to a certain number of propositions and then proceed to discuss them one by one. In his opening remarks, Claude urged preachers to exercise discretion when choosing how many proofs to provide. Important subjects that may provoke questions from the hearers require a greater number of proofs, which should be "like many rays of light, which naturally strengthen each other, and which all together form a body of brightness, which is irresistible."[18] Claude expanded on these general comments in his discussion of the explicatory model and later in his instructions on propositional sermons.

When reducing a doctrine to a set of propositions, preachers should state them clearly, establish them by scriptural proofs, then identify their moral consequences.[19] Claude allowed more freedom when discussing texts using the propositional method as opposed to the explicatory model. He wrote, "In the former methods you are restrained to your text, and you can only explain, and apply that . . . but here your subject is the matter

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[15] Other synonyms for dilate include, "extend, spread out, enlarge, or relate at large." Samuel Johnson, "Dilate," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers*, 4th ed. (London: W. Strahan, 1773), 1:104.

[16] Claude, *Essay*, 1:193.

[17] Claude, *Essay*, 1:191–192.

[18] Claude, *Essay*, 1:31.

[19] See Claude, "Chap. VIII. Of Texts to be discussed in Propositions," in *Essay*, 2:395–439.

contained in your propositions, and you may treat of them thoroughly, and extend them as far as you please, provided you do not violate the general rules of a sermon."[20] The freedom found within this method was owing to Claude's purpose for propositional sermons, which was to serve both theory and practice by expounding subjects related to systematic divinity.[21] Nevertheless, Claude allowed preachers to mix methods by combining the explicatory and propositional models when they deemed it necessary.[22]

Throughout his *Essay*, Claude supplied readers with a number of examples to illustrate his rules. As noted above, he allowed for some flexibility on the part of preachers to mix modes of sermon composition. While he advised preachers to use the explicatory model when treating doctrinal subjects, Claude offered a sample outline of a sermon on justification within his observational method. The sermon's outline is useful for the ensuing discussion on Fuller's sermons. When expounding the doctrine of justification, Claude counseled readers to observe its aim, or the ends Paul proposed when he introduced the doctrine in his epistles. He identified four in particular. They were to differentiate between the law and the gospel, to preserve people from pharisaical pride, to remove inadequate remedies (such as the law), and to bring people to the only atonement for sin, which is found in Christ's blood.[23] While there is no evidence that Fuller drew directly from Claude's outline in his own preaching of justification, nevertheless he approached the doctrine in a similar way to his French counterpart.

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[20] Claude, *Essay*, 2:395–396.

[21] Claude, *Essay*, 2:396–397.

[22] Claude, *Essay*, 2:437–438.

[23] Claude, *Essay*, 2:159–165.

Doctrinal Preaching in Historical Context

The Puritan Legacy

From its earliest days, doctrinal preaching was at the heart of the Puritan movement.[24] As heirs of the Protestant Reformation, the Puritans maintained a fundamental commitment to the authority of Scripture in all matters pertaining to life and godliness.[25] For William Perkins, Paul's admonition to Timothy to rightly divide the word of truth meant that preachers were expected to deduce doctrines from the text of Scripture so that the Word of God might be made suitable to edify the people of God.[26] These doctrines illuminated biblical truth and invigorated practical obedience. In his *Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, Perkins's contemporary, William Ames (1576–1633), furthered the connection between doctrine and application.[27] Using Ramist principles, Ames argued that theology was a practical, and not merely theoretical, exercise, one that may be pursued by theologians and preachers alike.[28] Together, Perkins and Ames supplied their Puritan contemporaries with the homiletical and theological foundations for doctrinal preaching.

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[24] Beeke describes Puritan preaching using four terms: biblical, doctrinal, experiential, and practical. Building on a single text of Scripture, Puritan preachers uncovered doctrinal truths that gave substance to the Christian experience and fueled practical obedience. See Joel R. Beeke, *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

[25] See James Thomas Ford, "Preaching in the Reformed Tradition" in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 65–88. On the Puritan adaptation of the regulative principle and their emphasis on preaching, see Horton Davies, "The Theology of Reformed Worship," in *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Princeton, NJ: Soli Deo Gloria, 1948), 13–24.

[26] William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying: Or a Treatise Concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of Preaching* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607), 90. See also 2 Timothy 2:15.

[27] First appeared as *Medulla theologiae* in 1623. Translated into English in 1639 as William Ames, *The marrow of sacred divinity: drawne out of the Holy Scriptures and the interpreters thereof, and brought into method* (London: Edward Griffin, 1639).

[28] Keith L. Sprunger, "Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 59, no. 2 (April 1966): 146.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Puritan sermon form was well established.[29] Its basic structure was codified in the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for Public Worship* and John Wilkins's *Ecclesiastes*. *The Directory* counseled preachers to employ the threefold structure of text, doctrine, use. It referred to the doctrine as "some principal or head of Religion," which preachers deduced from the text.[30] Once identified, preachers then proceeded to confirm their doctrines by means of evidence, explaining difficulties found within it, and removing any doubts in the minds of their listeners.[31]

Using slightly different terminology, Wilkins labeled the three parts of the sermon as explication, confirmation, and application.[32] He introduced a distinction not explicitly stated in *The Directory*, namely that applications could either be doctrinal or practical in nature.[33] Broadly speaking, his advice on doctrinal preaching followed the pattern laid down by *The Directory*. For Wilkins, preachers were to define the terms necessary to understanding a doctrine before confirming it by positive proofs and removing any obvious objections through carefully reasoned argumentation.[34] In every case, the proclamation of doctrinal truth was followed by the application of that truth to the listeners.

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[29] Oates summarizes, "For Protestant reformers—particularly those of a Puritan hue—sermons were central to effecting spiritual regeneration. Preachers thought that the preached Word was more affecting than the written Word. Their duty in the pulpit was to inform, explain and apply doctrines drawn from Scripture to the daily lives of their congregations—encouraging individuals to draw closer to God." Rosamund Oates, "Sermons and Sermon–Going in Early Modern England," *Reformation* 17, no. 1 (2012): 203.

[30] *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the three Kingdomes of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: T. R., 1651), 20.

[31] *Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, 21.

[32] John Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching as it fals under the rules of Art* (London: M. F., 1646), 7.

[33] Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching*, 15.

[34] Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching*, 21–25.

Jonathan Edwards was one of the most notable heirs of the Puritan homiletical tradition, specifically the model set forth by Wilkins.[35] In his doctrinal preaching, the New England divine employed Wilkins's strategy of explication, confirmation, and application through his own tripart formula of text, doctrine, and application.[36] Edwards's section on the text often served as an introduction to the leading doctrine he wished to expound, making doctrine and application the most substantial portions of his sermons.[37] In his work, *The Christian Preacher*, Edward Williams reproduced Wilkins's manual as *The Gift of Preaching*. Williams believed Edwards exemplified Wilkins's model more than any other modern author, and he offered a brief outline of Edwards's sermons on justification to prove this point.[38]

When Fuller recommended Edwards's preaching, he pointed to his ability to unite the various themes of a text under "one great leading truth" which often served as the title of his discourse.[39] For Fuller, these titles threw "an amazing light upon the text."[40] In his introduction to Edwards's sermons, Kimnach spoke similarly: "The single

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[35] According to Miller, the Puritan ethos "blazed most clearly and most fiercely in the person of Jonathan Edwards." Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1939), 5.

[36] Wilson H. Kimnach, "General Introduction to the Sermons: Jonathan Edwards' Art of Prophesying" in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 10, *Sermons and Discourses 1720–1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 32. See also, Keith Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 36 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 85–86.

[37] For simpler passages, the section on the Text was shorter, For more difficult passages, Edwards, like his Puritan predecessors, spent time explaining the difficult parts. For clearer passages, Kimnach notes that Edwards often had no explication of the text beyond simply reading it. See Kimnach, "General Introduction," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 10:32.

[38] In a footnote on Wilkins' section on doctrine, Williams wrote, "The method now recommended is clearly exemplified by Mr. Jonathan Edwards, in his admirable Discourse on Justification by Faith alone, where he first 'opens the text,' as advised in §7 and 10; and then infers his doctrinal observation, as in §11; after this he proposes 'the subject he means to insist upon,' as in this section. Perhaps no modern author follows the plan of composing sermons here proposed more generally and explicitly than the writer now mentioned." Williams also lists Doddridge and Robert Walker as "more improving models" of Wilkins' method. Edward Williams, *The Christian Preacher, or, discourses on preaching, by several eminent divines, English and foreign, revised and abridged; with an appendix on the choice of books* (Halifax, England: Holden and Dowson, 1800), 15.

[39] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720.

[40] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720.

statement of doctrine brings the entire sermon into a sharp thematic focus, like light rays passing through a lens, if only for a vivid moment."[41] While Edwards's sermons began with a simple articulation of the doctrine, they grew in complexity as he introduced his subordinating propositions that contained more detailed inquiries, proofs, and arguments. Perhaps this is one reason why Fuller commended Edwards's sermons on a broad level while also admitting that they were not proper for imitation in every respect.[42]

The Particular Baptists and Their Evangelical Contemporaries

Early eighteenth-century Particular Baptists closely followed the Puritan formula for doctrinal preaching.[43] The London minister, John Gill (1697–1771), was one of the most prominent and widely read Baptists of this period. In his *Body of Practical Divinity*, Gill offered four simple answers to the question, "What are ministers of Christ directed to preach?"[44] They are to preach the gospel, Christ-crucified, sound doctrine, and religious duties. When expounding the various doctrines of the faith, Gill counseled preachers to build their doctrines upon biblical foundations, to prove them in the same manner, and to confirm them through careful reasoning that both clarified the truth and refuted errors of every sort. "Sound doctrine," Gill observed, "is such as is according to the scriptures, which are profitable for doctrine; from whence every doctrine is to be fetched, and thereby proved and confirmed, according to which every minister of the word is to preach."[45] Only when sound doctrine has been firmly established may

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[41] Kimnach, "General Introduction," in *The Works on Jonathan Edwards*, 10:37–38.

[42] Fuller, "Letter III. Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:719–720.

[43] For a survey of the wider context, see Raymond Brown, "Baptist Preaching in Early 18th Century England," *Baptist Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1985): 4–22.

[44] John Gill, *A body of practical divinity; or, a system of practical truths, deduced from the sacred scriptures. Which (with the two former volumes) completes the scheme of doctrinal and practical divinity* (London: George Keith, 1770), 3:363–364.

[45] Gill, *Body of practical divinity*, 3:364.

ministers then proceed to insist on its corresponding duties, and this they must always do according to evangelical principles.[46]

The kind of doctrinal preaching exhibited by Gill and his contemporaries may be seen in a series of sermons known as *The Lime Street Lectures*, delivered between November and April of 1730–1731.[47] *The Lectures* contained sermons by seven Congregationalist ministers and two Baptists, Gill and Samuel Wilson (1703–1750). Each preacher set out to defend Calvinistic orthodoxy against the various Arian, Socinian, Arminian, and Deist opponents of their day.[48] The doctrinal and apologetic nature of this work was of notable interest to Fuller, who read select sermons from *The Lectures* during the winter of 1784–1785.[49] While the ministers differed on some finer points of soteriology, they all preached as direct descendants of the Puritan tradition.

In his two sermons contained within *The Lectures*, Gill expounded on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.[50] His method for preaching doctrine closely resembled his Puritan predecessors. After a short introduction, Gill entered immediately into the defense of his doctrine by stating the many ways it had been misunderstood and maligned over the centuries. Next, he established both the credibility and the certainty of

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[46] In full, "Saints are to be exhorted to the exercise of them upon evangelical principles and motives; they are to be taught to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded, every ordinance of his, and every duty both with respect to God and men; they are to be put in mind to be ready to every good work, and to be careful to maintain them for necessary uses; every duty, public and private, personal, relative, and domestic, as well as every doctrine, are to be inculcated throughout the course of the gospel ministry." Gill, *Body of practical divinity*, 3:364.

[47] The lectures were published in two volumes. *A Defence of some important doctrines of the Gospel, in twenty-six sermons. Most of which were preached in Lime-Street. By several ministers*, 2 vols. (London: A. Ward, 1732).

[48] See Peter Toon, "The Lime Street Lectures (1730–1731) and Their Significance," *Evangelical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1969): 42–48.

[49] Fuller's diary entry on December 20, 1784: "Employed pretty much in reading the Lime Street Sermons and writing." Later in December 1784 and January 1785, Fuller also records reading sermons by Bradbury and Wilson, both of whom contributed to the Lime Street Lectures. See Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 1, *The Diary of Andrew Fuller, 1780–1801*, eds. Michael D. McMullen and Timothy D. Whelan (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 97–105.

[50] John Gill, "The doctrine of the resurrection stated and defended: in two sermons," in *A Defence of some important doctrines of the Gospel*, 2:369–483.

the resurrection through the use of biblical evidence and other related doctrines. Under each heading, Gill included numerous points and subpoints to further confirm his argument. In the second sermon, Gill proceeded to answer two more inquiries related to the subjects of the future resurrection and the nature of the God who would accomplish it. Finally, Gill moved from explanation to application by demonstrating the resurrection's practical importance and its use for the Christian life. Similar to the modes of application outlined in *The Directory*, Gill found two uses for the doctrine of the resurrection: instruction and consolation. Given the occasion, Gill's section on application is far shorter than the doctrinal portion of his sermons.

Later Particular Baptists continued to emphasize the importance of doctrinal preaching even as their method evolved with time. The Evangelical Revivals in the middle of the eighteenth century carried with them a greater focus on the practical nature of the sermon and the necessity of preaching for a response. If Puritan preaching prioritized instruction, evangelical preaching tended to make invitation—the need to freely offer the gospel to the unconverted—as its primary aim. Many Particular Baptists were slow to adopt these evangelical emphases, believing they might contaminate their Calvinistic theology. In time, a new Evangelical Calvinism emerged within Particular Baptist life, which sought to combine sound doctrinal instructions with simple gospel invitations, without sacrificing one for the sake of the other.[51]

John Collett Ryland's 1781 republication of Cotton Mather's *Student and Preacher* sought to hold each of these emphases together. Mather's advice on preaching retained the Puritan vision for the sermon without reproducing all the complexities of

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[51] See McKibbens' chapter, "Lifting the Limits: The Emergence of the New Evangelical Calvinism" in Thomas R. McKibbens Jr., *The Forgotten Heritage: A Lineage of Great Baptist Preaching* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986). McKibbens credits Carey, Fuller, Ryland Jr., and Hall with popularizing this sort of preaching in Particular Baptist life. However, earlier Particular Baptists such as Bernard Foskett (1685–1758), Caleb Evans, and Hugh Evans, warrant more attention than McKibbens affords them for the role they played in the spread of Evangelical Calvinism through the Baptist Academy in Bristol. See Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism Among Eighteenth-century Baptist Ministers Trained at Bristol Academy, 1690–1791* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 2006).

their style, making it a suitable guide for evangelical preachers.[52] In his work, Mather offered several insightful pieces of advice on the doctrinal nature of the pulpit ministry. The preeminent doctrine which every preacher must never forget was the person of Jesus Christ, who Mather described as "the motto upon your whole ministry."[53] Beyond this, preachers were also to keep the doctrines of grace with them "as the very salt and soul of your sermons," with the implication being that a sermon devoid of doctrine was both useless and lifeless.[54] Ryland expanded on Mather's comments when he described a good sermon as one that "makes the glory of the person of Christ the great design and end of it."[55] He used similar language when he spoke of the conversion of sinners as "the grand design" of the pastoral office.[56] In his assessment, Ryland found no apparent contradiction between the Puritan and evangelical formulas. Rather, he urged preachers to endeavor to win souls to Christ in every sermon and to proclaim the doctrines of grace throughout the course of their ministries.[57]

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[52] This likely contributed to its popularity in Ryland's own day. Fuller recorded reading Mather's work in a diary entry on January 17, 1785. See Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 1, *The Diary of Andrew Fuller*, 103.

[53] In full, "Among all the subjects, with which you feed the people of God, I beseech you, let not the true bread of life be forgotten; but exhibit as much as you can of a glorious Christ unto them: yea, let the motto upon your whole ministry be, Christ is all." Cotton Mather, *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher. Intituled, Manuductio ad Ministerium; or, Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry.* [. . .] *Republished by John Ryland, A. M. of Northampton* (London: Charles Dilly, 1781), 100.

[54] Mather, *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher*, 103.

[55] John Ryland, "Notes and Observations on the several Sections of Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher," in *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher*, 170.

[56] In full, "It is an office and work, the grand design of which is to turn the sons and daughters of Adam, from darkness to light, from guilt to pardon, from corruption to holiness, and from ruin to eternal happiness." Ryland later added, "Is it the end of the christian preachers office, to bring millions of immortal souls out of the ruins of the fall, into the riches of eternity?" John Ryland, "To the Gentleman, and other several Christians, in London and the Country, who have the Cause of Christ, and the Honour of the Christian Ministry at Heart," in *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher*, iv, x.

[57] Ryland listed a series of questions preachers must ask when preparing for the pulpit: "Do I honestly aim in this sermon to win souls to Christ, and make lively christians? Do I firmly believe that the peculiar motives of the gospel have all such a respect to Christ, that they are enervated and dead if he be disregarded for one moment?" He continued, "Do I design, in the course of my ministry, to go through the variety of gospel subjects, declaring the whole council of God, the doctrines of grace, threatening, promises, laws and duties of morality, and giving each its due weight, place, and proportion?" Ryland, "Notes and Observations," in *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher*, 171–172.

Another key Baptist figure and proponent of Evangelical Calvinism during this period was Robert Hall Jr. (1764–1831), who in an ordination sermon titled, "The Substance of a Charge," reproduced a common maxim: "Preach the doctrines practically, and preach practice doctrinally."[58] Hall continued, "Preach the doctrines so as to show their influence on our practice, and recommend religious and virtuous conduct by evangelical motives. This happy combination will form a complete course of religious instruction."[59] For Hall and his evangelical contemporaries, doctrines should not be introduced in such a way as to engender speculation.[60] Rather, they should always be preached with an eye toward practical instruction.

The Scottish pastor, John Erskine (1721–1803), a contemporary of both Hall and Fuller, recommended ministers prioritize simplicity when preaching gospel doctrine. "When there is occasion to state and defend a scripture doctrine," Erskine asserted, "endeavour to do it in the plainest and most easy terms."[61] In addition to using plain terms, Erskine counseled ministers not to compile every argument imaginable, but only those that were the most "clear, pertinent, and strong."[62] Following in Claude's footsteps, Erskine drew ministers away from preparing sermons that were overcharged with doctrine towards those that were measured and designed for the benefit of the entire congregation.

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[58] Robert Hall Jr., "The Substance of a Charge," in *The Entire Works of Robert Hall. With a brief memoir of his life, and a critical estimate of his character and writings* (London: Samuel Holdsworth, 1836), 4:482

[59] Hall, "Substance of a Charge," in *The Entire Works of Robert Hall*, 4:482–483.

[60] Hall wrote, "The gospel is not revealed in a systematic form; it is not confined to any particular set of doctrines; nor does it ever advance and doctrine as merely a subject of speculation." Hall, "Substance of a Charge," in *The Entire Works of Robert Hall*, 4:481.

[61] John Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel, With respect to their doctrine, method, style & delivery in preaching; with hints on other branches of the ministerial office* (London: J. Buckland, 1783), 17–18.

[62] Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, 18–19.

The editor of *The Preacher's Manual* offered similar thoughts in the conclusion of his letter on doctrinal preaching. When handled with simplicity and clarity, preachers convert doctrinal subjects "from speculative to practical; give them an interest to the heart, and produce important effects upon the life,—without which, religion is an empty name."[63] Reflecting on the wider homiletical landscape of the eighteenth century, Lessenich wrote, preachers "endeavoured to present solid, uncontroversial truths with lucid perspicuity, to dress their thoughts in the most elegant words and phrases without the harshness of philosophical and theological terms, to be artistic and learned, yet so well to conceal art and learning as to meet both their obligation to artistic and their obligation to Christian simplicity."[64] It is within this homiletical milieu that Fuller developed his own approach to doctrinal preaching, one that shared the theological heartbeat of his Puritan, Baptist, and evangelical predecessors while clothing itself in the homiletical simplicity of Claude's rules.

Doctrinal Preaching: Fuller's Theological Foundations and Homiletical Instructions

The Selection of Doctrinal Subjects

In a sermon entitled, "Christian Stedfastness," Fuller offered a valuable insight into his approach to doctrinal preaching: "Christian doctrine is the foundation on which the church is built. Christians feel it to be so, and therefore will follow it wherever it is preached. . . . If we be rooted and grounded in Christian doctrine, we shall not be materially wrong in anything."[65] A commitment to the proclamation of Christian doctrine

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[63] Sheva, "Letter I. On Doctrinal Preaching," in *The Preacher's Manual: containing I. Two essays on lay-preaching and on the ministerial character: II. Simplicity recommended to ministers of the gospel; third edition: III. Letters on preaching* (London: Richard Baynes, 1820), 97.

[64] Fuller and his peers would have quibbled with Lessenich's use of the term 'uncontroversial' to describe their preaching. Their primary concern was not to avoid controversy but to expound biblical truth. Rolf P. Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)* (Köln, Germany: Böhlau-Verlag, 1972), 234.

[65] Fuller, "Christian Stedfastness," in *Works*, 1:527.

was an essential prerequisite to preaching. For doctrine was the driving motivation behind every "holy discipline and holy practice."[66] Thus, Fuller urged ministers to embrace their obligation to preach doctrine, or evangelical truth, from every text and on every occasion.

After articulating his views on expositional preaching, the first of the two general branches of the pastor's pulpit ministry, Fuller proceeded to outline the purpose of the sermon in his second letter on preaching. He explained, "There is a great variety of subjects, both in doctrinal and practical religion, which require to be illustrated, established, and improved; which cannot be done in an exposition. Discourses of this kind are properly called sermons."[67] Similar to Edwards, Gill, and others, Fuller employed the doctrinal and practical categories to help preachers determine the nature of their subject before they set out to design their sermons.

Doctrinal subjects contained some great leading truth which preachers uncovered through a careful study of the text. Following Claude, Fuller counseled preachers to examine the important terms within their passage. These terms supplied them with a number of interesting thoughts, or ideas, for their sermon. For those texts whose ideas were doctrinal in nature, Fuller advised preachers to reduce them to a single theme. He specified, "Your business is to find out that truth, and state it in the introduction."[68] Just as preachers should not design their sermons without first determining the doctrinal or practical nature of their subject, neither should listeners remain ignorant of the sermon's principal theme. Rather, the truth should be plainly stated at the outset so that the listeners might follow the preacher's direction.

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[66] Fuller, "Christian Stedfastness," in *Works*, 1:527.

[67] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:714.

[68] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

The Structure of Doctrinal Sermons

The structure of Fuller's doctrinal sermons followed the tripartite pattern laid down by those before him. Once the doctrine had been clearly stated, Fuller proceeded, "Search for the evidences, and make it one head of the discourse to establish it. If it be a truth to be illustrated, set it before the hearers in various points of light; and as no Divine truth is merely speculative, but some way or other concerns the hearers, the latter part of the subject should consist in improvement. I. To explain.—II. To establish.—III. To improve it."[69] Later, Fuller explained how he approached each of these three divisions using three simple questions: "What am I going to teach? Why? or on what ground do I advance it as a truth? And what does it concern any or all of my hearers if it be true?"[70]

Beyond these three major headings, preachers should be careful not to unnecessarily divide and subdivide their discourses. Fuller warned, "At all events avoid a multiplying of heads and particulars."[71] While "evidence should constitute the body or substance of every doctrinal discourse" preachers should only include those proofs that directly support the leading theme of the sermon.[72] On this point, Fuller diverged from his Puritan predecessors and aligned himself more closely with Claude's instructions. Claude was keen for preachers to design their discourses with a noticeable unity, where each point built upon the next and supported the sermon's central subject. While Fuller counseled preachers to draw evidence from a variety of sources, he expected every supporting argument to bear some connection to the leading truth. He offered a simple illustration: "In opening a battery against a wall, you would not throw your balls at random, first at one place and then at another, but direct your whole force against a

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[69] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

[70] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

[71] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

[72] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720.

particular spot."[73] In taking this approach, preachers were more likely to leave a lasting impression upon the minds of their listeners and less likely to leave them with a collection of scattered thoughts with little spiritual impact.

The Substance of Doctrinal Sermons

In Fuller's mind, doctrinal sermons should be both evangelical and experiential. The doctrine at hand should bear some distinct relation to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the lived experience of God's people. In his sermon on "The nature and importance of an intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," Fuller acknowledged that some preached doctrine detached from the heart of the gospel and so employed themselves in a "fruitless discussion of terms" often entering into subjects about which the Bible says very little.[74] Elsewhere, Fuller referred to these sermons as "ingenious essays" that lose sight of the great object that is Christ and him crucified.[75] While they may not openly propagate error, neither do they shed more light on the truth. On the contrary, a successful doctrinal sermon is one that keeps "the pure gospel of Jesus" in plain view.[76] It is one in which the doctrine being examined may be seen to have some clear connection, either leading to or resulting from, those "great doctrines of the gospel" such as the atonement of Jesus Christ, the depravity of human nature, and the work of the Spirit.[77]

Doctrinal sermons, if they are truly evangelical, are also experiential. "I love a sermon well laden with Christian doctrine," Fuller wrote. And he continued, "Complaints

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[73] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:720.

[74] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:170.

[75] Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:509.

[76] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:170.

[77] In full, "If you preach not the great doctrines of the gospel, such as the entire depravity of our nature, the atonement of Christ, the work of the Spirit, &c., the people of God will be famished." Fuller, "Intimate and Practical Acquaintance," in *Works*, 1:485. Elsewhere, Fuller wrote, "Take away the great doctrine of the atonement, and all your faith, joy, and peace are annihilated. Much the same might be said of other gospel doctrines." Fuller, "On spiritual declension and the means of revival," in *Works*, 3:618.

have been made of some preaching as too doctrinal; and a preference has been manifested for experimental and practical preaching; but that doctrinal preaching which I would recommend should include both. The doctrines of the Scriptures, Scripturally stated, are calculated to interest the heart, and to produce genuine evangelical obedience."[78] While Fuller urged preachers to maintain this balance, he conceded it was possible to preach doctrines in a cold and unaffecting manner while neglecting close practical addresses.[79] Those who did so were in danger of creating a superficial religion that appealed only to curious minds and did little for ordinary people.

Such was the scenario Fuller imagined in his dialogue between Crispus and Gaius.[80] As the inquirer, Crispus wondered whether or not the accusation that all doctrinal preaching was dry and uninteresting was true. Gaius responded that if doctrinal preaching was this way, it was due more to the preacher than to the subject matter itself. For the truths of Scripture are inherently life-giving and effective. Therefore, it is the preacher's responsibility to present them in such a way that the listeners are encouraged both to receive these truths and to prove, or test them, in their everyday life.[81] Here, Fuller implied what he stated explicitly elsewhere, namely that both the matter and the manner of preaching were essential components to the faithful proclamation of the Word.

If the matter of preaching referred to the content of the sermon, the manner referred to the way in which it was delivered.[82] A cold, unaffecting manner does harm to the gospel of Christ because it communicates that one may believe the gospel yet not feel its effects upon the heart. Thus, Fuller urged ministers to preach the doctrines of the

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[78] Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:509.

[79] Fuller, "Intimate and Practical Acquaintance," in *Works*, 1:485.

[80] These dialogues first appeared in the 1793 edition of *The Evangelical Magazine*.

[81] Fuller, "Dialogue III. The Connexion Between Doctrinal, Experimental, and Practical Religion," in *Works*, 2:652.

[82] It is "a means of conveying truth. A cold manner disgraces important truth." Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:510.

gospel faithfully, firmly, earnestly, and affectionately.[83] When this is done properly, there is no disconnect between doctrine and experience. Instead, one gives life to the other. As Fuller succinctly summarized, "Doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion are all necessarily connected together; they can have no existence separate from each other. The influence of truth upon the mind is the source of all our spiritual feelings."[84]

Fuller's Sermons on Justification

Chris Chun supposes that Fuller preached his sermons on justification between the late 1780s and early 1790s, sometime after his introduction to Edwards's work on the same subject.[85] In January of 1810, Fuller wrote in a letter to Carey, "Have got pretty forward in a volume of sermons, three of which will be on justification."[86] While it is difficult to discern if Fuller was referring to the initial composition of these sermon, the most likely option is that he revised them for publication along with several others. Evidence for this arrives near the end of Gunton Fuller's account of his father's life. He noted that Fuller published a collection of sixteen sermons entitled, *Sermons on Various Subjects*, in 1814, shortly before his death.[87] Three of these sixteen were Fuller's sermons on justification. If Chun's date holds, then Fuller would have been editing the sermons some two decades after he first preached them. Therefore, one may safely conclude that the older Fuller was satisfied with his theological conclusions and his homiletical

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[83] Fuller, "Affectionate concern," in *Works*, 1:510.

[84] Fuller, "On spiritual declension and the means of revival," in *Works*, 3:618–619.

[85] Chun credits Haykin for helping him arrive at this conclusion. See Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 184.

[86] Andrew Fuller to William Carey, January 10, 1810, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller*, copied from Various Sources by Miss Joyce A. Booth, gathered by the Rev. Ernest A. Payne, scanned by Nigel Wheeler (Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford).

[87] In full, "it was during the numerous engagements and afflictions of this year that he published his "Sermon on Various Subjects." This work consisted of sixteen discourses, worthy of the talents and piety of the author, and will be found in this volume, Numbers xi.—xxvi." Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:99. See also Andrew Fuller, *Sermons on Various Subjects* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1814). Fuller's sermons on justification are numbered xvii–xix in his *Works*.

approach to preaching the doctrine of justification. For this reason, Fuller's three sermons on justification are suitable examples of his approach to doctrinal preaching.

Sermon XVII: Justification (I)[88]

The opening paragraphs of Fuller's first sermon on justification are devoted to introducing his subject and the text to which it is connected. Fuller began, "The doctrine expressed in this passage runs through the Epistle, and constitutes the scope of it. It is taught in many other parts of Scripture, but here it is established by a connected body of evidence."[89] Before entering into his explanation, Fuller informed his listeners of the wider context of Paul's letter to the Romans. In the previous three chapters, the apostle placed both Jew and Gentile under God's condemnation and pronounced them incapable of being justified on basis of their own obedience. From this point, Fuller transitioned to Romans 3:21–26 and invited his hearers to feel the weight of the subject at hand:

> Of all the questions that can occupy the human mind, there is none of greater importance than that which relates to the way of acceptance with God. We learn from our own consciences, as well as from the Scriptures, that we are accountable creatures; but how shall we stand before the holy Lord God is a question that overwhelms us. If there were no hope from the gospel, we must despair. We must appear before the judgment-seat, but it would be only to be convicted and condemned. The doctrine, therefore, that shows a way in which God can be just, and yet a justifier, must be interesting beyond expression. This is, in substance, the good news to be proclaimed to every creature.[90]

Fuller's introduction closely follows Claude's instructions on the Exordium. He wrote, "The principal design of an Exordium is to attract or excite the affections of the audience—to stir up their attention—and to prepare them for the particular matters, of which we are about to treat."[91] Fuller appealed to the affections by urging his listeners to consider what awaited those who were to stand before God without Christ. His words

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[88] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:276–282.

[89] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:276.

[90] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:276.

[91] Claude, *Essay*, 2:461.

convey the gravity of his subject and follow Claude's advice for introductions to match the mood of the text.[92] Fuller then gathered their attention by highlighting the importance of justification by faith as the solution to humanity's most fundamental problem. Fuller's opening words mirror Claude's remarks that introductions be brief, clear, serious, and engaging.[93] Finally, Fuller prepared his hearers to receive his subject by outlining the general direction of his sermons.[94]

The complex nature of Fuller's argument is aided by the simplicity of his outline as he organized his sermons under three major headings: "I shall endeavor to ascertain the meaning of the term—to give proof of the doctrine—and to show the consistency of its being of free grace, and yet through the redemption of Jesus Christ."[95] Fuller devoted the entirety of the first sermon to "ascertain the meaning of the term," or, in other words, to illustrate it.[96] Johnson's *Dictionary* provides helpful context for the word "illustrate" which means "to explain," or "to brighten with light or honour."[97] Resisting the temptation to briefly define his doctrine and move on to other matters, Fuller considered the arduous task of sifting through the biblical and doctrinal material to expose the brilliance of justification to be time well spent. By arranging his propositions in order from general to specific, Fuller adhered to Claude's advice that propositions be arranged with a discernible unity and movement.[98] Moreover, he aligned with Claude's

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[92] Claude, *Essay*, 2:466–467.

[93] See Claude, "The Qualities of an Exordium," in *Essay*, 2:468–488

[94] Claude: "The second use of an introduction is to conduct the hearer gradually to the subject, of which you are about to treat." Claude, *Essay*, 2:468.

[95] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:277.

[96] Fuller uses these two terms interchangeably. See Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:714, 721.

[97] Johnson, "Illustrate," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1:1067.

[98] On Claude's instruction to arrange propositions well, Robinson commented, "Nothing elucidates a subject more than conformity to this rule." Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 1:201n2.

instructions concerning theological subjects, which were best expounded through the use of propositional statements.[99]

In order to present the doctrine of justification in all its splendor, Fuller began by removing every error that might obscure it. To understand what justification is, one must first understand what it is not. For preachers like Fuller, this well-worn practice was a logical and homiletical necessity. Claude allowed for preachers dealing with difficult terms to begin by refuting errors both past and present so that they might arrive at a "precise declaration of the truth."[100] First, Fuller corrected a common misconception that gospel justification was equivalent to the kind of justification a person may receive in a court of law. "He that is justified in an earthly court," Fuller observed, "is considered as being really innocent; and his justification is no other than an act of justice done to him. He is acquitted, because he appears to deserve acquittal."[101] Such justification occurred on the basis of merit, not of grace. Fuller raised this point to remind his listeners that the Scriptures are the only sufficient rule for establishing doctrine. Earthly comparisons may prove helpful, but they cannot usurp the authority of Scripture.

Following this point, Fuller proceeded to expose those who had wrongly defined the doctrine. Some commentators understood justification as an eternal decree passing first in the mind of God, second on Christ and the elect when he rose from the dead, and third in the sinner's conscience upon believing in Christ.[102] Fuller appears to have Gill's views on justification in mind here.[103] Others such as John Anderson (1748–

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[99] "The way of explication is most proper to give the meaning of Scripture; and this of systematical divinity. The way of application rather regards practice than theory: but this, which we call the way of propositions, or points, is more proper to produce an acquaintance with systematical divinity, and it will equally serve theory and practice." Claude, *Essay*, 2:396–397.

[100] Claude, *Essay*, 1:105–106.

[101] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:277.

[102] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:278.

[103] There has been a discussion in recent years concerning Gill's doctrine of justification and whether or not he was truly out of step with the broader Reformed tradition. See John Gill, *A body of*

1830), whom Fuller addressed at length in *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, did not locate justification in God's eternal decrees, but in man's religious experience, "as a manifestation, impression, or persuasion in the human mind."[104]

According to Fuller, neither view adequately articulated the biblical position, which located justification not in the hidden will of God nor in the inner disposition of man. Here, Fuller stepped outside his primary text for the first time to begin his journey toward a clear definition of his doctrine:

> Justification is a relative change, not in, or upon, but concerning us. It relates to our standing with respect to God, the Lawgiver and Judge of all. It is "passing from death to life," in respect of the law; as when the sentence against a malefactor is not only remitted, but he is, withal, raised to honour and dignity. It is our standing acquitted by the revealed will of God declared in the gospel. As "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" in the curses of his law, so "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," in the declarations of the gospel. It is in this revelation of the mind of God in his word, I conceive, that the sentence both of condemnation and justification consists.[105]

Drawing on language from John 5:24 and Romans 1:16–17, Fuller defined justification as a decisive act whereby guilty sinners are declared innocent before God upon trusting in Christ for their salvation. In this moment, all the "threatenings of God" that once hung over them are removed and sinners are "by the gracious constitution of the gospel, secured from the curse."[106]

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doctrinal divinity; or, a system of evangelical truths, deduced from the sacred scriptures (London: George Keith, 1769), 1:331–340, 2:794–820. For a recent treatment of this discussion, see David Mark Rathel, "Was John Gill a Hyper-Calvinist? Determining Gill's Theological Identity," *Baptist Quarterly* 48 (2017): 47–59.

[104] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:278. John Anderson was a Scottish Presbyterian pastor who migrated to America in 1783, where he preached and taught theology until his death in 1830. Fuller cites Anderson in the opening pages of *The Gospel Worthy* as someone who embraced "the Marrow doctrine." For Fuller, this view wrongly asserted that the gospel contains a "gift or grant" from Christ to all mankind, which requires man to simply reach out and receive it by faith. See Fuller, "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation," in *Works*, 2:335–338. See also John Anderson, *The Scripture doctrine of the appropriation which is in the nature of saving faith; stated and illustrated: in several discourses* (Edinburgh: Adam Neill, 1797).

[105] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:279.

[106] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:279.

Having exposed false notions of justification and replaced them with its true essence, Fuller proceeded to connect the doctrine to three other gospel realities—redemption, faith, and pardon for sin. The order of Fuller's sermon tracks with Claude's instructions for explaining a text that has been reduced to a set of propositions. First, preachers were to "give the sense clearly and neatly, taking care to develop it of all sorts of ambiguity."[107] Next, they were to "shew how important in religion it is to be acquainted with the truth in hand; and for this purpose open its connection with other important truths; and its dependence on them."[108] On the first truth—redemption—Fuller returned to the language of Romans 3:24 where Paul declared that sinners are justified "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The work of Christ, namely his willingness to suffer and to give his life in the place of sinners, was for Fuller "the procuring cause" of salvation.[109] So it is that the death of Christ rendered justification effective.

Next, Fuller explained the relationship between justification and faith, using Romans 4:16 and the idea that justification "is of faith that it might be by grace." Faith, by its very nature is a receiving grace. It is not effective by itself, but only in its relation to Christ. In an effort to make this biblical reality more concrete, Fuller offered a simple illustration: "Whatever other properties the magnet may possess, it is as pointing invariably to the north that it guides the mariner; and whatever other properties faith may possess, it is as receiving Christ, and bringing us into union with him, that it justifies."[110] On this point, Fuller followed Claude's next rule of illustrating the doctrine by various "reasons, or examples, or comparisons, or relations to each other."[111] Fuller employed

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[107] Claude, *Essay*, 1:378–379.

[108] Claude, *Essay*, 1:380–381.

[109] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:280.

[110] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:281.

[111] Claude, *Essay*, 1:382–385.

illustrations sparingly throughout these three sermons, neither discounting their usefulness them nor depending on them to carry his argument forward.

Following these two particulars, one question remained: Does justification include the pardon for sins, past, present, and future? On this point, Fuller seemed content to answer with relative ambiguity. In some sense, justification must include the pardon of all sins and the possession of eternal life since believers are no longer under condemnation. "Yet," Fuller conceded, "to speak of sins as being pardoned before they are repented of, or even committed, is not only to maintain that on which the Scriptures are silent, but to contradict the current language of their testimony."[112] Drawing on examples from both the Old and New Testaments, Fuller noticed that repentance, not justification, is the grace most immediately connected with pardon for sin. As a result, he concluded that repentance, while not the grounds for justification, is a necessary fruit of justification.[113]

In summary, Fuller's first sermon on justification sought to answer the question: "What is it?" To begin, Fuller oriented his listeners to the context of his preaching passage and placed the importance of the doctrine before them. Next, Fuller outlined several paths that others have taken to explain justification, none of which led them to the biblical destination. Ill-advised comparisons that equate gospel justification with earthly justification must be rejected along with other positions that misconstrue the doctrine as an eternal divine decree or an internal religious experience. Only when these hindrances were removed did Fuller provide a clear definition of justification, which he

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[112] Fuller, "Sermon XVII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:281.

[113] Fuller exerted a great deal of energy combating Antinomianism, which had crept its way into Particular Baptist life and diminished the need for repentance and practical obedience to Christ. See Fuller, "Dialogue VII: Antinomianism," in *Works*, 2:661; Fuller, "Antinomianism contrasted with the religion taught and exemplified in the Holy Scriptures," in *Works*, 2:737–762; Fuller, "A Picture of an Antinomian," in *Works*, 3:829–831.

promptly followed with a discussion of its relationship to other key gospel themes such as redemption, faith, and pardon.

Sermon XVIII: Justification (II)[114]

Once the preliminary question, "What is it?" had been answered, Fuller then asked, "On what evidence does it rest?"[115] Or, as he puts it elsewhere, "Why? or on what ground do I advance it as a truth?"[116] To use Claude's language, Fuller's next task was to confirm, or prove, the doctrine.[117] In his notes on Claude's *Essay*, Robinson offered this comment related to the preacher's responsibility to use sound proofs to confirm his doctrine: "This appears to me one of the most important rules in this essay; for, if every christian ought to be ready to render a reason for the hope, that is in him, how much more requisite is it for an intelligent teacher of a rational religion to recommend his doctrine to reasonable hearers by sound solid argumentation?"[118] Indeed, Fuller's ability to prove his doctrine with theological precision, sound argumentation, and homiletical simplicity is perhaps his greatest strength as a preacher.

If the doctrine of justification is true, then it will be supported by specific evidence and it will prove consistent with God's other works. Fuller's primary concern in this sermon was "to prove that we are not justified by any works of our own, but of free grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[119] Only two options exist for sinners to be declared righteous before God. They are either accepted on the basis of their own works or they are accepted on the basis of God's grace. As in his first sermon,

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[114] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:283–288.

[115] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:721.

[116] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

[117] Claude, *Essay*, 1:394, 1:401.

[118] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 1:191n9.

[119] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:283.

Fuller's defended the truth of justification by first refuting its opposite. In this case, the truth is that people are justified freely by God's grace, which means they cannot be justified by any works of their own. Claude offered a similar approach in his sample outline of a sermon on justification, in which he proposed that preachers preserve their listeners from the kind of pharisaical pride that seeks to establish its own righteousness rather than receive the gift of God's righteousness in the gospel.[120]

In order to prove man's inability to be justified by his works, Fuller exposed the erroneous views of those outside the Christian faith and those within it who he accused of distorting the truth of God's grace. "All the false religions that have existed, or do now exist, in the world," declared Fuller, "are so many modifications of a self-righteous spirit, so many devices to appease the conscience and propitiate the Deity."[121] Each of these false religions, contended Fuller, trace their origins to Cain, who shamelessly brought his offering to God "as though he had never sinned; bringing no sacrifice, and yet entertaining high expectations of success."[122] In relying on such a system to save them, people throughout the world overlooked God's free offer of salvation and exchanged it for a self-made religion that could not deliver on its promises.

Perhaps more concerning for Fuller were those who argued for a religion of works from within the confines of the Christian faith. One such author was Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), the renowned scientist, philosopher, and theologian, who employed a purely rationalist approach to his interpretation of the Scriptures. In time, he rejected historical Christian positions on the atonement, original sin, and the Trinity. Priestley's words in *The scripture doctrine of remission* (1761) summarize his views on the atonement and his belief that man possessed the ability to save himself:

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[120] Claude, *Essay*, 2:162.

[121] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:284.

[122] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:284.

Is it not very surprising, then, that in all the scripture, neither in the Old nor the New Testament . . . ever assert, or explain, the principle on which the doctrine of atonement is founded: for tho' they describe the heinous nature of sin, in the strongest colours, represent it as exceeding sinful, and the like; they never once go a single step further, and assert that it is of so heinous a nature, that God, the infinitely good and gracious, cannot pardon it without an adequate satisfaction being made to his justice, and the honour of his laws and government.—In all their discourses, there occurs not one clause that contains the sentiment, and it admits of great variety of expression. Nay, the contrary sentiment abounds every where, that repentance and a good life, are, of themselves, sufficient to recommend us to the favour of God.[123]

By dismissing the atonement as unnecessary for the forgiveness of sins, Priestley removed the grounds for justification by faith. His only other option, as Fuller recognized, was to conclude that "repentance and a good life" were sufficient means for people to earn the favor of God.

When mounting his defense, Fuller offered a series of proofs that combined his judicious use of key texts with a firm grasp of wider biblical and theological themes. For his first two proofs, Fuller appealed to the character of God and that of his creatures. God's absolute righteousness, as it is revealed throughout the Scriptures, is incompatible with the doctrine of justification by works. Drawing on the language of Romans 3:21–26, Fuller argued, "If Christ were set forth to be a propitiation that God might declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, his righteousness would not have been declared in the remission of sins without it."[124] In essence, justification by works would dismember the very character and righteousness of God, a possibility which Fuller could hardly fathom. Alongside God's absolute righteousness is man's complete inability, due to his sinful nature, to gain favor with God on the basis of his own works. Fuller wove together over a dozen passages throughout Paul's letters, all of which "teach a justification by a righteousness received, in opposition to a righteousness done, or performed."[125]

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[123] Joseph Priestley, *The scripture doctrine of remission. Which sheweth that the death of Christ is no proper sacrifice nor satisfaction for sin: but that pardon is dispensed solely on account of repentance, or a personal reformation of the sinner* (London: C. Henderson, 1761), 37–38.

[124] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:285.

[125] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:286.

Therefore, justification by works not only gives sinful men room to boast before God, but it also robs God of his exclusive glory in the salvation of his people.

In his final three proofs, Fuller traced the work of God in salvation beginning with his grace given to sinners, followed by Christ's righteousness received by them, and ending with their good works offered in response. If salvation were of works, God would have been obligated to save those who performed the necessary requirements. The very notion of grace, however, implies that God was under no obligation to save sinners. To confirm this point, Fuller returned to Romans 3:24 and the phrase "justified freely by his grace." The grace that brought salvation to mankind was free and all-encompassing even as the sin that brought death was costly and all-condemning. In this way, sin and grace produce opposite results. In Fuller's words, "Sin reigns over our species, subjugating them all to death; but grace conquers the conqueror, reigning through righteousness to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."[126]

The righteousness through which grace reigns to eternal life is none other than the righteousness of Christ himself. It is a righteousness that is credited to sinners who, along with Abraham, believe God's promise concerning the Messiah. Fuller was quick to note the relationship between Abraham's faith and the son that God promised to him. Meditating on Paul's use of Genesis 15:6, Fuller noticed, "When faith is said to be counted for righteousness, it is as relating to Christ."[127] Abraham's faith was not a general belief in God, which he supplemented with his own righteousness. Rather, it was a specific faith in the promised seed that God counted to him for righteousness, a point that Fuller developed further in his exposition of Genesis 15:1–6.[128]

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[126] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:287.

[127] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:287.

[128] See chapter 6.

Only after the righteousness of Christ is credited to sinners do their good works then have any lasting value. Yet, Fuller reminded his listeners, "Those works which are the expressions of faith and love have so much sinful imperfection attached to them that they require to be presented by an intercessor on our behalf. The most spiritual sacrifices are no otherwise acceptable to God than by Jesus Christ."[129] Moved by the truth of his previous discussion, Fuller concluded his sermon: "Supported by this body of Scripture evidence, as well as by the experience we have had of the holy and happy influence of the doctrine, I trust we shall continue unmoved in our adherence to it. Let others boast of the efficacy of their own virtues, we, with the apostle, will 'count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.'"[130] Though not explicitly stated as an application, Fuller's theological defense produced within him a doxological response, one that he undoubtedly expected his listeners to share.

Fuller's second sermon on the doctrine of justification answered the question: "On what evidence does it rest?" through a sustained meditation on the phrase "justified freely by his grace." To defend the truth of justification by grace, he proposed and refuted the only other possibility, justification by works. In his proofs, Fuller examined key biblical texts such as Genesis 15:6 and explored larger biblical themes such as the righteousness of God and the nature of human sinfulness. By combining specific scriptural examples with a wider biblical theology, Fuller labored to show that the doctrine of justification extended beyond a single verse or phrase and encompassed the whole of God's salvific purpose for humanity. Whereas in his first sermon, Fuller defined the doctrine of justification, in his second, he convinced his listeners of its truth and its consistency with the free grace of God.

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[129] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:288.

[130] Fuller, "Sermon XVIII. Justification," in *Works*, 1:288.

Sermon XIX: Justification (III)[131]

In his third sermon on justification, it remained for Fuller to improve the doctrine. Rather than imply something is deficient and in need of repair, the word "improve" conveys a different idea, namely, to advance in goodness or learning.[132] To put it in sermonic terms, it is to apply the doctrine by answering the question, "What does it concern me, or any of the people, if it be true?"[133] It would be a mistake at this point to assume that Fuller has waited until his third sermon to offer any applications of the doctrine. Though Fuller's concluding reflections in this sermon contain the most substantial applications to this point, readers must remember that the printed sermon is not the same as the preached sermon. As a result, it is possible Fuller excluded applications specific to his audience in his first two sermons when preparing the material for publication, as may have also been the case with his expositions on Genesis and Revelation, many of which contain little to no direct application.

While Fuller's first two sermons fit neatly into each of the first two divisions—explain and establish—his final sermon contains a mixture of further proofs followed by several concluding applications. Using Claude's model Fuller spent the majority of his first two sermons stating his propositions and establishing them by solid scriptural proofs. In his third and final sermon, he provided more proofs in connecting the doctrine of justification to the atonement before following Claude's advice to "draw some moral consequences from the truth you have proved."[134] Interestingly enough, Claude's fourth suggested point for a sermon on justification was for preachers to "bring men to the true

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[131] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:289–296.

[132] James Barclay, "Improve," in *A complete and universal English dictionary*, 4th ed. (London: G. G., 1799), 620.

[133] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:721.

[134] Claude, *Essay*, 2:436.

and only atonement for sin, which is the blood of Jesus Christ."[135] Indeed, this was the destination to which Fuller led his listeners in his final sermon.

The sermon opens with these words: "Having endeavoured to explain and establish the doctrine of justification, it remains for me to show the consistency of its being of free grace, and yet through the redemption of Jesus Christ."[136] In his second sermon, Fuller defended the nature of justification as a doctrine of grace, not of works. Here, Fuller defended the doctrine on a different, but not unrelated, front by showing the consistency between justification and the atonement as he carefully explored the phrase "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Indeed, this third and final sermon reveals a central tenet of Fuller's theology: the centrality of the person and work of Christ.[137] Elsewhere, Fuller made clear, "Christ crucified is the central point, in which all the lines of evangelical truth meet and are united. There is not a doctrine in the Scriptures but what bears an important relation to it."[138] Therefore, if the doctrine of justification is to be properly proclaimed, it must be shown to be consistent with the doctrine of atonement.

As an ardent evangelical, proving the necessity of the atonement was no secondary matter. By dispensing with it, men like Joseph Priestley wandered away from the safe waters of biblical orthodoxy. As noted above, it was Priestley who found no evidence that God demanded a sacrifice in order to forgive sinners. Though the biblical authors described sin in the darkest of terms, according to Priestley, they never "assert that it is of so heinous a nature, that God, the infinitely good and gracious, cannot pardon it without an adequate satisfaction being made to his justice, and the honour of his laws

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[135] Claude, *Essay*, 2:164–165.

[136] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:289.

[137] See Ian Hugh Clary, "'The Centre of Christianity—the Doctrine of the Cross': Andrew Fuller as a Reformed Theologian," *Evangelical Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (July 2019): 195–212; Adam McClendon, "The Crucicentrism of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," *Churchman* 127, no. 4 (2013): 311–322.

[138] Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190.

and government."[139] For this reason, Fuller was keenly aware of the need to connect the substitutionary death of Christ with God's free grace in justification.

In the opening paragraphs of this final sermon, he reminded his listeners: "The principal reason alleged by those who reject the doctrine of the atonement is its inconsistency with grace."[140] If God required the atonement in order to extend grace to his creatures, then this objection would stand. Grace would no longer be free. However, Fuller rejected this position for a more biblical one: "The friends of the doctrine of atonement allow that the sacrifice of Christ was not the cause, but the effect of the Father's love."[141] If this is true, then the atonement is itself a gracious act. In love, God satisfied the requirements of his own justice by placing the sins of the guilty on the innocent one and crediting them with the undeserved gift of his perfect righteousness.

To further show the consistency of justification with the atonement, Fuller drew a parallel to the human experience, which he then supplemented with biblical examples. "It is common among men," he argued, "in showing kindness to the unworthy, to do it out of regard to one that is worthy; which kindness is nevertheless considered as a matter of free favour."[142] To illuminate this point, Fuller invited his listeners to imagine they had a dear friend who had died and left behind a son of ignoble character, who, after the death of his father, reduced himself to a life of poverty. Yet, despite the son's predicament, they showed kindness to him for the sake of his father, whom they loved. "Here," Fuller exclaimed, "is an exercise of both justice and grace; justice to the memory of the worthy, and grace in relief of the unworthy."[143]

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[139] Priestley, *Scripture doctrine of remission*, 37.

[140] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:289.

[141] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:289.

[142] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:290.

[143] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:291.

Connecting this imaginary scenario to the truth of his doctrine, Fuller continued with his second point: "God, in his dealings with mankind, has frequently proceeded upon the same principle."[144] To Noah the promise was given that God would never again flood the earth. Both he and his children benefited from this promise, though in time they would fall prey to corruption just like those before them. Similar examples are found in the lives of Abraham, David, and Solomon. After compiling the necessary evidence, Fuller concluded, "In these instances, there was a display of both justice and grace, and the righteousness of the fathers was, as I may say, imputed to the children, inasmuch as, in consequence of it, they were treated as if they themselves were righteous."[145]

To this point, Fuller has defended the idea that grace may be shown to the unworthy for the sake of one who is worthy, who effectively stands as a substitute in their place. Next, he proceeded to build the biblical case for atonement as the avenue through which grace flows to sinners. In the Old Testament, God "sanctified the principle" of sin being removed by the sacrifice of a substitute.[146] In the New, this principle finds its fulfillment in Christ whose sacrifice is "necessary for the consistent exercise of mercy" even as the whole of man's salvation is accomplished by the free grace of God.[147] Though Fuller developed his first three points from a broad biblical perspective, for his final point he returned to his primary passage and examined Romans 3:25 in considerable depth. From this verse, Fuller discerned that the first thing needed in order for a person to be justified was to have their sins forgiven. How are their sins forgiven but through the death of Christ? Only when the effects of his death are applied to sinners, who put their

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[144] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:291.

[145] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:291.

[146] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:291–292.

[147] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:292.

faith in his blood, do the full benefits of justification then flow to them. Following his

discussion of this verse, Fuller concluded with certainty:

> That God in love to his dear Son should reward this voluntary obedience unto death with the bestowment of eternal salvation on them that believe in him, and even lay himself under obligation to do so, is perfectly consistent with its being of grace; but obligation of this kind furnishes no ground for demand, nor does it appear from the Scriptures that the Majesty of heaven and earth was ever so approached. In the gospel way of salvation, grace and justice meet or are combined in the same thing.[148]

As a conclusion to the entire subject, Fuller offered three reflections on the

odious nature of sin, the danger of rejecting the gospel, and the necessity of good works

as evidence of justification. Specific instructions related to application, or use, are

noticeably absent within Claude's *Essay*.[149] Either Claude neglected the importance of

application, assumed preachers were capable of applying the texts without further

instruction, or simply chose not to include his thoughts within the *Essay*. While the latter

two options may each be possible, the first should be rejected as Claude clearly believed

preachers should draw some moral consequences from their doctrines and preach in such

a way that aims to affect the heart, either to "comfort the hearers, or to excite them to acts

of piety, repentance or holiness."[150]

Regarding the odious nature of sin, Fuller warned, "It is upon light thoughts of

sin that a disbelief of justification through the blood-shedding of Christ is grafted."[151]

Thus, doctrinal error spreads like a disease. A denial of truth in one area inevitably leads

to a denial of truth in others as well. Conversely, a proper view of sin enables people to

see the grace of God for what it is—a truly undeserved gift. Where sinners fall into

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[148] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:294.

[149] In chapter VII, Claude offered instructions on sermons that discussed texts by way of "continued application." However, Claude was referring to sermons that were practical in nature not to particular applications, or uses, within all sermons. See Claude, "Chapter VII. Of Texts to be discussed in a way of continued Application," in *Essay*, 2:325–394.

[150] Claude, *Essay*, 2:436, 1:22–23.

[151] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:294–295.

danger is when they reject God's free offer of salvation on account of their own self-righteousness. At this point, Fuller pled with his listeners: "If we be willing to receive Christ, and with him all things freely, there is nothing to hinder it. If the door of mercy be shut upon us, it is a self-righteous spirit that shuts it."[152] As a Calvinistic theologian, Fuller reserved all the glory in salvation to God alone. As an evangelical preacher, he did not hesitate to offer the gospel indiscriminately to everyone who heard him. Contrary to his High Calvinist opponents, Fuller saw no contradiction between his soteriology and his evangelistic appeals. As a pastor, Fuller called on his congregation to give proof of their justification by devoting themselves to good works. "The law of God," Fuller reminded them, "though not the medium of life, is nevertheless the rule of conduct; and though we are justified by faith alone, yet good works are necessary to prove it to be genuine."[153] Thus, he closed his sermons with a sober warning to those who used justification by faith as license to sin or liberation from God's commands.

In summary, Fuller's final sermon examined the connection between justification and atonement using the phrase "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." As was the case in the previous two sermons, the text served as the starting point from which Fuller began his trek toward the doctrine of free grace and the necessity of the atonement. Although this final sermon includes further evidences for the truth of justification, Fuller improved, or applied, his subject through the use of several concluding reflections, which represent his most complete use of application in these three sermons.

Conclusion

The argument of this dissertation is that Claude's *Essay* supplied Fuller with a coherent homiletical method that he modified to fit his own theological convictions and

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[152] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:295.

[153] Fuller, "Sermon XIX. Justification," in *Works*, 1:296.

ministerial context. In his sermons on justification, Fuller shared Claude's views that doctrinal preaching must be clothed in homiletical simplicity. Therefore, Fuller unified each of his sermons around one leading subject and he expounded that subject through the use of few subdivisions, each containing simple headings and plain language.

While Fuller followed Claude's instructions in several areas, he also modified them in three primary ways. First, Fuller remained true to his own instructions on preaching and ensured that each of his sermons "contained a portion of the doctrine of salvation by the death of Christ."[154] He accomplished this by demonstrating the relationship between the doctrine of justification and the cross of Christ. One could say that Fuller designed his sermons with an explicitly crucicentric focus in order to show that his doctrine was only true because of the cross of Christ, and it cannot be rightly understood apart from it.

Next, Fuller used a kind of redemptive reasoning in tracing God's work throughout salvation history to prove the truth of his doctrine. His biblical proofs went beyond the mere citation of parallel passages to support his argument. He demonstrated that God's way of dealing with sinners from the beginning of Scripture to the end was consistent with his understanding of justification by faith. As a result, those who arrived at a different place were not merely out of step with his understanding of the doctrine, but they were also out of step with the rhythm of God's saving work throughout redemptive history.

Finally, Fuller believed that the doctrine of justification also served an apologetic purpose. Not only does it reveal the manner in which sinners may be made right with God, but it also stands over and against every other manmade system of salvation. Given how much energy Fuller deployed in his apologetic writings, it is no surprise to find that as a secondary focus in his sermons on justification. Preaching in the

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[154] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:717.

shadow of the Enlightenment, Fuller recognized that his hearers were regularly being exposed to new ideas, many of which confronted the gospel way of salvation. Therefore, a doctrine as central to the faith as justification warranted a robust biblical, theological, and apologetic defense alongside a fervent, evangelical, and affectionate proclamation.

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICAL PREACHING: FULLER'S SERMONS
ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS

The 1793 edition of *The Evangelical Magazine* included a series of letters written by Fuller depicting a fictional conversation between Crispus, an impressionable inquirer, and Gaius, his more theologically astute counterpart. In the third letter, Crispus opened the dialogue with these words: "In our last interview we discoursed on the influence of truth as it respected our eternal salvation; we will now inquire, if you please, into its influence on the holiness and happiness of Christians in the present state; or, in other words, into the connection between doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion."[1] In Fuller's view, there existed an unbreakable bond between theological reflection and practical instruction, for "divine truth, when cordially imbibed, proves the seed of a godly life."[2] If the primary aim of doctrinal preaching is to convince listeners that the truths of the gospel are worth believing, then the primary aim of practical preaching is to show them how to walk according to those truths in everyday life. In this way, doctrine directs practice and practice displays doctrine. For "if God has joined these things together," Fuller exclaimed, "let no man, whether preacher or hearer, attempt to put them asunder."[3]

The argument of the present chapter is that in his practical preaching, Fuller grounded his moral exhortations in evangelical truth so that people might pursue

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[1] "Dialogue the Third, Between Crispus and Gaius. *On the Connection between doctrinal, experimental, and practical Religion*," *Evangelical Magazine* 1 (1793): 150.

[2] "Dialogue the Third," 152.

[3] "Dialogue the Third," 153.

godliness as a path to deeper fellowship with their Savior. When done properly, practical preaching produced holier and happier Christians. For it not only provided them with the tools to obey Christ's commands, but it also showed them the benefits of godliness in the present life. Claude's *Essay* supplied Fuller with valuable insights for discoursing on practical subjects primarily through his instructions on observational and applicatory sermons. The observational and applicatory models demonstrate Claude's desire for preachers to draw practical implications for their listeners throughout the entirety of their sermons. While he adopted several of Claude's general principles, Fuller's chosen method was to inquire into the meaning of an exhortation and then to enforce it on evangelical principles. In this way, Fuller simplified Claude's scheme as he labored to ensure that all of his practical sermons contained moral instructions that flowed directly from his theological convictions.

The chapter begins by analyzing Claude's views on practical religion, which lay the foundation for his instructions on practical preaching. Like Fuller, Claude was keen to connect theological truth to practical obedience. Next, the chapter surveys the various approaches to practical preaching within English Protestantism. Priority is given to those authors who contributed most directly to Fuller's own historical and theological context. Next, the chapter outlines Fuller's theological foundations and homiletical convictions regarding practical preaching. Finally, the chapter examines Fuller's sermons on practical subjects that he preached on a variety of occasions throughout his ministry.

Claude's *Essay*: Practical Preaching

The opening pages of Claude's *Essay* establish the practical nature of all true Christian preaching. According to Claude, it is an exercise that "affects the heart; either to comfort the hearers, or to excite them to acts of piety, repentance or holiness."[4] These

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[4] Claude, *Essay*, 1:22–23.

words make sense of Claude's earlier warnings regarding the excessive use of doctrine within the sermon. A single prominent truth—thoroughly explained and forcefully applied—would do more to encourage practical obedience than a collection of interesting thoughts with no principal end in mind. For preaching exists to serve the greater cause of Christ in the gospel, which is to promote the practice of good works and the pursuit of a holy and religious life.[5]

"A holy application": The Necessity of Practical Religion

True Christianity consists in a practical knowledge of divine truth that produces genuine obedience in the life of a Christian. Claude found support for this basic supposition in Paul's use of the phrase "faith unfeigned" in 1 Timothy 1:5.[6] For faith to be unfeigned, or sincere, it must be "true and lively; not consisting in a bare speculation of gospel-mysteries: but in an extensive practical knowledge of christian doctrines, and in a full persuasion of the truth of divine revelation."[7] Here, Claude juxtaposed two kinds of spiritual knowledge—speculative and practical. Broadly speaking, speculative knowledge is an awareness of physical truth or metaphysical realities in the universe. Those engaged in the pursuit of speculative knowledge are solely concerned with its acquisition. Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is a "knowledge of objects in order to act by them, and to use them for a rule, and a guide, as when we know the nature of virtue, and the precepts of morality."[8] Those concerned with practical knowledge are only satisfied when they apply the truths they have acquired. For Claude, the doctrines of Christianity

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[5] In full, "the practice of good works, and an holy and religious life is the principle end proposed in the gospel, and a principal character of a true christian." Claude, *Essay*, 2:399.

[6] The verse reads, "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Claude, *Essay*, 1:211.

[7] Claude, *Essay*, 1:260.

[8] Claude, *Essay*, 1:400.

were not mysteries of contemplation but mysteries of practice, which Christians were obliged to make the rule of all their conduct.[9]

These mysteries of practice, as Claude understood them, were more than general exhortations to godly living. Rather, they contained specific instructions for personal piety in every area of life. In the gospel, "There is no vice whatever, which it does not condemn, no virtue, which it does not ordain. It not only regulates the exterior, but it goes even so far as to purify the heart, the source of all our actions. It gives us precepts for all the different states and conditions, in which men can be placed."[10] Again, Claude found evidence to support his view within the Pauline Epistles. Commenting on 1 Thessalonians 4:7, he observed how the apostle did not content himself with vague principles for Christian living, but "would have them make a holy application of these to themselves, and put them in practice."[11] Claude went so far as to argue that Christian truth, if not applied, would do more harm than good. For it might convince a person that bare intellectual ascent was a sufficient replacement for genuine obedience.

Commenting on Claude's words, Robinson noted, "There is not one single doctrine in all the christian system, which doth not reduce itself to practice, and this is the glory of the system."[12] For Claude, as for Robinson, the system is glorious because it transforms individuals into the image of their Savior. Claude was careful not to imply that Christian precepts exist solely to reform people's manners. Other religions may give "only cold and powerless rules, without any arguments taken from our true motives to hate sin, and love holiness" but Christianity provides people with a path to enjoy communion with Christ as they pursue conformity to his character.[13]

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[9] Claude, *Essay*, 1:400.

[10] Claude, *Essay*, 2:277.

[11] Claude, *Essay*, 2:278–279.

[12] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 2:279n5.

[13] Claude, *Essay*, 2:276.

"One heart and one soul towards God":
The Design of Practical Preaching

The previous discussion on the necessity of practical religion provides the necessary context for understanding Claude's design for practical preaching. Just as Christianity is not merely an intellectual exercise, so too preaching is more than the bare transfer of information.[14] One might simply say that the ultimate aim of preaching is the ultimate end of the Christian faith. Preachers should "aim at winning the hearts of men to God and uniting them together. It is for this that the word is to be preached in common to all, that all may have but one heart and one soul towards God."[15] Every sermon, whether doctrinal or practical in its focus, must have this ultimate goal in view.

As outlined in the previous chapter, the selection of a biblical text preceded the selection of the sermon's subject. Once the subject had been properly identified, preachers then turned their attention to finding a suitable method of sermon composition. Subjects that required a more thorough explanation, such as those containing difficult terms or doctrinal truths, should be expounded using the explicatory or propositional methods. When met with a simpler subject or one that contained an exhortation or command, Claude instructed preachers to use the observational and applicatory models.

In the observational model, preachers could either make speculative observations related to the mysteries of Christianity or practical observations related to Christian morality.[16] Practical observations were designed to make the moral implications of the text clear for the listeners. As an example, Claude offered the Pharisees' complaint

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[14] Commenting on his rule that a sermon must give the entire sense of the text, Claude wrote, "This rule condemns dry and barren explications . . . In matters of religion and piety, not to edify much is to destroy much; and a sermon cold and poor will do more mischief in an hour, than a hundred rich sermons can do good." Claude, *Essay*, 1:13.

[15] Claude, *Essay*, 1:237–238.

[16] While Claude allowed for speculative observations, he was quick to remind his readers that these should not be designed to gratify curiosities, but to instruct the mind and inflame the heart. Claude, *Essay*, 2:13.

against Jesus's disciples regarding their lack of concern for the traditions of their elders.[17] After establishing the basic principle of Christian liberty in order to justify the actions of the disciples, Claude advised preachers to show the difference between true and false worship. One consists in external ceremonies and the observation of human traditions and customs. The other consists of "true piety, real inward holiness, and actual obedience to the commandments of God."[18] By proving the validity of this most basic principle of Christian freedom, preachers could then apply the principle in specific ways for their audience.

Of the four methods, the applicatory model contained the majority of Claude's instructions for preaching practical sermons. For one, Claude designed this method for texts with clear exhortations to repentance and holiness.[19] Since the practical nature of the subject was apparent from the beginning of the sermon, preachers were permitted to spend the majority of their time opening all avenues to the individual's conscience so as to lead them to a place of self-examination.[20] To illustrate this point, Claude directed his readers to Paul's exhortation to the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.[21] After a short introduction and explanation of the terms, Claude offered several searching questions regarding the plight of mankind, the nature of salvation, and God's kindness to provide it. Once he had established the need for reconciliation with God, Claude then urged his listeners to avail themselves of every possible means of preserving it. He listed three in particular: "1st. Our faith must be kept and increased. 2d.

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[17] See Matthew 15:1–20. Claude, *Essay*, 2:202.

[18] Claude, *Essay*, 2:202.

[19] Claude, *Essay*, 2:325–326.

[20] Claude, *Essay*, 2:336.

[21] Philippians 2:12 reads, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Claude, *Essay*, 2:332.

We must live a holy christian life. 3d. Repentance must be familiarized."[22] As will be shown, Claude's rules regarding applicatory sermons contain the most overlap with Fuller's approach to preaching practical subjects.

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Practical Preaching in Protestant Britain

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The Puritans and Other Seventeenth-Century Writings

In his classic work, *The Reformed Pastor*, Richard Baxter (1615–1691) reflected on the relationship between godly living and practical preaching. He wrote, "A practical Doctrine must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. We must think and think again how to compose our lives as may most tend to mens salvation, as well as our Sermons."[23] Writing in the midst of the Puritan era, Baxter captured an essential element of their thinking, namely that the doctrinal truths of Christianity must be practically explained and embraced so that both the preacher and his hearers may learn how to live well. Baxter stood within a Puritan preaching tradition that aimed to make the doctrines of Scripture understandable and applicable for the people of God.[24]

As noted in the previous chapter, the Puritans commonly used the tripartite formula of text, doctrine, use in order to fulfill their vision for preaching. While the first two parts of the sermon focused heavily on exegesis and theology, the final part was reserved for practical instruction. For Perkins, the uses, or applications, were either mental or practical.[25] Mental applications included doctrine, or information, and

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[22] Claude, *Essay*, 2:380.

[23] Richard Baxter, *Gildas Salvianus, the reformed pastor shewing the nature of the pastoral work, especially in private instruction and catechizing: with an open confession of our too open sins* (London: Robert White, 1656), 24.

[24] For an extended discussion, see Joel R. Beeke, *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 142–156.

[25] William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying: Or a Treatise Concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of Preaching* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607), 122.

redargution, or refutation of error, while practical applications dealt with life and behavior.[26] These contained instruction, "whereby doctrine is applied to frame a man to live well," and correction, by which "the doctrine is applied to reforme the life from ungodliness and unrighteous dealing."[27] Wilkins reproduced these two categories, renaming them doctrinal and practical. For Wilkins, practical applications were used for correcting ill manners and directing listeners to the appointed means of pursuing godliness and avoiding sin.[28]

      The Directory for Public Worship advised the preacher to bring his doctrines "home to speciall Use, by application to his hearers."[29] While *The Directory* did not divide applications into mental or practical, its categories were similar to Perkins and Wilkins. These included instruction or information, refutation of false doctrines, exhortation to duties, as well as various cautions and comforts.[30] These practical remarks followed the theological foundations that were laid down in the first portion of the sermon. Old captured the balanced approach of Puritan preaching when he wrote, "If the sovereignty of God was an overriding concern for the Puritans, the sanctification of Christians was an undergirding concern."[31] In summary, the Puritans did not conceive of sermons as either doctrinal or practical in nature. Rather, all sermons contained elements of both. In the Puritan mind, practical preaching referred to that portion of the sermon where the doctrines previously defined and defended were then applied to the hearers.

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[26] Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 123.

[27] Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 124.

[28] John Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, Or, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching as it fals under the rules of Art* (London: M. F., 1646), 16–17.

[29] *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the three Kingdomes of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: T. R., 1651), 22.

[30] *Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, 22–24.

[31] Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 4, *The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 256.

Two late seventeenth-century homiletical works that also warrant mention are

Joseph Glanvill's (1636–1680) *An Essay Concerning Preaching* (1678) and Gilbert

Burnet's (1643–1715) *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care* (1692).[32] Robinson referenced

both authors on several occasions in his notes on Claude's *Essay*. Glanvill outlined his

rules for preaching under four heads: plain, practical, methodical, and affectionate.

Speaking on practical preaching, Glanvill wrote, "The main business of Religion is a

good and holy life."[33] He continued, "The directing men to the knowledge of their duties,

and the way to perform them, as they ought, is one of the greatest parts of our work."[34]

One noticeable difference between Glanvill's instructions and both the Puritans that

preceded him and the evangelicals who followed him was his lack of emphasis on God's

redemptive work as an indispensable motivation for practical religion. Glanvill preferred

to speak more broadly of motivations pertaining to reason, common hopes and fears, as

well as considerations of the present world and of the next.[35] Glanvill's *Essay* carried

forward the necessity of practical preaching without retaining as much of the Puritan

emphasis on the person and work of Christ as the driving factor behind Christian

obedience.

It appears that Burnet's work received a greater reception among later

eighteenth-century evangelicals and Particular Baptists. Robinson quoted his *Discourse*

extensively in his notes on Claude's *Essay* and Fuller's 1798 personal library included a

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[32] Glanvill was a clergyman in the Church of England whose interests ranged from preaching to philosophy to scientific examination. Burnet was a Scottish minister and longtime bishop of Salisbury. Joseph Glanvill, *An essay concerning preaching written for the direction of a young divine, and useful also for the people in order to profitable hearing* (London: A. C., 1678); Gilbert Burnet, *A discourse of the pastoral care. Written By the Right Reverend Father in God, Gilbert, Lord Bishop of Sarum* (London: R. R., 1692).

[33] Glanvill, *An essay concerning preaching*, 28.

[34] Glanvill, *An essay concerning preaching*, 35.

[35] Glanvill, *An essay concerning preaching*, 37.

copy of the work.[36] Additionally, Fuller's own writings contain numerous references to Burnet's writings. Moreover, Burnet's *Discourse* shares a number of overlapping themes with both Claude and Fuller such as his desire that the text of Scripture determine the theme of the sermon and that every sermon contain one point, clearly articulated and coherently argued.[37] Similarly, Burnet believed that preachers should not only uncover the truths contained within a text but they should also "lay the Matter home to the Consciences of the Hearers, so directing all to some good and practical end."[38] For Burnet, this good and practical end, or application, was the chief point of the sermon. The explanation of the text served to enforce the application and make it all the more apparent for the listeners. From a wider perspective, both Glanvill and Burnet are emblematic of the trend toward a more practically oriented British pulpit in the late seventeenth century.[39]

Evangelicals and Particular Baptists
of the Eighteenth and Early
Nineteenth Centuries

As practical preaching grew in its popularity at the turn of the eighteenth century, some were concerned that an unbalanced emphasis on Christian precepts could eventually lead to the abandonment of Christian doctrine. In 1709, John Edwards (1637–1716), author of *The Preacher*, warned against those "Pulpit-Moralists" who would undermine the cause of Christ by insisting that one could embrace the virtues of the

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[36] Andrew Fuller, "Appendices: A. Books in Fuller's Library, 1798" in *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 1, *The Diary of Andrew Fuller, 1780–1801*, eds. Michael D. McMullen and Timothy D. Whelan (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 219.

[37] See Burnet, *Discourse of the pastoral care*, 218.

[38] Burnet, *Discourse of the pastoral care*, 217.

[39] See Rolf P. Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)* (Köln, Germany: Böhlau-Verlag, 1972).

Christian religion apart from its fundamental principles.[40] On the contrary, Edwards argued, "A settled Persuasion concerning the Truth of the Gospel is the Ground-work of Christian practice. Where the former is wandering, all the other is made void."[41]

A decade later, John Jennings (1687–1723) published his pivotal work, *Two Discourses: The First of Preaching Christ; The Second of Particular and Experimental Preaching* (1723), in which he aimed to show the inseparable connection between evangelical truth and experimental religion in the preached Word.[42] Most fundamentally, "The preaching of Christ is our Business, our Charge, and our Glory," said Jennings.[43] Only when preachers embrace this essential focus may they then lead their hearers "on in every Step, and to shew what particular Duties to God, our Neighbour, and our Selves, will flow from these Principles, and are necessary to make the Man of God perfect."[44] Jennings's work was well-received by his fellow evangelical ministers, reaching its fourth edition by the year 1740.

Other prominent evangelicals joined the fray in the coming years, offering their own corrections to the present state of preaching as they saw it. Originally published in Boston, Cotton Mather's *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (1726) provided candidates for the ministry with clear instructions regarding their pastoral charge. Mather neatly

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[40] In full, "Let us beware of our mere Pulpit-Moralists. . . . It is my apprehension that this Account is to be given of it, namely, that it is Satan's great Masterpiece of Policy in this Age to put Men upon extolling and applauding the External Practice of Vertue, but at the same time to push them on to Undermine the Fundamental Principles of the Christian Religion, and to nourish such Doctrines as run counter to those Principles." John Edwards, *The preacher. The third part. Containing farther rules and advices, for the right discharging of the sacred-office of preaching* (London: Jonathan Robinson, 1709), 138–139.

[41] Edwards, *The Preacher*, 140.

[42] In the preface, Isaac Watts wrote, "I know none of more eminent Necessity, Glory, and Usefulness, than those two which are the Subjects of this little Book; I mean the Evangelical Turn of Thought that should run thro' our Ministry, and the Experimental Way of Discourse on practical Subjects." Isaac Watts, preface to John Jennings, *Two discourses: the first Of preaching Christ; the second Of particular and experimental preaching* (London: John and Barham Clark, 1723), vi.

[43] Jennings, *Two discourses*, 10.

[44] Jennings, *Two discourses*, 35.

synthesized the doctrinal and practical nature of preaching when he urged ministers to "Gospellize" their congregations to "all the Commandments of the Law, and show them how to obey upon the Principles of the Gospel: And how the Precepts of the Gospel are also so many Promises of it."[45] In 1731, Isaac Watts (1674–1748), who penned the forward to Jennings's *Two Discourses*, published his own *An Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion*. After urging his fellow dissenting ministers to firmly establish their people "in the Belief and Profession of the Religion of Christ," Watts quickly reminded them not to simply preach sermons of "mere Doctrinal-Truth and Articles of Belief, but into every Sermon (if possible) bring something Practical."[46] Two decades later, the dissenting Presbyterian minister, John Mason (1706–1763), assumed that practical preaching was the "ordinary Strain" of the pastor's pulpit ministry.[47] Even so, Mason cautioned preachers against what he termed "moral Harangues" in which people were furnished with nothing but ethical and behavioral precepts. Instead, Mason advised them: "Let your chief Motives to Practice be drawn from Christian Principles."[48] In their respective works, Mather, Watts, and Mason each sought to correct the extremes of highly moralistic preaching on the one hand and purely speculative doctrinal preaching on the other.

Late eighteenth-century evangelicals continued these efforts to strike the balance between doctrinal and practical preaching. Commenting on Claude's statement that "the truths of religion are rules of conduct," Robinson wrote,

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[45] Cotton Mather, *Manuductio ad Ministerium. Directions for a candidate of the ministry. [. . .] as may render him a skilful and useful minister of the Gospel* (Boston: Thomas Hancock, 1726).

[46] Isaac Watts, *An humble attempt toward the revival of practical religion among Christian and particularly the Protestant dissenters, by a serious address to ministers and people, in some occasional discourses* (London: E. Matthews, 1731), 52, 54.

[47] It appears Fuller shared this assumption as the overwhelming majority of his surviving sermons are practical in nature. John Mason, *The student and pastor: or, directions how to attain to eminence and usefulness in those respective characters* (London: J. Noon, 1755), 61.

[48] Mason, *The student and pastor*, 61.

Some divines, zealous for the peculiar doctrines of religion, hold the eyes of their auditors in perpetual speculation, while others, to avoid this method, do nothing but lay down rules of action. Our best divines unite both. They neither turn all religion into dispute with the first, nor sink in to the dulness of mere moralists with the last: but, considering all doctrinal divinity as tending to practice, and all practices as founded on principle, they prove each doctrine, and apply it to the tempers of the heart, and the deportment of the life. The scriptures teach practical divinity in this way.—God loved us—If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. Thus doctrines become experimental and practical.[49]

As stated above, the doctrines of Christianity only fulfill their design when they are put to some experimental or practical use.[50] Thus, it is the preacher's responsibility to make the applicatory connection for his listeners. Robinson referred to this as the preacher's "capital art," namely "to bring his subject home to the bosoms of his hearers."[51] Robinson's views also characterized many of his dissenting evangelical contemporaries. In 1783, John Erskine pled with his fellow ministers to build practical religion on gospel principles within their sermons.[52] For he believed that he was simply following the pattern found in Scripture, wherein God's people were exhorted to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."[53]

Working with similar themes, Thomas Scott (1747–1821), preached a sermon in 1786 entitled *The Doctrines of Election, and Final Perseverance stated from Scripture, and shewn consistent with exhortatory and practical Preaching, and conducive to holiness and life*.[54] Fuller referred to Scott as "that judicious writer" who ably produced "solid, rational, and scriptural divinity" on some of Christianity's most important

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[49] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 1:401n8.

[50] When received properly, doctrines produce practical christians, who Robinson referred to as "the pillars of society." Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 2:280n5.

[51] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 2:325n1.

[52] John Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel, With respect to their doctrine, method, style & delivery in preaching; with hints on other branches of the ministerial office* (London: J. Buckland, 1783), 13.

[53] 2 Peter 1:10 quoted in Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, 13.

[54] Thomas Scott, *The doctrines of election, and final perseverance stated from Scripture, and shewn consistent with exhortatory and practical preaching, and conducive to holiness of life. A sermon preached at the Lock-Chapel, November 26th, 1786* (London: C. Watts, 1786).

subjects.[55] One such subject of great importance for both Scott and Fuller was the consistency between Calvinistic doctrine and evangelical preaching. Near the end of his sermon, Scott offered several concluding remarks that set the stage for the discussion of Fuller's approach to practical preaching. He inquired, "What is there inconsistent with discoursing to Christians very particularly concerning the Christian temper and walk?" Scott then proceeded to resolve the issue: "If means, as well as ends, are provided for in the divine counsels; then Calvinism forms as firm a foundation for all exhortations, instructions, warnings, invitations, and expostulations of the preacher: And all diligence, and watchfulness; and activity of the hearer, as the opposite doctrine."[56] While some viewed the proclamation of Calvinistic doctrines to be a hindrance to Christian practice, Scott found no such tension. Like Fuller and other Evangelical Calvinists, he believed that doctrinal truth, when practically preached, produced genuine Christians.[57] Or, as Robert Hall Jr. articulated it, "The enforcement of duties, by evangelical motives, is the very end of the gospel: and all preaching is good and estimable, only as it secures the same end by the same motives."[58]

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[55] Andrew Fuller, "Letter VII. The Systems compared, as to their Tendency to promote Love to God," in *The Calvinistic and Socinian systems examined and compared, as to their moral tendency: in a series of letters, addressed to the friends of vital and practical religion*, 6th ed. (London: T. Gardiner, 1810), 146.

[56] Scott, *Doctrines shewn consistent with exhortatory and practical preaching*, 43–45.

[57] John Newton offered this helpful illustration: "If I wanted a man to fly, I must contrive to find him wings; and thus, if I would successfully enforce moral duties, I must advance evangelical motives." R. Cecil, *Memoirs of The Rev. John Newton, Late rector of the United Parishes of St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, Lombard Street: with general remarks on his life, connections, and character* (London: William Baynes and Son, 1824), 116.

[58] Robert Hall Jr., "The Substance of a Charge," in *The Entire Works of Robert Hall. With a brief memoir of his life, and a critical estimate of his character and writings* (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1831–1832), 4:483. The editor of *The Evangelical Magazine* spoke similarly some years later, "Found all your precepts on evangelical principles, and enforce them by evangelical motives." Sheva, "Letter II. On Practical Preaching," in *The Preacher's Manual: containing I. Two essays on lay-preaching and on the ministerial character: II. Simplicity recommended to ministers of the gospel; third edition: III. Letters on preaching* (London: Richard Baynes, 1820), 98.

Practical Preaching: Fuller's Theological Foundations and Homiletical Convictions

"His dying love": The Motivation for Practical Religion

The previous discussion highlighted two equal and opposite extremes that eighteenth-century Evangelical Calvinists sought to correct—preaching doctrine without practice and practice without doctrine. In Fuller's mind, the central message of Christ and him crucified was the key to keeping the entire system in balance. Not only is the cross the point at which all evangelical truths unite, it is also the fountain from which all evangelical morality flows.[59] Fuller asserted, "Practical religion finds its most powerful motives in his dying love. That doctrine of which Christ is not the sum and substance is not the gospel; and that morality which has no relation to him, and which is not enforced on evangelical principles, is not Christian, but heathen."[60] When the people of God embrace Christ and him crucified as the source of their religion, all other doctrinal principles and moral precepts maintain their proper place.[61] Only when the doctrine of the cross rests lightly upon the minds of preachers and their people do errors in principle and practice then arise on all sides.

According to Fuller, those congregations that relinquished the pure preaching of the cross "whether it be in favour of what is called morality on the one hand, or high notions of orthodoxy on the other" were commonly characterized by "the laxity of their conduct."[62] The bare preaching of religious morals may reprove men's manners "by a

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[59] Fuller summarized, "As all doctrinal religion meets here, so does all practical.—The Scriptures draw every thing from the dying love of Christ. . . . The same may be said of experience.—Christian experience clings to Christ and his gospel. The religion of some, who talk of experience, goes to idolize their feelings and admire their supposed graces. But true Christian experience thinks little of self, and much of Christ." Fuller, "Faith in the Gospel," in *Works*, 1:516.

[60] Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190.

[61] Of the cross, Fuller wrote, "There is not an important truth, but what is presupposed by it, included in it, or arises out of it; nor any part of practical religion but what hangs upon it." Fuller, "Conformity to the Death of Christ," in *Works*, 1:310.

[62] Fuller, "Future Perfection of the Church," in *Works*, 1:246.

conformity to the genteel vices of the world" but it does little to reform the soul.[63] For

Fuller, such preaching tended only to produce more polite sinners. Something similar

resulted from purely doctrinal preaching, which elevated "high notions of orthodoxy" at

the expense of practical obedience.[64] As Fuller learned firsthand during his early years in

Soham, Christians within these congregations have often been "offensive to common

decency" when they used their doctrinal stances to excuse immodest behavior.[65] Fuller

warned against each of these errors extensively throughout his writings and his sermons,

often reminding his readers that "Jesus Christ is the medium of all holiness."[66] In other

words, the self-giving love of Christ motivates Christians to embrace the practical aspects

of their religion and to pursue them wholeheartedly.

"The spring of a holy life": Connecting
Doctrinal and Practical Preaching

Although Fuller drew a distinction between doctrinal and practical sermons, he

nevertheless maintained that the two subjects should remain closely connected. Sermons

built on texts that are doctrinal in substance should contain some practical instructions,

even if they are given by way of implication. Sermons built on texts containing

imperatives, exhortations, warnings, comforts, or some other practical aspect of the

Christian life should be grounded in doctrinal truth. For Christian experience is genuine

only when it arises from the influence of truth upon the mind.[67] In his sermon, "Soul

Prosperity," Fuller brought further clarity to the issue when he concluded, "All principles

lie at the bottom and source of affections and actions. If they be genuine, evangelical, and

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[63] Fuller, "Future Perfection of the Church," in *Works*, 1:246.

[64] Fuller, "Future Perfection of the Church," in *Works*, 1:246.

[65] Fuller, "Future Perfection of the Church," in *Works*, 1:246. For further context, see the account of John Eve's removal from the Soham pastorate. Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:8–10.

[66] Fuller, "Paul's Prayer for the Philippians," in *Works*, 1:361.

[67] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:170.

true, they are the spring of a holy life."[68] Thus, the prosperous soul is one that holds the doctrinal and practical aspects of Christianity in lovely proportion, without neglecting one for the sake of the other.[69]

In a similar manner, the prosperous sermon is one that captures the emphasis of the text—be it doctrinal or practical—and demonstrates its relationship to the other. Returning to the dialogue between Crispus and Gaius, Fuller contended, "The religion of Jesus ought not to be mangled and torn to pieces. Take away the doctrines of the gospel, and you take away the food of Christians. Insist on them alone, and you transform us into religious epicures."[70] In his own preaching, Fuller aimed to maintain this balance as he expounded on a variety of subjects. As the wider theological landscape in Britain drifted away from orthodox principles toward a more moralistic approach to religion, Fuller understood the plain proclamation of Christian truth to be all the more necessary. At the same time, Fuller was aware of tendencies to downplay the imperatives of Scripture among some within his own Calvinistic community. Thus, he insisted preachers show their congregations that "wholesome words and sound doctrine have an effect on the soul similar to that which wholesome food has on the body; they render it strong, vigorous, and active."[71]

**"Enforcing the duties of religion": The
Imperative of Practical Preaching**

When Fuller embraced evangelical convictions concerning the free offer of the gospel to the lost, it was only a matter of time before he began delivering "close practical

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[68] Fuller, "Soul Prosperity," in *Works*, 1:405. Speaking similarly elsewhere, "holy doctrine is the source and spring of a holy life." Fuller, "Holding fast the Gospel," in *Works*, 1:549.

[69] Fuller, "Soul Prosperity," in *Works*, 1:405.

[70] Fuller, "Dialogue I. The Peculiar Turn of the present Age," in *Works*, 2:649.

[71] Fuller, "Soul Prosperity," in *Works*, 1:405.

addresses" to believers in his midst as well.[72] For it is not only those who are outside the faith who must be summoned to Christ, but also those who are within it. As Fuller grappled with his own pastoral limitations early in his ministry, he lamented that he did not adequately study the lives of those under his care. Visiting the sick and conversing with the unconverted and the converted alike "would have a tendency to make my preaching more experimental," he admitted.[73] Both the godly and the ungodly require exhortations to repentance and faith, albeit in different ways. Later, in his concluding reflections to *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, Fuller defended this conviction: "Enforcing the duties of religion, either on sinners or saints, is by some called preaching the law. If it were so, it is enough for us that such was the preaching of Christ and his apostles. It is folly and presumption to affect to be more evangelical than they were."[74]

The imperative of practical preaching is to enforce the duties of religion on all who would receive them. For Fuller, the preeminent duty for every sinner and every saint was to look to Christ, the "universal remedy for all the moral diseases of all mankind."[75] While there is a myriad of moral diseases that may lead men astray, two of the most common are the tendencies toward pride and despair. Preachers only contribute to these problems if they neglect to preach Christ as the underlying motivation for all religious practice. In his sermon, "Advice to the Dejected," Fuller described the dangers of preaching morality without Christ:

> If the preacher be of such a description as to content himself with moral harangues; if, instead of exhibiting the Saviour of sinners, he have nothing to say to a wounded spirit, unless it be to advise him to forsake his vices, and be better; or if his object be rather to improve the manners of men, and render them decent members of society,

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[72] Fuller, "Intimate and Practical Acquaintance," in *Works*, 1:485.

[73] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:23. By experimental, Fuller means known or tested by experience. See Samuel Johnson, "Experimental," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers*, 4th ed. (London: W. Strahan, 1773), 1:180.

[74] Fuller, "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation," in *Works*, 2:386.

[75] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:504.

than to renew their hearts; the tendency of his preaching will be either to establish the hearer in Pharisaical presumption, or sink him into despondency.[76]

Fuller's words on this occasion offer a window into his larger vision for preaching, which involved more than merely reforming the manners of his congregation. Instead, the aim of his preaching was to exhibit the glory of Christ and him crucified in such a way as to render practical godliness both desirable and attainable.[77]

The imperative of practical preaching also implies that preachers must do more than simply instruct their people in the truth. Following the pattern of the biblical authors, they must supplement the indicatives of the gospel with the imperatives of God's commands. In his sermon, "True Wisdom," Fuller exhorted his listeners with these words: "We shall read the oracles of God: the doctrines for belief, and the precepts for practice; and shall thus learn to cleanse our way by taking heed thereto, according to God's word."[78] If Christians find wisdom by adopting this approach with the Scriptures, then preachers must do the same in their sermons. They may "cut off the reproach of dry doctrine, by preaching it feelingly; and of its being inimical to good works, by preaching it practically."[79]

Fuller's Sermons on Various Practical Subjects

Throughout the course of his ministry, Fuller preached practical sermons on a wide variety of subjects and occasions. His published material includes sermons he delivered to his own congregation as well as those given at ordinations, funerals, association meetings, ministers' meetings, and other ministries he supported such as the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Widows' Fund, and the Bristol Education

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[76] Fuller, "Advice to the Dejected," in *Works*, 1:232.

[77] Fuller, "Soul Prosperity," in *Works*, 1:406.

[78] Fuller, "True Wisdom," in *Works*, 1:465.

[79] Fuller, "Ministers and Churches exhorted," in *Works*, 1:544.

Society.[80] Fuller judiciously selected texts and subjects to suit each occasion. Following

Claude's instructions, his sermon texts rarely covered more than a few short verses and

often focused on a single verse taken from a wide range of books and genres. His subjects

include instructions for present and future pastors, encouragements in private and public

devotion, advice for youth, comfort for the grieving, consolation for the weak, conviction

for the cold-hearted, and exhortations for the faithful. The following discussion surveys

dozens of Fuller's sermons on practical subjects ranging from the end of his time in

Soham in October 1782 to the final months of his life in December 1814. In these

sermons, Fuller commonly began with a short introduction followed by an inquiry into

the meaning of the text and the subject. Next, he applied his subject by enforcing its

duties on evangelical principles and showing its importance for the Christian life before

ending with a brief conclusion.

The Sermon's Introduction

Although Fuller offered no explicit instructions on how to craft an

introduction, his sermons reveal a simple model that appears to combine Claude's rules

with his own particular method. In his introductions, Fuller sought to position his readers

in the path of his sermon by orienting them to the subject of his text and carefully

opening their minds to receive it. Evidently, Fuller shared Claude's disapproval of certain

English preachers who "enter immediately into the literal explication of the text, and

make it serve for an exordium."[81] If the listeners are to profit from the preached Word,

then the preacher must prepare them to hear what he has to say. For the exordium,

according to Claude, is the portion of the sermon "in which the minds of the hearers are

prepared, and a natural and easy way opened to the discussion."[82] Referring to his vision

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[80] See Fuller, "Sermons and Sketches," in *Works*, 1:ix–xi.

[81] Claude, *Essay*, 2:456.

[82] Claude, *Essay*, 2:451.

for preaching, Claude instructed preachers to please their audiences during the opening minutes of the sermon so they might gain an adequate hearing. Neither Claude nor Fuller assumed their listeners already understood the subject nor how to properly apply it without the preacher's help. Therefore, the introduction was crucial for peaking the interest of the listeners and guiding their affections toward biblical truth.

Concurrent with Fuller's general approach to sermon composition, his introductions were often simple, plain, modest, and sincere. "We ought to use sound speech, and good sense," Fuller advised his fellow preachers, "but if we aspire after great elegance of expression, or become very exact in the formation of our periods, though we may amuse and please the ears of a few, we shall not profit the many."[83] For his part, Claude cautioned preachers against using "pompous and magnificent expressions" in the opening minutes of the sermon since the hearer's mind was still "cool and in its natural state."[84] In his introductions, Fuller prepared his listeners through a combination of personal remarks, discussion of the biblical context, connection to the contemporary world, outline of his discourse, and statement of his primary point. His method varied depending on the occasion, the makeup of his audience, and the text set before him.

As one might expect, Fuller was more inclined to begin with personal remarks on solemn occasions, such as funerals, or in more intimate settings, such as ordinations or ministers' meetings. At the funeral of his late friend, Beeby Wallis, in April of 1792, Fuller opened his sermon with a humble admission: "It is usual with us on the death of our friends, to improve the mournful event by a sermon on the occasion. I feel a difficulty, in the present instance, on account of my near and intimate connexion with the

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[83] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:717.

[84] In full, "Pompous and magnificent expressions must be avoided, as far as the things spoken will permit. Do not use a style too elevated, bordering on bombast—not periods too harmonious—nor overstrained allegories—nor even metaphors too common or too bold, for indeed the hearer's mind, yet cool and in its natural state, can bear nothing of this kind." Claude, *Essay*, 2:477.

deceased."[85] Interestingly, Claude counseled preachers not to praise themselves or speak of themselves in any way in the introduction, believing this practice to be an insincere form of affectation.[86]

While the tendency to use personal remarks as a means of self-promotion may have been a temptation for some, Fuller appeared not to show any interest in directing sustained attention to himself.[87] What personal remarks he did offer were generally brief and particularly suited to the occasion. Speaking to a friend on the day of his ordination, Fuller admitted, "It is a very important work to which you are this day set apart." He continued, "You need both counsel and encouragement; I wish I were better able to administer both. In what I may offer, I am persuaded you will allow me to be free; and understand me, not as assuming any authority or superiority over you, but only as saying that to you which I wish to consider as equally addressed to myself."[88] Whether they were carefully planned or simply extemporaneous thoughts, Fuller's personal remarks would have endeared himself to his audience as a recipient of the same grace he aimed to proclaim.[89]

Although his practical sermons often focused on a single verse, Fuller was keen to alert his listeners to the surrounding context. For the meaning of a text cannot be discerned apart from its context.[90] At the 1791 ministers' meeting at Clipstone, Fuller

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[85] Fuller, "Blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord," in *Works*, 1:152.

[86] Claude, *Essay*, 2:461.

[87] On the whole, Fuller's sermon material contains very few personal illustrations or discussions concerning his private life.

[88] Fuller, "Qualifications and encouragement," in *Works*, 1:135.

[89] He met Claude's expectation: "You must softly insinuate yourself into their esteem, so that they may not only not oppose what you say, but be well satisfied you are an honest and well-meaning man." Claude, *Essay*, 2:475.

[90] Fuller contended, "When a passage of Scripture is fixed on as the ground of a sermon, it is necessary to read it in connexion with the context, and endeavour by your own judgment to gain a clear idea of its genuine meaning." Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:718. Claude referred to this portion of the sermon as the connection, which is "the relation of your text to foregoing or following verses." Claude, *Essay*, 1:37.

delivered one of his more famous sermons entitled, "Instances, Evil, and Tendency of Delay, in the Concerns of Religion."[91] The sermon was a clarion call for his fellow Baptists to assume responsibility for the cause of Christ around the globe. For his text, Fuller selected Haggai 1:2, which reads, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."[92] To some, this passage may have been an obscure choice for such an occasion. In the opening paragraphs, Fuller answered these doubts by explaining the verse in connection with its context.

When the people of Israel returned to Jerusalem from their Babylonian exile, they failed to complete the task of rebuilding the temple in a timely manner. As Fuller observed, they delayed in their obedience by concerning themselves with present comforts, believing that some future generation would accomplish the work on their behalf. After clarifying this point, Fuller connected their situation to those in his own day: "There is something of this procrastinating spirit that runs through a great part of our life, and is of great detriment to us in the work of God. We know of many things that should be done, and cannot in conscience directly oppose them; but still we find excuses for our inactivity."[93] The "procrastinating spirit" was the thread Fuller used to connect the biblical text to his contemporary audience. The sinful tendency of his hearers was no different from that of the people of Israel in Haggai's day. In the remainder of his sermon, Fuller expounded on this single idea and urged his peers not to make the same mistake as those before them.

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[91] See John Sutcliff and Andrew Fuller, *The Clipston Sermons: A Key Moment in the History of Christian Missions*, eds. Michael A. G. Haykin and G. Stephen Weaver Jr. (Louisville: Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, 2016). Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:145.

[92] Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:145.

[93] Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:145.

In addition to the method mentioned above, Fuller used a variety of illustrations, biblical examples, quotations, and contrasts, to capture the attention and affections of his listeners.[94] On one occasion, he began an ordination sermon by comparing the minister's task to one who exercises oversight of a home or a garden. Fuller found warrant for this imagery within his preaching passage in Jeremiah 1:10.[95] Ministers, he asserted, are appointed to build up what is good and to root out what is evil. Thus, the imagery of building or demolishing a house and planting seeds or pulling weeds from a garden were fitting. On another occasion, he began an ordination sermon with a quote from one of his contemporaries: "A remark which I once heard from the lips of that great and good man, the late Mr. Abraham Booth, has often recurred to my recollection. 'I fear,' said he, 'there will be found a larger proportion of wicked ministers than of any other order of professing Christians.'"[96] While the quote certainly would have peaked the interest of his listeners, the connection to his subject—preaching Christ—was less apparent. Fuller endeavored to clear away any confusion by urging his fellow ministers not to preach a Christ that they had not first personally received.

An additional method Fuller employed effectively was to introduce a contrast between right and wrong ways of thinking, or between truth and error. When introducing the subject of private religion in his sermon, "Solitary Reflection," Fuller disabused his listeners of the notion that religion was a merely public exercise that consisted in hearing sermons, discussing them in public, and deciding whether or not to applaud or censor the preacher.[97] On the contrary, sincere Christians should listen to sermons, forget about the

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[94] Claude wrote, "The principal design of an Exordium is to attract or excite the affections of the audience—to stir up their attention—and to prepare them for the particular matters, of which we are about to treat." Claude, *Essay*, 2:461.

[95] "I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant." Fuller, "Ministers appointed to root out Evil and to cultivate Good," in *Works*, 1:486.

[96] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:501.

[97] Fuller, "Solitary Reflection," in *Works*, 1:221.

preacher altogether, and think only of themselves and the demands Scripture lays upon them. "It may be well to examine the actions of your life," Fuller pressed, "but as the heart is the spring-head of action, the state of your heart must be the chief object of your inquiry."[98] Elsewhere, Fuller contrasted images of light and darkness, wisdom and folly, purity and corruption, all in an attempt to provide his hearers with a clear choice between the ways of God and the ways of the world.[99]

On occasion, Fuller supplied his listeners with several initial observations related to difficult terms or themes within his text. These were preparatory remarks designed to clear any confusion before entering into the main portion of the discourse. In his sermon on James 1:27 titled, "The Characteristics of pure Religion," Fuller offered two preliminary remarks.[100] First, the author did not intend to offer a comprehensive definition of religion in this one verse, but to make a "declaration of some of its essential branches."[101] Second, because James used the terms "pure and undefiled" to refer to true religion, Fuller deduced there was another kind of religion that is impure and defiled, which must be avoided.[102] Through these initial observations, Fuller removed two major obstacles from the minds of his listeners and set them in the path of his sermon. Once he oriented his hearers to his subject and addressed some discernible spiritual need within them, Fuller outlined the remainder of his discourse and offered its leading sentiment, or primary truth. He then proceeded to the body of his sermon, beginning with his inquiry into the meaning and the extent of the text and its subject.

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[98] Fuller, "Solitary Reflection," in *Works*, 1:222.

[99] On light and darkness, see Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:160. On wisdom and folly, see Fuller, "True Wisdom," in *Works*, 1:464. On purity and corruption, see Fuller, "Characteristics of pure Religion," in *Works*, 1:398.

[100] James 1:27 reads "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

[101] Fuller, "Characteristics of pure Religion," in *Works*, 1:398.

[102] Fuller, "Characteristics of pure Religion," in *Works*, 1:399.

**Inquire into the Meaning and
Extent of the Exhortation**

In his fourth letter on preaching, Fuller explained his method for discoursing on practical subjects.[103] First, he began by selecting a text that contained a simple exhortation, which required little explanation or proof. He relied on his previous study of the text to determine whether or not it was suitable for a practical or doctrinal discourse. Commenting on the applicatory mode of composition, Claude instructed preachers to primarily select texts "exhorting to holiness and repentance."[104] Fuller appeared to follow Claude's advice and avoided longer narrative passages in lieu of shorter prophetic, poetic, or epistolary texts.[105] When dividing his practical sermons, Fuller devised a simple formula: "I have generally found that exhortations include matter for a twofold division, and have very commonly proposed, first, to inquire into the meaning and extent of the exhortation; secondly, to enforce it."[106] Like Claude before him, Fuller found it unnecessary to defend or prove a text that was already clear.[107] Nevertheless, he allowed preachers to "expatiate upon every idea or branch of the duty" in their inquiries, so as to thoroughly demonstrate its relevance for the listeners.[108] Having inquired into the meaning of the text or subject, Fuller expected preachers then to enforce it by introducing the motives for obedience and showing its importance for the Christian life.

Fuller approached his inquiries from two different vantage points. He either expounded the text, phrase by phrase, or expatiated on his subject by exploring related

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[103] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724–725.

[104] Claude, *Essay*, 2:326.

[105] When Fuller did select a narrative text, he often chose a small portion of a larger dialogue. For example, see his sermon on Joshua 23:11, "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God." Fuller, "Nature and Importance of Love to God," in *Works*, 1:304.

[106] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

[107] Claude emphasized, "When texts are clear of themselves, and the matter well known to the hearers, it would be trifling to amuse the people with explication. Such texts must be taken as they are, that is, clear, plain, and evident, and only observations should be made on them." Claude, *Essay*, 2:1.

[108] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

themes or ideas.[109] When expounding the text, Fuller appears to have loosely followed

Claude's advice for observational sermons. Claude referred to the observational model,

alongside the explicatory model, as textuary methods "because, in effect, they keep to the

text without digression, they regard it as the subject-matter of the whole discussion, or, if

you please, the field, which they have to cultivate, or to reap."[110] In his chapter on

observational sermons, Claude suggested twenty-seven different ways preachers might

make observations of a text. These included comparing and contrasting its terms,

reflecting on the person speaking or acting, drawing inferences from actions or events,

and connecting the text with related subjects, among others.

One of the earliest sermons preserved in Fuller's *Works* was an ordination

sermon delivered on October 31, 1787, entitled, "The qualifications and encouragement

of a Faithful Minister illustrated by the character and success of Barnabas." His text on

that occasion was Acts 11:24: "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit, and of

faith; and much people was added to the Lord." For his outline, Fuller simply reproduced

his preaching passage: "I. He was a good man. II. He was full of the Holy Spirit. III. He

was full of faith. IV. And much people was added unto the Lord."[111] These four points

comprised the body of his sermon as Fuller interspersed these theological observations

with practical applications. In time, Fuller moved away from this particular method,

choosing to confine his textual observations to the first half of the sermon. Indeed, Fuller

later discouraged preachers from designing their sermons in this way, since it tended to

obscure the sermon's leading truth or theme.[112]

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[109] Expatiate means to enlarge upon in language, to move beyond, or to expand. See Johnson, "Expatiate," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1:179.

[110] Claude, *Essay*, 2:325.

[111] Fuller, "Qualifications and encouragement," in *Works*, 1:135–144.

[112] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:724.

A more common approach was to make textual observations within his larger inquiry into the primary subject of his discourse. His sermon on Psalm 90:14 entitled, "Advantages of Early Piety," illustrates this approach. Fuller preached this sermon to the youth in his congregation at the turn of the new year, as was his custom.[113] His aim was to convince his listeners to pursue "an early participation in divine mercy."[114] Fuller carried his hearers to his main point by discussing *divine mercy* in general terms, before explaining that people are to be *satisfied* with divine mercy, then clarifying that they should be satisfied *early* with divine mercy. Here, Fuller's method reflects one of Claude's suggestions for preachers to make observations that "descend from genus to species," or from general ideas to specific ones.[115] When done properly, the listeners not only grasped the meaning of the text, but they were also prepared to receive the application that followed. Additional examples of practical sermons containing textual observations similar to these include "Principles and prospects of a Servant of Christ," "The Work and Encouragements of the Christian Minister," and "Habitual Devotedness to the Ministry."[116]

When he was not offering textual observations in his inquiry, Fuller opened his subject through the use of various propositions. Indeed, this was Fuller's preferred method throughout his practical preaching. Following Claude's advice, Fuller designed these propositions to be applicatory in nature.[117] They were not simply doctrinal remarks

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[113] See "Review of Religious Publications: *A New-Year's Gift for Youth*," *Missionary Magazine* 5 (1800): 33–34.

[114] This followed from his text, which reads, "O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

[115] See Claude, *Essay*, 2:24–26.

[116] Fuller, "Principles and prospects," in *Works*, 1:342–356; Fuller, "Work and Encouragements of the Christian Minister," in *Works*, 1:496–501; Fuller, "Habitual Devotedness to the Ministry," in *Works*, 1:506–508.

[117] See Claude, "Chapter VII. Of Texts to be discussed in a way of continued Application," in *Essay*, 2:325–394.

that required his listeners to wait until the end of the sermon to discover their relevance. Commenting on the applicatory model, Claude asserted, "There is a third way, which is, without explaining or making observations, the making of a continual application of it, and the reducing of it immediately to practice."[118] For Claude, the text dictated the terms of the sermon. If the preacher determined the text's primary aim was self-examination or some other practical exercise, then he was obligated to design his sermon with the same end in mind. What resulted was a sermon whose main points contained both theological truth and practical application, which the preacher then expounded to the extent he deemed necessary.

One example showing how Fuller inquired into a practical subject through propositions is found in his sermon, "The nature and importance of an intimate knowledge of Divine Truth" on Hebrews 5:12–14.[119] After offering several preliminary remarks, Fuller stated the leading sentiment of his passage, which is reflected in his title—the importance of a deep and intimate knowledge of divine truth. He first set out to "inquire wherein it consists" and second, to "endeavour to show the importance of it."[120] Fuller structured his inquiry around four applicatory propositions: "1. Though we must not stop at first principles, yet we must be well grounded in them. 2. We must not content ourselves with knowing what is truth, but must be acquainted with the evidence on which it rests. 3. We must learn truth immediately from the oracles of God. 4. We must view it in its various connexions in the great system of redemption."[121]

Within each proposition, Fuller employed several short, yet potent, illustrations—both biblical and contemporary—to help his listeners feel the truths he

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[118] Claude, *Essay*, 2:325.

[119] Fuller preached this sermon before the Baptist Association of St. Albans on June 1st, 1796. See Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:160–174.

[120] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:161.

[121] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:162–168.

sought to convey. When imploring them to learn their religion directly from the Scriptures, Fuller reminded his hearers of one well-known biblical account: "There is a savour in truth, when drawn from the words which the Holy Spirit teaches, which is lost, or at least diminished, if it pass under the conceptions and expressions of men. . . . Truth learned only at second-hand will be to us what Saul's armour was to David; we shall be at a loss how to use it in the day of trial."[122] When observing the four propositions listed above, one also notices a progression in Fuller's thought that culminates with a discussion of "the great system of redemption" in Christ.

Alongside these propositions, Fuller also made select applications to the mind, will, affections, and actions of his listeners. In speaking of the "first principle" of repentance, Fuller observed how carnal men gain knowledge of divine truth and are immediately puffed up by it. Thinking "they understand great things, they know nothing as they ought to know it" because they have not experienced the grace of genuine repentance.[123] Such a statement would have provoked immediate self-examination given the predominantly Christian context in which Fuller ministered. He then seized the opportunity to define true repentance as "a kind of self-emptying work," which includes "a renunciation, not only of those things for which our own consciences at the time condemned us, but of what we have been in the habit of reckoning wisdom and righteousness."[124] By defining repentance in this way, Fuller was able to provide a theological framework for his people alongside a searching, personal application. Other practical sermons that follow a similar pattern are "The Nature and Importance of Love to God," "The Common Salvation," and "A Peaceful Disposition."[125]

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[122] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:164.

[123] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:162.

[124] Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:162.

[125] Fuller, "Nature and Importance of Love to God," in *Works*, 1:304–310; Fuller, "Common Salvation," in *Works*, 1:409–413; Fuller, "Peaceful Disposition," in *Works*, 1:534–538;

A final method of inquiry Fuller employed in his practical sermons was through the use of questions designed to illuminate the subject for his audience. Two sermons that illustrate this method are "Solitary Reflection" and "The Work of Patience."[126] Fuller delivered the first sermon in a country village and his passage on this occasion was Psalm 4:4: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." [127] In his inquiry into the meaning of this exhortation, Fuller posed five searching questions:

> First, does my heart choose and follow after those things which my conscience tells me are right? Second, is my conscience instructed and formed by the word of God? Third, have any or all my pursuits, whether after natural or sinful enjoyments, ever yet afforded me satisfaction? Fourth, will the course I am in do to die with? Finally, If I should die in an unconverted state, and perish for ever, can I endure the wrath of an offended God?

Not only does each question build on the preceding one, but each question also escalates in its significance. Fuller began with the individual conscience by asking his hearers to search their hearts in the moment. Next, he asked them to consider the course of their life as a whole to determine if they were satisfied with the outcome. Finally, Fuller urged them to contemplate their eternal destiny and the coming judgment that awaited those who perish without Christ. Fuller raised and answered each question all within his explanation and application of the subject. What followed was Fuller's attempt to enforce the subject by showing why his listeners must comply with the demands of his text if they were to mature in the faith.

**Enforce the Exhortation on
Evangelical Principles**

In his memoirs of his late friend, Samuel Pearce, Fuller included an extract from a letter between Pearce and a younger minister that contained Pearce's thoughts on

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[126] Fuller, "Solitary Reflection," in *Works*, 1:221–228; Fuller, "Work of Patience," in *Works*, 1:374–379.

[127] For more on Fuller's itinerant ministry, see Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, Studies in Baptist Life and Thought (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 116–120.

preaching human obligation. Pearce exhorted his friend to do it extensively, constantly, affectionately, and evangelically.[128] He expanded, "I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives."[129] Preachers have tried a myriad of methods to improve the spiritual condition of their congregations, but it is only "the gospel of the grace of God that will most effectually animate, and impel to action."[130]

Pearce's words echo the sentiments of earlier Particular Baptists such as John Gill, who wrote, "The ministry of the word takes in the several duties of religion, which are to be insisted on in their course; and saints are to be exhorted to the exercise of them upon evangelical principles and motives."[131] Similarly, Fuller believed that religious duties must be enforced on evangelical principles if people were to grow in godliness. To enforce these duties meant to strengthen, invigorate, and urge them upon the people with great energy and affection.[132] In his inquiries into the meaning and extent of his subject, Fuller plainly articulated the duties that the biblical text laid upon his listeners. Now, in the latter portion of his practical sermons, Fuller grounded those duties in the unchanging truths of the gospel. Commenting on the danger of missing this most crucial homiletical element, Fuller warned, "I may be very pointed in pressing the practical parts of religion, and in reproving the sins of the times; but if I enforce the one, or inveigh against the

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[128] Samuel Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce, A. M., minister of the gospel in Birmingham: with extracts from some of his most interesting letters*, ed. Andrew Fuller (Clipstone: J. W. Morris, 1800), 251.

[129] Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce*, 251.

[130] Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce*, 251.

[131] John Gill, *A body of practical divinity; or, a system of practical truths, deduced from the sacred scriptures. Which (with the two former volumes) completes the scheme of doctrinal and practical divinity* (London: George Keith, 1770), 3:364.

[132] See Johnson, "Enforce," in *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1:158.

other, on any other than evangelical principles, I, in so doing, preach not the gospel. All Scriptural preaching is practical; but when practice is enforced in opposition to doctrine, or even to the neglect of it, it becomes antiscriptural."[133] To attempt to enforce the commands of God without a robust understanding of the grace of God was, for Fuller, the fatal flaw of moralistic preaching.

To guard against such errors, Fuller used the latter part of his sermons to introduce all the relevant reasons why his listeners should heed his exhortation. He referred to this in a variety of ways depending on his subject and the occasion. Fuller typically used one of three phrases to describe his approach. He either enforced the duties of the exhortation, demonstrated its importance, or pointed out its influence on the whole of the Christian life. While each of the terms are slightly different, they accomplish the same overarching goal. For those texts that contained elements of both doctrinal and practical religion, Fuller allowed for the doctrinal truths to serve as underlying motives for the practical commands.[134]

The most common language Fuller employed following his inquiry into the exhortation was to enforce its duties or show its motives. His sermons "The obedience of churches to their pastors explained and enforced," "The Work and Encouragements of the Christian Minister," "Habitual Devotedness to the Ministry," "Christian Churches Fellow Helpers with their Pastors to the Truth," and "Holding fast the Gospel," among others, each follow this method.[135] In his ordination sermon, "The Work and Encouragements of the Christian Minister," Fuller preached on the master's approval of his servant in

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[133] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:716.

[134] Fuller, "Letter IV. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:725.

[135] Fuller, "Obedience of churches to their pastors," in *Works*, 1:196–202; Fuller, "Work and Encouragements of the Christian Minister," in *Works*, 1:496–501; Fuller, "Habitual Devotedness," in *Works*, 1:506–508; Fuller, "Christian Churches Fellow Helpers with their Pastors," in *Works*, 1:524–526; Fuller, "Holding fast the Gospel," in *Works*, 1:547–549. Additional examples include Fuller, "Nature of the Gospel," in *Works*, 1:494–496; Fuller, "Young Minister exhorted to make full Proof of his Ministry," in *Works*, 1:518–521; Fuller, "Peaceful Disposition," in *Works*, 1:534–538.

Matthew 25:21: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."[136] From this text, he expounded on the Christian minster's responsibilities as a servant of God entrusted with a serious charge. After outlining the various duties associating with this task, Fuller considered three important motives for the discharge of his ministry: "1. You will receive the approbation of your Lord. 2. Your honour and happiness in the world to come shall be greatly enlarged. 3. You will participate in that joy of which your Lord partakes."[137]

Consistent with the aim of his passage, Fuller designed these motives with an eye to the future. Although he often urged his listeners to reflect on the previous mercies of God in salvation, here he compels this younger minister to look ahead to the glory that awaits him. Even so, Fuller reminded him that this glory "will be a reward of grace, not of debt."[138] For "were it not for the sake of Christ, nothing we do could be accepted, there being so much sin cleaving even to our best services."[139] By supporting each motive with constant reminders of the grace necessary to reach the final reward, Fuller aimed to ensure ministers would rely on Christ to uphold them in the pursuit of their master's commendation.

Elsewhere, Fuller enforced his practical exhortations by alerting his listeners to the grave importance of the subject at hand.[140] In his sermon, "The Nature and importance of walking by faith," preached before the Northamptonshire Association in 1784, Fuller supplied his reasons for explaining a practical subject and showing its

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[136] In full, "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, and I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

[137] Fuller, "Work and Encouragements," in *Works*, 1:499–501.

[138] Fuller, "Work and Encouragements," in *Works*, 1:500.

[139] Fuller, "Work and Encouragements," in *Works*, 1:500.

[140] See Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:117–134; Fuller, "Common Salvation," in *Works*, 1:409–413; Fuller, "Solitary Reflection," in *Works*, 1:221–228; Fuller, "Nature and Importance of Love to God," in *Works*, 1:304–310.

importance.[141] He summarized, "All I shall attempt will be to explain the nature, and show the importance, of the Christian's walk by faith. Both are necessary: the one, that we may form just ideas of what we have to do; and the other, that we may feel our hearts excited to do it."[142] As seen in these comments, Fuller designed the first portion of his sermon to speak chiefly to the intellect and the second to the affections. For the mind must first receive the truth before the heart can come to adore it.

Using Claude's language, Fuller expounded first on the terms of his passage in great detail before moving on to "obtain a more comprehensive view of the thing itself, (namely, of a Christian's walking by faith)."[143] Once he accomplished this to his satisfaction, Fuller proceeded to establish the importance of the life of faith. First, he reminded his listeners that "such a life brings great glory to God."[144] Nothing should surpass the glory of God in the heart of the Christian, for it should be "dearer to us than our dearest delights!"[145] Next, Fuller invited his listeners to see how the life of faith was also "productive of great good to us," especially in trying circumstances.[146] He expanded, "In all the vicissitudes of life and horrors of death, nothing can cheer and fortify the mind like this. By faith in an unseen world we can endure injuries without revenge, afflictions without fainting, and losses without despair."[147] Third and finally, Fuller concluded by encouraging his listeners that the life of faith "will make the vision sweeter" on that final

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[141] This sermon was a catalyst for the monthly prayer meeting that eventually gave birth to the Baptist Missionary Society. See notes on Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:117.

[142] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:118.

[143] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:125. See also Claude, "Explication of terms" and "Explication of things," in Claude, *Essay*, 1:100–106.

[144] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:132.

[145] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:132.

[146] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:133.

[147] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:133.

day.[148] To illustrate this idea, Fuller invited his audience to imagine arriving at a destination after a long and harrowing voyage. In the end, "the remembrance of our dangers, fears, and sorrows will enable us to enjoy the heavenly state with a degree of happiness impossible to have been felt, if those dangers, fears, and sorrows had never existed."[149] With each point, Fuller aimed to furnish his listeners with sufficient motivations to walk by faith despite the challenges that accompany such a life.

A final method that Fuller employed to enforce his exhortation was by showing its influence on the present and future happiness of the Christian.[150] In his sermon, "The Work of Patience," on James 1:4, Fuller connected the pursuit of patience with its desired end, that the follower of Christ may be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."[151] Seeking to show his listeners how patience accomplishes this end, Fuller exclaimed, "Show me the man who has the greatest portion of noble qualities, and that will be the man who has gone through the greatest trials. Here is the perfect work of patience. It is the bearing of these trials, and the exercise of patience under them, that fills up the vacancies in Christian character."[152] The exercise of patience exerts an influence over every other of the Christian life such that if a person longs to grow in the faith without it, they pursue maturity in vain. Fuller's final words in this sermon make plain his commitment to urge obedience on evangelical principles: "God grant that this may be the object of each heart! May all our means of grace, prayer, reading, and so on, be

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[148] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:133.

[149] Fuller, "Walking by faith," in *Works*, 1:133.

[150] See Fuller "Work of Patience," in *Works*, 1:374–378; Fuller, "Advantages of Early Piety," in *Works*, 1:421–426.

[151] The verse reads, "Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Fuller, "Work of Patience," in *Works*, 1:374.

[152] Fuller, "Work of Patience," in *Works*, 1:379.

tending to this! Thus shall we be fitted for usefulness here, and meetened for the inheritance of the saints above."[153]

The Sermon's Conclusion

Similar to his introductions, Fuller did not offer any clear instructions on how to close his sermons. Alongside many of his contemporaries, Fuller adopted the method Claude laid down in his *Essay*. For Claude, the conclusion was a pivotal moment in the sermon. It was the final opportunity for preachers to pierce the affections of their audience and win their hearts to God. Commenting on this point, Robinson wrote, "The fire of the preacher should blaze here, he should collect the ideas of his whole sermon into this part, as rays are collected in the focus of a burning glass, and inflame the hearts of his auditors."[154] How did Claude advise preachers to inflame hearts? He instructed them to employ three different dispositions, or emotions, that were dictated by the subject—the violent, the tender, and the elevated.[155] Violent emotions included indignation, fear, zeal, and courage, and were calculated for stern warnings regarding judgment, temptation, or repentance. Tender emotions expressed joy, comfort, and gratitude, and warmly invited listeners to receive the pardoning mercy and enlivening grace of God. Finally, elevated emotions sought to raise the affections by gazing upon the majesty of God, his providential work in salvation, and the glory of eternity.

Erskine reproduced each of these categories—violent, tender, elevated—in his 1783 work, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*.[156] Like Claude, the conclusion was that portion of the sermon where the preacher principally addressed the passions of the people. It carried the weight of the entire discourse on its shoulders. At

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[153] Fuller, "Work of Patience," in *Works*, 1:379.

[154] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 2:489n1.

[155] Claude, *Essay*, 2:491.

[156] Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, 37.

this point, argued Erskine, the preachers' emotions "are so much stronger and more affecting."[157] Therefore, he must "thunder and lighten, as it were, till all his auditors feel the same emotion, and burn with the same passion as himself: or, if the softer affections are more proper to his subject, he must melt down his hearers by the tenderest motives to mercy, pity or repentance."[158] Along with these heightened emotions, Erskine and Claude both counseled preachers to judiciously apply their closing words to the diverse needs within their congregation. When appropriate, "the rich should be persuaded to liberality, the poor to contentment; the prosperous to gratitude, the afflicted to patience and confidence in God; the saint to joy, and the sinner to repentance."[159]

When Fuller adopted evangelical beliefs in the early years of his ministry, he committed to combine the preaching of the cross with "earnest calls, and pressing invitations, to sinners to receive it, together with the most solemn warnings and threatenings to unbelievers who shall continue to reject it."[160] Having established the truth of his subject and enforced it on evangelical principles in the body of his sermon, the only element that remained for Fuller was to invite his listeners to respond in repentance and faith. Nearly all of Fuller's practical sermons contain a distinct conclusion where he sought to gather the attention of his hearers one final time and press upon them the urgency of a response. A frequently-cited passage from Burnet's *Discourse of the Pastoral Care* aptly summarizes Fuller's closing aim: "For it is certain, that a sermon, the conclusion whereof makes the auditory look pleased, and sets them all a talking with one another, was either not right spoken, or not right heard . . . but that sermon that makes

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[157] Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, 36.

[158] Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, 37.

[159] Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, 36.

[160] Fuller, "Letter II. Sermons—Subject-matter of them," in *Works*, 1:717.

every one go away silent and grave, and hastning to be alone, to meditate or pray over the matter of it in secret, has had its true effect."[161]

In reviewing Fuller's conclusions, it is evident that he sought to affect his listeners through his own use of violent, tender, and elevated emotions. He was careful to ensure that his disposition in the final moments matched the tone of his text and subject. The closing paragraph of his sermon "Sin its own Punishment" illustrates Fuller's use of violent emotions. He issued both a stern warning not to entertain sin and an urgent invitation to accept God's gracious offer of repentance. In the climactic moment, Fuller pressed home the aim of this sermon: "Beware of sinful indulgence of any sort or in any degree; for be sure of this, that the Almighty will find you out; and let it be your concern and mine to cleanse our hands, and to repair to the blood of Calvary, that we may be cleansed from all our backslidings and all our wickedness."[162] Having dealt extensively with the dangers of harboring sin without repentance, Fuller waited until the closing moments to apply the remedy. Similar conclusions appear in his sermons, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay in the Concerns of Religion," "The nature and importance of an intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," "Advantages of Early Piety," and "Equity of the sentence against those who love not Christ."[163]

Tender emotions emerge in the final paragraphs of Fuller's discourses on more sensitive subjects.[164] In his sermon, "Remedy for Mental Dejection," Fuller concentrated on David's words in Psalm 42:6: "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore I

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[161] Both Robinson and Erskine reproduced Burnet's words in their comments on the aim of the sermon's conclusion. See Burnet, *Discourse of the pastoral care*, 224–225.

[162] Fuller, "Sin its own Punishment," in *Works*, 1:560.

[163] Fuller, "Instances, evil, and tendency of Delay," in *Works*, 1:151; Fuller, "Intimate knowledge of Divine Truth," in *Works*, 1:174; Fuller, "Advantages of Early Piety," in *Works*, 1:426; Fuller, "Equity of the sentence," in *Works*, 1:441.

[164] See Fuller, "Solitary Reflection," in *Works*, 1:228; Fuller, "Advice to the Dejected," in *Works*, 1:236; Fuller, "Christianity the antidote to presumption and despair," in *Works*, 1:327; Fuller, "All things working together for good," in *Works*, 1:391; Fuller, "Common Salvation," in *Works*, 1:413; Fuller, "Consolation to the afflicted," in *Works*, 1:447.

will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar."[165] After highlighting the various ways people can have their souls cast down and directing them to remember God's past and present mercies, Fuller began his conclusion with these words: "There is one place which David could not mention, but which you and I can; and which it will do our souls more good to remember than either Jordan, or the land of the Hermonites, or the hill Mizar, or all the other places put together; and that is Calvary."[166] By reserving this most crucial remedy for the final moments of his sermon, Fuller was able to bring his entire discussion to a head, or, as Robinson described it, to collect his ideas "as rays are collected in the focus of a burning glass."[167] Then, with tender pleas, Fuller counseled his listeners to remember Christ's own dejection in Gethsemane and agony on Calvary when they faced providential depressions, afflictions, griefs, sorrows, and guilt of all kinds. For, "a view of the cross of Jesus will prove a balm for every malady—a relief under all thy sorrows."[168] Having endured his fair share of sufferings and sorrows, Fuller gently applied the same remedy to his listeners that he, through many trials, had first applied to himself.[169]

On other occasions, Fuller used an elevated style to offer a lasting word of encouragement through an expectation of future glory. In his sermon, "The Vanity of the human mind," Fuller exposed the many ways people entertain vain and unprofitable thoughts throughout the course of their life.[170] Such thoughts conceal the glory of the

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[165] Fuller, "Remedy for Mental Dejection," in *Works*, 1:368–374.

[166] Fuller, "Remedy for Mental Dejection," in *Works*, 1:374.

[167] Robinson in Claude, *Essay*, 2:489n1.

[168] Fuller, "Remedy for Mental Dejection," in *Works*, 1:374.

[169] One such trial was Fuller's extended agony over the salvation of his oldest son, Robert. In the midst of this arduous season, Fuller confessed, "My heart is oppressed; but yet I am supported. Yesterday I fasted and prayed the day through. Many scriptures were sweet to me; particularly Matt. xv. 25 — 'Lord, help me!—a petition in which a parent was heard for a child, after repeated repulses." Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:70–73.

[170] Fuller, "Vanity of the human mind," in *Works*, 1:434–438.

gospel from unbelievers and hinder the growth of believers when they entertain notions of God that are unworthy of him. With his final words, Fuller urged his listeners to exchange the thoughts of a depraved mind for those of a renewed one. In so doing, they would enjoy a foretaste of those thoughts they will possess for all eternity:

> If we think of God with approbation, of sin with contrition, of ourselves as nothing, of Christ as all, of earth as the house of our pilgrimage, and heaven as our home; this is thinking justly, as we ought to think. Such thoughts also are an earnest of that state where themes of unutterable glory shall for ever present themselves; and where all our powers, being corrected and sanctified, shall ever be employed in exploring the wonders of grace.[171]

With violent emotions, Fuller aimed to pierce the conscience of his hearers. With tender emotions, he sought to melt their hearts. With elevated emotions, he labored to raise their affections so as to give them a glimpse of glory as they departed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to analyze Fuller's sermons on practical subjects to determine the extent to which he adapted and modified Claude's *Essay*. Fuller's introductions and conclusions contain the most overlap with Claude's rules. Through his use of succinct, yet pointed introductions, Fuller gathered the attention of his listeners and captured their affections so they might be ready to receive the truth of his message. He accomplished this by orienting them to the biblical context and drawing a contemporary connection through his use of illustrations, applications, questions, quotations, and contrasting examples. In his conclusions, Fuller labored to bring his entire subject to a single point to make the purpose of his message clear and to open the way for his listeners to respond. Moreover, Fuller used these final minutes to speak directly to the hearts of his hearers through his use of violent, tender, and elevated emotions.

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[171] Fuller, "Vanity of the human mind," in *Works*, 1:438.

The main modifications to Claude's instructions appear in the body of Fuller's practical sermons as he simplified the French preacher's approach by inquiring into the meaning of his subject and enforcing it on evangelical principles. In his inquiries, Fuller expounded on his chosen text, phrase-by-phrase, drawing various observations that contained some theological implication for his listeners to consider. On other occasions, he expanded on important ideas contained within his subject through various propositions or questions. In so doing, Fuller was able to move beyond his preaching passage and wade into other related theological or practical issues. In the latter half of the body of his sermons, Fuller enforced his previous inquiry on evangelical principles. In other words, he sought to ground his moral exhortations in the unchanging truths of the gospel, which he believed provided the only proper foundation for the pursuit of a holy and happy life.

CHAPTER 6

EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING: FULLER'S
EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES
ON GENESIS

In February of 1804, having recently turned fifty years old, Fuller reflected on

his life and ministry in a letter to his friend, John Fawcett (1739–1817). He wrote, "I feel

happy in my work; in no part more so than in expounding a chapter of God's Word every

Lord's Day forenoon. I have done this for the last fourteen years; and as I keep the notes

of the exposition by me, I find them of great use in other labours."[1] Eight years into his

pastorate in Kettering, Fuller began his practice of biblical exposition by preaching

through larger portions of Scripture for his congregation every Lord's Day morning.

While sermons on a single verse were useful for discoursing on specific doctrinal or

practical subjects, the value of exposition resided in its ability to "convey the general

scope and design of the Scriptures."[2] For Fuller, the design of the Scriptures terminated

on the person and work of Christ—the one in whom "every precept finds its most

powerful motive, and every promise its most perfect fulfilment."[3] As a result, biblical

exposition provided him with the opportunity to explore Scripture's vast landscape all the

while leading his people to its pinnacle destination.

The argument of the present chapter is that Fuller maintained a consistent and

careful Christological focus throughout his biblical expositions, enabling him to expound

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[1] Andrew Fuller to John Fawcett, February 1804, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller*, copied from Various Sources by Miss Joyce A. Booth, gathered by the Rev. Ernest A. Payne, scanned by Nigel Wheeler (Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford).

[2] Fuller, dedication to "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis, Interspersed with Practical Reflections," in *Works*, 3:1.

[3] Fuller, "Letter VII. The uniform bearing of the Scriptures on the Person and Work of Christ," in *Works*, 1:704.

the text without imposing Christ onto it or ignoring him altogether. Fuller's *Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis* form the primary source material for this chapter.[4]

These fifty-eight discourses offer a balanced view of how Fuller approached expositional preaching, specifically in the Old Testament. In these expositions, Fuller labored to understand the true meaning of the passage before connecting it to some aspect of Christ's person, his work, his role as the object of saving faith, and his mission to the lost. To accomplish this, Fuller employed a variety of interpretive tools—analogy, typology, contrast, promise-fulfillment, redemptive-historical patterns, and New Testament references—all designed to unite the text with its *telos*.[5] Although he relied heavily on Claude's *Essay* in his doctrinal and practical sermons, Fuller's expositional preaching represents the largest divergence from the French preacher's method. While he retained some of Claude's general principles regarding proper biblical interpretation and the overarching aims of preaching, Fuller operated with more freedom in his expositions, not confining himself to the same set of rules he followed in his sermons.[6]

The chapter begins with a brief survey of expositional preaching within Fuller's historical context. Claude's *Essay* acted as a hinge point in the evolution of modern homiletics between the expositional preaching of the Reformers and the sermonic method of later preachers. Thus, Fuller's use of exposition represents something of a return to an older method, one that he and select contemporaries held in high esteem. Next, the chapter outlines Fuller's philosophy, theology, and practice of biblical

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[4] This is the largest set of expositions that have been preserved, with his *Expository Discourses on the Apocalypse* (Revelation) being the only other remaining full-length treatment. Fuller's expositions on Job were ready for print, but were lost due to a fire in the printer's shop. See Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, Studies in Baptist Life and Thought (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 46.

[5] David Norman Jr. identifies similar interpretive tools in his study of three of Fuller's expositions on the Abrahamic Narrative. See David G. Norman Jr., "Christ as the Criterion for Preaching: Andrew Fuller and the Abrahamic Narrative" in *Understanding Andrew Fuller: Life, Thought, and Legacies*, eds. Nathan A. Finn, Jeff Robinson Sr., and Shane Shaddix (H & E Academic, 2021), 2:112.

[6] See Claude, "Chapter II. General Rules of Sermons," in *Essay*, 1:11–36.

exposition, which provides the necessary foundation for analyzing his discourses. Finally, the chapter explores Fuller's approach to expositional preaching in his *Discourses on Genesis* by showing how he connected the text of Scripture to some aspect of Christ's person, his work, his role as the object of saving faith, and his mission to the lost.

Expositional Preaching from the Protestant Reformation to the Particular Baptists

With the arrival the Protestant Reformation came the recovery of expository preaching as the centerpiece of the church's worship. As the Bible was translated into various languages throughout Europe, preachers were trained, and the Scriptures were proclaimed with renewed passion and clarity.[7] Early Reformers such as Martin Luther (1483–1546), Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531), Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531), Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575), and John Calvin (1509–1564) each endeavored to expound the Scriptures through their own unique methods and styles. Expositions flowed from their pulpits, resulting in commentaries that spanned the entirety of the Old and New Testaments. The common thread that bound each of these expositors together was their commitment to preach the Scriptures plainly, accurately, and applicably.[8] In Calvin's words, the pastor's "whole task is limited to the ministry of God's Word, their

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[7] After surveying the expository method of several early Reformers, James Thomas Ford remarks, "The prominence of preaching in the Reformation went hand in hand with developments in biblical exegesis. Instrumental in the development of biblical hermeneutics and homiletics was the *Prophezei* of Zurich, founded in 1525, which provided a training ground in biblical exposition. The institution was established in other Reformed communities such as Strasbourg and Geneva and spread in Puritan England via the Marian exiles." James Thomas Ford, "Preaching in the Reformed Tradition," in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 69.

[8] For further discussion, see Ford, "Preaching in the Reformed Tradition," in *Preaching and People*, 65–85; Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 4, *The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Joel R. Beeke, *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming the Heart of God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2018, 97–141.

whole wisdom to the knowledge of his Word: their whole eloquence, to its proclamation."[9]

The practice of consecutive exposition, though uncommon at the time, was not a new invention. Rather, it represented a return to an older method found among several earlier church fathers, the most prominent of which was John Chrysostom (347–407). As Stitzinger observes, "Chrysostom's preaching was characterized by simple Bible exposition, fearless proclamation of morality rather than dogma, deep earnestness, and application directed to the common man."[10] The Reformers recovered this model because they believed it to be the most effective way to inculcate people with scriptural truth. Their sermons were characterized by a combination of exegesis and application that guided the listeners through the biblical text—verse by verse, book by book.[11] In time, their homiletical approach spread throughout Europe and into the British Isles where heirs of the Reformation, such as the English Puritans, appropriated their method and applied it within their own context.

As discussed previously, Claude's *Essay* served as a homiletical hinge between the expositional method of the Reformation and the modern era of expository preaching.[12] Prior to its publication in 1688, preaching in England had already undergone significant changes. The Puritans reinforced the importance of pulpit exposition, but the emphasis of their homiletical approach shifted. They elected to center their sermons upon the discovery of doctrinal truths, often drawn from a single verse of Scripture. Perkins's fourfold approach highlights this aim as he counseled preachers to move from text to

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[9] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (1536; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 195.

[10] James F. Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," *Master's Seminary Journal* 3, no. 1 (1992): 14. See also O. C. Edwards Jr., "Homiletics and Catechetics: Chrysostom and Others," in *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 1:72–94.

[11] For an example of Calvin's approach to biblical exposition, see Edwards, "Calvin and the Reform Tradition," in *A History of Preaching*, 1:315–322.

[12] See chapter 2.

meaning to doctrine to application in every sermon.[13] While no two Puritan preachers were exactly the same, biblical exposition frequently served a higher purpose, namely the defining and defending of right doctrine.

Claude's principal contribution to the history of homiletics was his attempt to simplify the sermon by centering it upon a single subject. As a result, each division within the sermon had to connect to the leading theme for it to warrant a place in the discourse. While Claude outlined four models for composing a sermon, none of them were identical to the previous expositional method.[14] In his discussion of Fuller's preaching, Grant rightly identifies the influence of Claude's *Essay* on Fuller's selection of sermonic categories. However, Fuller appears not to have borrowed any specific rules from Claude's analytic, or textual, approach in his expositions.[15] While there is some overlap between his explicatory and observational models and Fuller's expositions, they are not one in the same. This is an important point for the ensuing discussion of Fuller's *Expository Discourses*. In these discourses, Fuller diverged from a strict adherence to Claude's model and exchanged it for the older method of biblical exposition, which amounted to a verse-by-verse explanation and application of the text. While Claude acted as Fuller's primary homiletical mentor for the composition of his sermons, when it came to his expositions, the Particular Baptist pastor looked elsewhere for inspiration.

In his work, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel*, Erskine lamented the loss of pulpit exposition in his own day: "The original method was doubtless expository, i.e. the preacher read a passage out of scripture, and gave the sense

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[13] William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying: Or a Treatise Concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of Preaching* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607).

[14] It appears Claude was quite critical of it: "Some say, preaching is designed only to make scripture understood, and therefore they take a great deal of text, and are content with giving the sense, and with making some principal reflections: but this is a mistake; for preaching is not only intended to give the sense of scripture, but also of theology in general; and, in short, to explain the whole of religion." Claude, *Essay*, 1:5.

[15] Keith S. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 84, 84n37.

as he went on; a truly excellent, and too much neglected means, of promoting scriptural knowledge!"[16] With the rise of the subject sermon over the course of the eighteenth century, many ministers adopted this newer homiletical method and abandoned the older one. However, there were some notable exceptions among dissenting ministers who retained the practice throughout the course of their ministries.[17] Fuller's own personal library contained the works of several of them, including Matthew Henry's (1662–1714) *Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament* (1721–1725), Gill's *Exposition of the Old Testament* (1763–1765) and *Exposition of the New Testament* (1774–1776), and John Guyse's (1680–1761) *The Practical Expositor: or, an Exposition of the New Testament* (1792).[18] Commenting on Gill, McKibbens notes, "Most of his published works, in particular his biblical expositions, had their origins in sermons."[19] The same may be said for many others who first penned their expositions for use among their own congregations.

Phillip Doddridge was another influential dissenting minister who afforded exposition a prominent place in his pulpit. A summary of his lectures on preaching appeared in the 1820 publication, *The Preacher's Manual*. In them, Doddridge recommended expositions be a regular part of worship on the Lord's Day. He supplied four reasons in defense of the practice:

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[16] John Erskine, *Simplicity recommended to ministers of the Gospel, With respect to their doctrine, method, style & delivery in preaching; with hints on other branches of the ministerial office* (London: J. Buckland, 1783), 26.

[17] Stitzinger lists John Gill, Matthew Henry, Fuller, Robert Hall, John Brown, John Eadie, and Alexander Carson as examples. See Stitzinger, "History of Expository Preaching," 24.

[18] Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*, 6 vols. (London: J. Clark, 1721–1725); John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, 6 vols. (London: George Keith, 1763–1765); John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament, both doctrinal and practical*, 3 vols. (London: George Keith, 1774–1776); John Guyse, *The practical expositor: or, An exposition of the New Testament, in the form of a paraphrase; with occasional notes in their proper places for further explication, and serious recollections at the close of every chapter*, 4th ed. (Glasgow: Alerander Abam, 1792).

[19] Thomas R. McKibbens Jr., *The Forgotten Heritage: A Lineage of Great Baptist Preaching* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 28.

1. To keep up a due honour to the Scriptures, and to lead your people in an understanding of the word of God, in its due connection and relation. 2. To guard against unscriptural notions and opinions. 3. It gives the opportunity of many admonitions and much instruction, which would not occur in the usual course of preaching. 4. Preaching and expounding may frequently be blended, by devoting the former part of the discourse to an explanation of the context; especially when the subject is taken from a Psalm, a Parable, or a part of Sacred History.[20]

Similarly, Sturtevant argued for the recovery of what he termed "teaching sermons," which were expository discourses that prioritized explanation and instruction.[21] While Sturtevant retained many of Claude's principles throughout his lecture on exposition, he nevertheless reminded his readers that "all the rules of the other kinds of division and discussion must be laid aside."[22] For, "this scheme is no borrower, it being complete in itself. In other schemes we sometimes make the text bend to our plan, but here our scheme must entirely bend to the text."[23] The only requirements Sturtevant listed for expositions were that they be both true and expedient.[24]

As Morden observes, many of Fuller's closest contemporaries, including Robert Hall Jr., shared these sentiments and adopted the practice in their own ministries.[25] In his *Memoir*, Ryland indicated that Fuller became convinced of the value

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[20] Sheva, "Appendix. No. II. Extracts from Doddridge's Lectures on Preaching," in *The Preacher's Manual: containing I. Two essays on lay-preaching and on the ministerial character: II. Simplicity recommended to ministers of the gospel; third edition: III. Letters on preaching* (London: Richard Baynes, 1820), 140.

[21] S. T. Sturtevant, "Lecture IV. Exegetical or Expository Division," in *The Preacher's Manual; a Course of Lectures on Preaching, in which Claude's Principles, as laid down in "Letters and Conversations on Preaching" are more fully developed, and illustrated by numerous examples, with a view to assist the least educated class of Preachers*, 2nd ed. (London: R. Baynes, 1834), 1:63.

[22] Sturtevant, "Lecture IV. Exegetical or Expository Division," in *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:67.

[23] Sturtevant, "Lecture IV. Exegetical or Expository Division," in *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:67.

[24] In full, "The only rules to be observed, in expounding the Scriptures, are truth and expediency—the latter contrived to fit the subject, and not to constitute a fashion in preaching—and they vary in every possible way." Sturtevant, "Lecture IV. Exegetical or Expository Division," in *The Preacher's Manual*, 1:68.

[25] See Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2015), 150.

of exposition when he saw its scriptural basis and its use in the primitive churches.[26]

Ryland's remarks, coupled with Hall's influence and the older authors mentioned above,

may well have been the key reasons behind Fuller's decision to begin expounding the

Scriptures from his own pulpit in Kettering.

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**Expositional Preaching: Fuller's Philosophy,
Theology, and Practice**

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**"Become Bible Christians": The Value of
Biblical Exposition in Pastoral Ministry**

In an ordination sermon, "Ministers and Churches exhorted to serve one

another in Love," Fuller advised his fellow minister to serve the church by feeding them

with the word of life. Anticipating the question of how this should be done, Fuller

explained, "Be concerned to have treasures, and to bring them forth. I would advise that

one service of every sabbath consist of a well-digested exposition, that your hearers may

become Bible Christians."[27] For Fuller, "Bible Christians" were those who understood

the genuine meaning of the Scriptures and determined to live upon the truths they

discovered within them. Thus, biblical exposition was an opportunity to instruct people in

public as they gathered together for worship and to equip them for private study when

they returned home.

In Fuller's mind, public exposition was advantageous both for the pastor and

for his people. In the pastor's case, the demands of exposition forced him to immerse

himself in the Scriptures so he might competently expound them for his people.[28] From

the congregation's perspective, exposition helped them to clearly see "that what they hear

should come directly from the word of God, and that they should be led to see the scope

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[26] John Ryland Jr., *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope Illustrated in the Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller*, 2nd ed. (London: Button & Son, 1818), 381–382.

[27] Fuller, "Ministers and Churches exhorted," in *Works*, 1:544.

[28] Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:712.

and connexion of the sacred writers."[29] Once he began the practice for himself, Fuller could not imagine a healthy ministry in which exposition did not play a prominent role. Commenting on his father's preaching, Gunton Fuller wrote, "Exposition was a favourite exercise; and he was accustomed to regard a ministry in which this occupied a subordinate place as equally wanting in Scriptural authority and practical advantage."[30]

Exposition also carried with it innumerable benefits for equipping the people to read and understand the Scriptures for themselves. As Fuller said on one occasion, "Learn your religion from the Bible. Let that be your decisive rule."[31] While theological systems and the writings of great men may be useful, only a personal interaction with the Scriptures can provide Christians with the necessary means to grow in godliness. Indeed, this was one of Fuller's principal aims for adopting the practice of exposition. Speaking to his Kettering congregation, Fuller encouraged them "not to rest in any exposition, but to be constantly perusing the Scriptures themselves, and digging at the precious ore."[32] For a steady diet of biblical exposition each Lord's Day would enable them to relish the word of life every other day as well.

"The sacred Scriptures are full of Christ": Christocentricity in Biblical Exposition

Guiding Fuller's theological method throughout his preaching and his writings was what he termed "the doctrine of the cross."[33] Indeed, Fuller began his own discussion of systematic theology—not with the doctrine of God, creation, or the Scriptures—but

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[29] Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:712.

[30] Gunton Fuller, "Memoir," in *Works*, 1:112.

[31] Fuller, "Intimate and Practical Acquaintance," in *Works*, 1:483.

[32] Fuller, dedication to "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis," in *Works*, 3:1.

[33] See Ian Hugh Clary, "'The Centre of Christianity—the Doctrine of the Cross': Andrew Fuller as a Reformed Theologian," *Evangelical Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (July 2019): 195–212.

with Christ.[34] He contended, "To believe the truth concerning Jesus is to believe the whole doctrine of the Scriptures. Hence it is that in all the brief summaries of Christian doctrine the person and work of Christ are prominent."[35] Though the person and work of Christ are not the only doctrines worth studying, they are the gravitational center of the Christian faith. Commenting on Fuller's crucicentric theology, Adam McClendon concludes, "This single point—the essential nature of the cross to the gospel—is the natural spring of his theological fountain from which many would drink."[36] For Fuller, the doctrine of the cross guided the theologian as he developed his system, and it steered the preacher as he composed his expositions.

Moments after urging his fellow minister to help his people become "Bible Christians," Fuller offered an additional piece of advice: "Be concerned to understand and to teach the doctrine of Christianity—'the truth as it is in Jesus.' Be careful, particularly, to be conversant with the doctrine of the cross; if you be right there, you can scarcely be essentially wrong any where."[37] For Fuller, preaching Christ was an essential component of faithful exposition. Neither the pastor nor the people could comprehend the true meaning of the Scriptures without also seeing the one "to whom they uniformly bear testimony."[38] Thus, Fuller argued for a careful, yet consistent, practice of explaining the meaning of the text and connecting it to this leading gospel truth.

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[34] Fuller, "Letter III. Plan proposed to be pursued," in *Works*, 1:690.

[35] Fuller, "Letter III. Plan proposed to be pursued," in *Works*, 1:691.

[36] Adam McClendon, "The Crucicentrism of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," *Churchman* 127, no. 4 (2013): 314.

[37] Fuller, "Ministers and Churches exhorted," in *Works*, 1:544.

[38] Fuller, "Letter VII. The uniform bearing of the Scriptures on the Person and Work of Christ," in *Works*, 1:704.

Vital to the present study on Fuller's preaching of the Old Testament is his view that "the sacred Scriptures are full of Christ, and uniformly lead to him."[39] Though Fuller refused to follow those who "drag in Christ on all occasions," he nevertheless maintained that "creation seems to have been designed as a theatre on which he (God) should display his glory, particularly in the work of redemption."[40] For this reason, all of biblical history—including the sacrificial system, the prophecies, the precepts, and the promises of the Old Testament—prepared the world for the coming of the Messiah and his death in the place of sinners. As Grant observes, "The necessary centrality of Christ did not impose a restriction upon the preacher's themes, but rather, supplied a central thread through the canon." [41] In Fuller's view, the interpreter need not descend into allegory to find Christ in the Scriptures.[42] Rather every text, like a village, contains a road that leads to the metropolis that is Christ.[43] Therefore, to read and preach the Scriptures according to God's own design is to read and preach them with an eye on the person and work of Christ.

Rather than insist that Christ be the central focus of every sermon—that position belongs to the text being preached—Fuller urged his fellow ministers to read and preach the Bible *as Christians*.[44] Preachers should avoid "moral harangues" that bypass

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[39] Fuller, "Letter VII. The uniform bearing of the Scriptures on the Person and Work of Christ," in *Works*, 1:703.

[40] Fuller, "Letter VII. The uniform bearing of the Scriptures on the Person and Work of Christ," in *Works*, 1:702–03.

[41] Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, 93.

[42] See Fuller, "The Abuse of Allegory in Preaching," in *Works*, 1:726–727.

[43] Fuller's words are similar to a later quote attributed to Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892), though there is some debate about its origin. Fuller wrote, "If I leave out Christ in a sermon, and allege that the subject did not admit of his being introduced, I fear it will only prove that my thoughts have not been cast in an evangelical mould. I might as well say there is a village which has no road to the metropolis, as that there is a Scripture doctrine or duty which has no relation to the person and work of Christ." Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190.

[44] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:501. Of Fuller's fifty-eight expositions in Genesis, only eight do not contain an explicit reference to Christ.

the gospel to affect behavioral change and they should resist the use of elaborate allegorical interpretations and so bypass the plain meaning of the text.[45] A better way, Fuller assured his peers, was to remember "if all Scripture doctrines and duties bear a relation to him, we have only to keep that relation in view, and to urge practical religion upon these principles."[46] To keep that relation in view is to preach the Bible as a Christian to fellow Christians. Preaching that is faithful to the Scriptures unfolds the divine author's intended meaning and points the audience to the divine author's singular way of salvation.

In his sermon, "Preaching Christ," Fuller divided Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:5—"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus's sake"—into four basic points that illuminate his Christocentric methodology. First, he exhorted preachers to "Exhibit his Divinity and glorious character."[47] The person of Christ, in his divine and human natures, should be made plain for all to see. Second, preachers must "Hold up his atonement and mediation as the only ground of a sinner's hope."[48] Fuller moved from Christ's person to his work, urging ministers to hold these twin truths together. Third, they should "Hold up the blessings of his salvation for acceptance, even to the chief of sinners."[49] Christ, the object of saving faith, may be freely offered to everyone, regardless of their social status, ethnic heritage, or perceived hostility to the message. Finally, Fuller exhorted his listeners to "Preach him as 'the Lord,' or Lawgiver, of his church."[50] Christ is not only the Savior of sinners, but

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[45] Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190.

[46] Fuller, "God's approbation of our Labours," in *Works*, 1:190.

[47] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:503.

[48] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:503.

[49] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:503.

[50] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:503.

he is also the Lord over their lives. He should be offered, in all his fullness, to the lost and to the saved as the means of both their salvation and sanctification.

"A token of love": Biblical Exposition
on the Lord's Day in Kettering

On January 14, 1805, Fuller wrote in a letter to his friend William Ward (1769–1823): "If I can copy a volume of my exposition on the Book of Genesis, I mean to print that as a token of love to the church I serve in the gospel. That will be without controversy."[51] In the fifteen years since Fuller began his expositions, he had developed a deep affection for this branch of his pulpit ministry. However, the demands Fuller's wider work placed upon him often pulled his attention away from his preparations for the pulpit.[52] That this troubled Fuller to some degree is seen in a subsequent letter to Ward later that same year: "I have many irons, as we say, in the fire. Morris has nearly finished one of two Vols of Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis. This will please you better I suppose than controversy; and I assure it does me. I have always engaged in such writings with reluctance."[53] While Fuller may have engaged in theological disputes as a matter of necessity, he composed his expositions as a labor of love.

Over the course of his time in Kettering, Fuller expounded various books throughout the Old and New Testaments. Ryland recorded that he began his expositions on April 18, 1790, with the Book of Psalms. He then expounded, in succession, Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Job, Genesis, Matthew, Luke, John, Revelation, Acts, Romans, a portion of 1 Corinthians, and the Song of Solomon.[54] When preparing

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[51] Fuller to William Ward, January 14, 1805, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[52] See J. W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, Late Pastor of the Baptist Church at Kettering, and Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society* (London: T. Hamilton, 1816), 70–71; Morden, *The Life and Thought*, 152.

[53] Fuller to William Ward, September 12, 1805, in *Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[54] Ryland, *The Work of Faith*, 382.

his discourses, Fuller labored over the text in private, collecting his thoughts, and striving to understand its genuine meaning. Next, he consulted other expositors to compare his ideas with theirs. Then, having gathered what he believed to be the essence of the passage and his most interesting observations, Fuller recorded his notes in his customary shorthand.[55] He commonly carried very little with him into the pulpit, as he was committed to preaching extemporaneously. The simplicity of Fuller's expositional method was likely due to the constraints on his time as well as the freedom he afforded himself in the composition of these discourses.

Determining the precise nature of Particular Baptist worship in the late eighteenth century has proven to be an elusive task. While Morden provides some helpful descriptions of the physical setting and style of worship, he does not comment on the order of the service.[56] In his study of dissenting worship during this period, Christopher Ellis reproduced an outline of a morning worship service from Isaac Watts's Bury Street Church in London in 1723.[57] Given the similarities between Independent and Particular Baptist congregations at that time, Watts's church may serve as a model for both traditions. The service proceeded as follows: Psalm, Short prayer, Exposition of Scripture, [Psalm or hymn], Prayer, Sermon, Psalm or Hymn, Short Prayer, Benediction. If Fuller conducted his morning worship in a similar fashion, he would have preached at least three times each Lord's Day when one considers the afternoon service as well. Evidence that this was indeed his practice may be seen in another letter to Ward, dated February 4, 1812. On that occasion, an aging Fuller conceded, "As to my health, I make shift to preach twice on Lds [*sic*] day, but that is all. My lungs are very tender and

[55] Fuller, "Letter I. Expounding the Scriptures," in *Works*, 1:714.

[56] Morden, *The Life and Thought*, 151–152.

[57] Christopher J. Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 52.

susceptable of cold."[58] Thus, one may tentatively conclude that Fuller commonly preached two sermons and one exposition each Lord's Day in Kettering.

Following the publication of Fuller's complete works in the years after his death, the *New Baptist Miscellany* (1832) offered their assessment of his *Expository Discourses*. Their review helpfully captures both the clarity of his composition and the overall content of his preaching:

> They are invariably marked by a close adherence to the plain sense of Scripture, and are never disfigured with far-fetched and fanciful accommodations of the sacred text. The natural sagacity, the solid judgment, the penetration, the clearness of his habits of thinking, his extensive acquaintance with the inspired writings, and, above all, the eminent gifts of divine grace conferred upon him, combined to render the pastor of the Baptist church at Kettering one of the most acute, solid, luminous, and satisfactory interpreters of the word of God.[59]

The subsequent discussion of Fuller's expositions confirms this assessment and further illustrates his settled commitment to clearly explain the text and connect it with the truths of the gospel in a careful and appropriate manner.

Fuller's Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis

In the dedication to his *Discourses on Genesis*, Fuller expressed his gratitude for his congregation and offered his own reflections on the value of his expositions. He wrote, "They have enabled us to take a more connected view of the Scriptures than could be obtained merely by sermons on particular passages; and I acknowledge that, as I have proceeded, the work of exposition has become more and more interesting to my heart."[60] In total, Fuller preached fifty-eight expositions on Genesis with some spanning only a handful of verses and others covering entire chapters. Unlike his sermons, Fuller rarely organized his expositions around a single leading theme or doctrine. Instead, he preferred

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[58] Fuller to William Ward, February 4, 1812, in *The Letters of Andrew Fuller* (Angus Library).

[59] "Reviews. *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, with a Memoir of his Life*," *New Baptist Miscellany* 6 (1832): 20.

[60] Fuller, dedication to "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis," in *Works*, 3:1.

to divide his passage according to the natural flow of the narrative. The body of his expositions contain a mixture of explanation and application, with more attention given to the former. Fuller's *Discourses on Genesis* represent the largest collection of his expositions on a single book.[61] For this reason, they are uniquely valuable for gaining insight into his expositional method. In these discourses, Fuller labored to understand the true meaning of his passage before connecting it to some aspect of Christ's person, his work, his role as the object of saving faith, and his mission to the lost.

"Only one faultless character":
Preaching the Person of Christ

The opening lines of Fuller's first discourse on Genesis 1:1–4 lay the groundwork for his approach to preaching Christ throughout the rest of the book. Fuller believed it was Moses's intent to describe "the origin of things," namely the "visible creation, the generations of man, moral evil among men, the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, the new world, the church in the family of Abraham, the various nations and tribes of man."[62] Present in the world before the created order took shape was the person of Jesus Christ in his divine nature, alongside God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Fuller found no fault with those who interpreted the plural term, *Elohim*, to refer to the Triune God, especially given the evidence of later testimony that all three members of the Trinity participated in creation.[63] In essence, Fuller expounded these verses by reading his Bible both forward and backward. He looked forward as he described God's design for the created world, and he looked back as he filled in the gaps for his people regarding the eternal existence of the divine Son of God.

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[61] It should be noted that Fuller most certainly edited these expositions in preparation for print. He wrote in the dedication, "You will consider these Discourses as the result of having once gone over that part of the Scriptures to which they relate. . . . As the Exposition was delivered in public worship, it was not my wish to dwell upon particular words, so much as to convey the general scope and design of the Scriptures." Fuller, dedication to "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis," in *Works*, 3:1.

[62] Fuller, "Discourse I," in *Works*, 3:2.

[63] Fuller, "Discourse I," in *Works*, 3:2.

Because Jesus shares the same divine nature as God the Father, Fuller openly

identified various manifestations of God's presence to the patriarchs with the Second

Person of the Trinity. In his exposition of Genesis 18, Fuller directed his listeners to

subtle clues within the text that revealed the presence of Christ. In Genesis 18:1, the Lord

appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, and in the following verse, the patriarch saw

"three men were standing in front of him" (Gen 18:2). Noting the peculiar nature of this

moment, Fuller observed,

> In the progress of the Old Testament history we often read of similar appearances;
> particularly to Jacob at Peniel, to Moses at the bush, and to Joshua by Jericho. The
> Divine personage who is in this manner appeared to men must surely have been no
> other than the Son of God, who thus occasionally assumed the form of that nature
> which it was his intention, in the fulness of time, actually to take upon him.[64]

Thus, Fuller perceived that Christ, in his divine nature, appeared as a man to prepare his

people for the day when he would assume human nature in the incarnation.[65]

While appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ was one way God prepared his

people for the incarnation, Fuller also saw Christ in the patriarchs themselves—both in

their successes and their failures. Early in the story of Joseph, Fuller established the

typological connection between Joseph and Christ when he perceived that God prepared

the way for the coming of his Son "by a variety of persons, in whom the life and

character of Christ were in some degree previously manifest."[66] He continued, "Thus

Melchizedek prefigured him as a priest, Moses as a prophet, and David as a king; and I

cannot but think the history of Joseph there is a portion of designed analogy between

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[64] Fuller, "Discourse XXVI," in *Works*, 3:74.

[65] On Genesis 30, Fuller commented, "'I am the God of Beth-el!' Such words could never have been uttered by a created angel; nor does the appearing in the form of an angel, or messenger, accord with the Scripture account of God the Father: it must therefore have been the Son of God, whose frequent appearances to the patriarchs afforded a prelude to his incarnation." Fuller, "Discourse XXXIX," in *Works*, 3:123.

[66] Fuller, "Discourse XLV," in *Works*, 3:146.

them."[67] Fuller traced this designed analogy throughout Joseph's life. In the visceral

hatred of Joseph's brothers toward him, one sees something of the hatred of the Scribes

and Pharisees toward Jesus.[68] In the temptation of Joseph at the hands of Potiphar's wife,

one is reminded of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.[69] In Joseph's imprisonment

and subsequent exaltation, one catches a glimpse of the sufferings of Christ and his future

glory.[70] For Fuller, God intended these events in the patriarch's life to serve as a pattern

for the Savior who was to come. "Surely, it was the design of God," Fuller concluded,

"by these sweet analogies, to lead the minds of believers imperceptibly on, that when the

Messiah should come, they might see him in perfection, in their Josephs, and Joshuas,

and Davids, as well as in their sacrifices, their cities of refuge, and their jubilees."[71]

In addition to seeing the person of Christ in the successes of the patriarchs,

Fuller saw him in their failures as well. Just as his perfect character exceeded even their

most righteous acts, so too did it stand in direct contrast to their most sinful ones. Fuller

made this point explicit in his discussion of one of the darkest moments of Abraham's

life. Shortly after hearing the promise that he would be the father of many nations,

Abraham fled to Egypt to preserve his family line. In fear for his life, he attempted to

convince Pharaoh that Sarah, his wife, was his sister. In this moment, Abraham was

characterized, not by a bold faith, but by a curious fear. By highlighting the sin of one of

the great heroes of the Bible, Fuller drew attention to the unique nature of the person of

Christ. Speaking on Genesis 12:10–20, he commented,

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[67] Fuller limited his discussion on typology to the story on Joseph, even though he had already established numerous lines of connection between other characters such as Abel, Noah, and Abraham. Resisting the urge to press these connections too far, Fuller noted, "I am far from thinking that every point of analogy which may be traced by a lively imagination was designed as such by the Holy Spirit; yet neither do I think that we are warranted in rejecting the idea." Fuller, "Discourse XLV," in *Works*, 3:146.

[68] Fuller, "Discourse XLV," in *Works*, 3:146.

[69] Fuller, "Discourse XLVI," in *Works*, 3:152.

[70] Fuller, "Discourse XLVIII," in *Works*, 3:160

[71] Fuller, "Discourse XLVIII," in *Works*, 3:160.

It is remarkable that there is only one faultless character on record; and more so that, in several instances of persons who have been distinguished for some one excellence, their principal failure has been in that particular. Thus Peter, the bold, sins through fear; Solomon, the wise, by folly: Moses, the meek, by speaking unadvisedly with his lips; and Abram, the faithful, by a kind of dissimulation arising from timid distrust.[72]

What is God's purpose in allowing his people to fail on the very same point where they were previously praised? For Fuller, it was to expose human pride and remind the faithful that any evidence of grace in their lives flowed from their dependence on God rather than their confidence in themselves. "Such things," he suggested, "would almost seem designed of God to stain the pride of all flesh, and to check all dependence upon the most eminent or confirmed habits of godliness."[73] When the sins of even the godliest saints are contrasted with the perfect character of Christ, they retreat into the background, and he takes center stage.

To summarize the argument to this point, Fuller aimed to preach the person of Christ in Genesis by pointing his listeners to expressions of his divine and human natures through various events and persons within the narrative. In his divinity, Jesus was present with the Father in creation and manifested himself to the patriarchs in order to prepare them for his incarnation. In his humanity, he was the perfect man who succeeded in greater ways than those before him and who persevered in righteousness when they succumbed to sin.

**"A greater Saviour": Preaching
the Work of Christ**

If the first task of the preacher is to exhibit the divinity and glorious character of Christ, then the second is to hold up his atonement and mediation as the only ground of a sinner's hope. Unsurprisingly, Fuller recognized Genesis 3:15 as the first place where

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[72] Fuller, "Discourse XIX," in *Works*, 3:54.

[73] Fuller, "Discourse XIX," in *Works*, 3:54.

God explicitly revealed his plan of redemption to mankind.[74] The verse reads, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Through Satan's curse and Eve's promise, God established a pattern of salvation that would be repeated throughout Scripture, culminating in the death of Christ. Although the serpent would inflict great harm on the seed of the woman, in the end, he would bruise the serpent's head and usher in the final victory for God and his people.

Before expounding Genesis 3:15–24, Fuller offered a preliminary remark concerning the meaning of this first gospel promise. He reminded his readers that although God spoke directly to the serpent, he was not the focal point of the text. Rather, the text "respects the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy his works."[75] Having established this point, Fuller proceeded to make four critical observations that reveal his approach to preaching the work of Christ. First, he observed, "The ruin of Satan's cause was to be accomplished by one in human nature."[76] Given Satan's superiority to the human race, the fact that the Son of God would assume human nature in order to destroy his works was, in Fuller's view, beautifully ironic. Moreover, this must have been damning to Satan's pride. For, if he would have had his choice "he might rather have wished to have been crushed by the immediate hand of God" than by the hand of those whose nature he particularly despised.[77] For his second observation, Fuller turned his attention to Eve's role in this plan. Satan's ruin "was to be accomplished by the Seed of

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[74] In his introduction to this discourse, Fuller observed, "But mark the wisdom and goodness of God: as under the form of cursing the serpent he had pronounced a most tremendous doom on the tempter, so under the form of this doom is covertly intimated a design of mercy the most transcendent to the tempted!" Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:15.

[75] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:15.

[76] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:15.

[77] In full, Fuller surmised, "This must have been not a little mortifying to his pride. If he must fall, and could have had his choice as to the mode, he might rather have wished to have been crushed by the immediate hand of God; for however terrible that hand might be, it would be less humiliating than to be subdued by one of a nature inferior to his own." Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:15.

the woman."[78] Here, Fuller introduced a simple paradigm for seeing God's saving work throughout Genesis: the ways of God often confound human wisdom as he accomplishes victory through apparent defeat. The same woman Satan used to further his wicked purposes in the world God would now use to reverse the curse and defeat him once and for all.

For his third observation, Fuller encouraged his listeners that "the victory should be obtained, not only by the Messiah himself, but by all his adherents."[79] The work of Christ is such that everyone who believes in him will participate in his final victory over the serpent. Satan's humiliation continues. Though not explicitly stated in the text, Fuller pressed this point as a necessary implication of Christ's victory. For every believer, alongside his Savior, would "be made to come near, and as it were set his feet upon the neck of his enemy!"[80] Finally, Fuller assured his people: "Though it should be a long war, and the cause of the serpent would often be successful, yet in the end it should be utterly ruined."[81] While many years had passed since the promise was first given and many may still remain until it is accomplished—the success of Christ's work is certain. Fuller concluded his observations in this way: "From the whole, we see that Christ is the foundation and substance of all true religion since the fall of man, and, therefore, that the only way of salvation is by faith in him."[82] How sinners respond to Christ in this life determines if they will participate with him in victory or bow before him in defeat.

Another connection to the work of Christ within Genesis 3:15–24 arrives near the end of the narrative when God clothed Adam and Eve with the garments of a slain animal (Gen 3:21). At this early stage in biblical history, Fuller noticed that substitution

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[78] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:15.

[79] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:16.

[80] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:16.

[81] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:16.

[82] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:16.

and atonement were paired together for the first time. He inferred that these animals were slain for the purpose of a sacrifice "especially as this practice is mentioned in the life of Abel" not long after these events.[83] Taking the point a step further, Fuller wondered if these sacrifices were "ordained of God to teach man his desert, and the way in which he must be saved."[84] In Fuller's view, the divine author was working alongside the human author to prepare his people for their future salvation in Christ. He understood Genesis 3:21 to be a preparatory text, introducing select ingredients of God's redemptive work that would be fulfilled at a later date.

The pattern of salvation introduced in the *protoevangelium* continues through the Genesis narrative in the lives of Adam and Eve's descendants. Fuller was keen to notice this pattern in the next notable patriarch, Noah. In his discourse on Adam's genealogy in Genesis 5, Fuller connected the pattern of redemption in Noah's life to the work of Christ. He observed, "Noah, by building the ark, saved a remnant from the flood; and, by offering an acceptable sacrifice, obtained the promise that the ground should no more be cursed for man's sake."[85] Fuller picked up on God's plan of salvation and the various themes that would later be used throughout redemptive history, such as salvation through judgment, the atonement, substitution, and creation's restoration. He continued, "If the birth of this child afforded comfort, in that he would save the world and remove the curse, how much more His who would be a greater Saviour, and remove a greater curse, by being Himself an ark of salvation."[86] While Noah was a great savior who

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[83] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:17.

[84] Fuller, "Discourse VI," in *Works*, 3:17.

[85] Fuller, "Discourse IX," in *Works*, 3:25. The "acceptable sacrifice" to which Fuller referred occurs in Genesis 8:20–22. On this passage, Fuller remarked, "I think this is the first time we read of a burnt-offering. It was so called, as Moses says, 'because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning.' It was a substitutional sacrifice, for the purpose of atonement . . . The burnt-offerings of Noah, according to this, must have been designed for an atonement in behalf of the remnant that was left." Fuller, "Discourse XIII," in *Works*, 3:36

[86] Fuller, "Discourse IX," in *Works*, 3:25.

delivered humanity from destruction, Fuller alerted his listeners to an even greater Savior who would accomplish all that Noah did and more.

The redemptive themes of substitution and sacrifice are given a sharper focus later in the narrative in Genesis 22 when Abraham was commanded to offer up his son, Isaac. In this discourse, Fuller made special mention of the place where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac—Mount Moriah. On this mountain, Fuller noted, David would later call upon the Lord as he offered sacrifices of his own. So too Solomon would be directed to build the temple there. Moreover, Jesus himself would be crucified on Calvary, only a short distance away. To Fuller, the connection was impossible to miss:

> Hither then was led God's own Son, his only Son, whom he loved, and in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; nor was he spared at the awful crisis by means of a substitute, but was himself freely delivered up as the substitute of others. One reason of the high approbation which God expressed of Abraham's conduct might be its affording some faint likeness of what would shortly be his own.[87]

As he emphasized the language of Genesis 22—"his only Son"—Fuller helped his people see the correlation between these two loving fathers who willingly handed over their own sons to death. While one father was spared the loss, the other was not. In Abraham's case, the Lord provided the substitute in the place of his son. In the future, God the Father would not spare his own Son but would willingly give him up for the sins of his people. The actions of Abraham and the location of the sacrifice both pointed to the actions of God in the death of Christ. For Fuller, the shadow of the cross hung over every narrative, whether plain or veiled, and it was the preacher's responsibility to ensure that his people perceived it.

"Believing in the Messiah": Preaching Christ as the Object of Saving Faith

As a Reformed theologian, Fuller consistently recognized the continuity between the Old and New Testaments, particularly as it relates to the nature of saving

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[87] Fuller, "Discourse XXX," in *Works*, 3:90.

faith. Since the fall of man, God justified sinners by his grace as they looked to him in faith. For Fuller, justification by faith was not an exclusively New Testament doctrine. Rather, it reached as far back as Genesis 4 and the first account of man's sin after Adam and Eve's rebellion in the garden. In his exposition on the tragic story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1–8, Fuller contrasted the lives of these two men. Abel served as an example of God's free choice to justify sinners apart from their works. Fuller directed his listeners to the precise order of events: "God first accepted Abel, and then his offering."[88] For "if he had been justified on the ground of his good deeds, the order should have been reversed; but, believing in the Messiah, he was accepted for his sake; and being so, his works were well-pleasing in the sight of God."[89] Fuller relied on the testimony of Hebrews 11:4—"by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain"—to establish his point.[90] By faith, Abel's heart was alive to God. Therefore, his sacrifice was accepted. On the other hand, "Cain's offering was just what a self-righteous heart would offer: it proceeded on the principle that there was no breach between him and his Creator, so as to require any confession of sin, or respect to an atonement."[91] Fuller understood the implications of Genesis 4 to reach beyond a simple quarrel between two brothers. Instead, the story was foundational for seeing God's justification of sinners and his acceptance of their works as the fruit of their faith.

One of the more subtle yet significant points in Fuller's discussion of Cain and Abel was his comment that Abel was "believing in the Messiah" as he made his offering.[92] In what sense could this be true? Fuller pointed to Eve's response upon giving

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[88] Fuller, "Discourse VII," in *Works*, 3:19.

[89] Fuller, "Discourse VII," in *Works*, 3:19.

[90] Fuller, "Discourse VII," in *Works*, 3:19.

[91] Fuller, "Discourse VII," in *Works*, 3:19.

[92] Forgiveness was extended to Abel on account of his faith in the Messiah. So too, Fuller wrote, "If Cain had believed in the Messiah, there was forgiveness for him, no less than for his brother; and

birth to Cain as a clue that she and her husband both hoped he might be the serpent-crushing seed, since he was the first child born after the promise. In time, he would prove to be just the opposite. However, his brother, Abel, continued to believe that the promised seed was still to come. While Cain possessed a general knowledge of God, he did not recognize the pervasive nature of sin in his life and his own need for forgiveness. For Fuller, the grounds of Abel's acceptance before God were found in his trust in the promised seed. Though his discussion on this point is fairly brief, Fuller afforded more time to the doctrine of justification in his discussion of God counting Abraham's faith to him as righteousness.

Genesis 15:1–6 is a key text for establishing the doctrine of justification by faith in the Old Testament. Indeed, the apostle Paul spent considerable time on this passage in his defense of justification in Romans 4. As Fuller began his exposition of this text, he reminded his listeners that several years had passed since God first made the promise to Abraham concerning his seed.[93] God appeared to him to assure him that his own son, by his wife Sarah, would inherit the promise. In response to God's words, Abraham "believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6). The primary question Fuller raised was simple, what did Abraham believe that led to his justification? He answered, "It is faith, or believing, that is counted for righteousness; not however as a righteous act, or on account of any inherent virtue contained in it, but in respect of Christ, on whose righteousness it terminates."[94] Abraham was justified not because he believed God generally, but because he believed God's specific words concerning the promised seed.

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he should also have had the excellence attached to the first-born, which he reckoned he had a right to, and the loss of which galled him." Fuller, "Discourse VII," in *Works*, 3:20.

[93] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:61.

[94] Fuller's words here contain a footnote to Calvin's Institutes, Book III. Chap. XI. Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:62.

To press this idea further, Fuller offered four points in defense of his premise that Abraham's justification was "in respect of Christ." First, "Though Abram believed God when he left Ur of the Chaldees, yet his faith in that instance is not mentioned in connexion with his justification."[95] Rather than imply that Abraham was in an unjustified state prior to this moment, Fuller simply observed that Abraham's faith was only reckoned for righteousness when there was "an immediate respect had to the person of the Messiah."[96] Here, Fuller relied on Paul's words in Romans 4:11 and Galatians 3:16 as his supporting evidence for his claim that "Abram believed in God as promising Christ."[97] The application for Fuller's listeners was clear. The saints of old trusted God as they looked forward to the fulfillment of his promises while Christians trust God as they look back to what he accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son.[98] In both cases, God justifies those who look to Christ in faith. Thus, the patriarch's faith was no vague belief in a divine being, but a specific trust in the promised seed who was to come.

Fuller's second point flowed from the first: "This distinction, so clearly perceivable both in the Old and New Testament, sufficiently decides in what sense faith is considered as justifying."[99] To what distinction does Fuller refer? He referred to the reality that faith is not the grounds of the believer's acceptance before God, for then it would be a justifying work. Rather, it is faith "as pointing to Christ, and bringing us into union with him" that justifies.[100] Drawing on a familiar metaphor, Fuller equated the efficacy of faith with the ability of a magnet to guide the mariner to his preferred

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[95] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:62.

[96] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:62.

[97] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:62.

[98] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:62–63.

[99] Fuller, "Discourse XII," in *Works*, 3:63.

[100] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:63.

destination. Faith is an instrument that is only effective insofar as it directs believers to Christ and brings them into union with him.[101] As an expositor committed to a Christ-centered hermeneutic, Fuller was content to employ New Testament language when expounding this Old Testament account. The unifying witness of the Scriptures to the person and work of Christ afforded him the freedom to look forward and see the fulfillment of God's purposes in justifying his people through faith.

For his third point, Fuller provided further clarity to the phrase "counted for righteousness." He described Abraham's faith as God "graciously reckoning it what in itself it was not, viz. a ground for the bestowment of covenant blessings."[102] Abraham was now qualified to receive the blessings of the covenant because his faith ultimately terminated on the Messiah, the one through whom these blessings would come. In a later discourse on Genesis 17, Fuller commented, "Surely these things were designed to familiarize the great principle on which our salvation should rest. It was the purpose of God to save perishing sinners; yet his covenant is not originally with them, but with Christ."[103] The primary future blessing of this covenant, as Paul argued in Romans 3–4, is the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Christ. Though Abraham possessed no inherent righteousness of his own, God supplied it through the promised seed.

Fuller concluded in his fourth point, "Though faith is not our justifying righteousness, yet it is a necessary concomitant and means of justification; and being the grace which above all others honours Christ, it is that which above all others God delights to honour."[104] In other words, faith is the conduit through which the righteousness of

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[101] Interestingly, many High Calvinists in Fuller's day focused heavily on the subjective nature of faith and the need to continuously examine oneself to determine the genuineness of one's faith. Morden notes a shift in Fuller's own spirituality over the years as he grew out of these introspective tendencies. The fruits of Fuller's theological shift are evident in his discussion on justification here in Genesis 15 and in his sermons on Romans 3:24. See Morden, *The Life and Thought*, 158.

[102] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:63.

[103] Fuller, "Discourse XXV," in *Works*, 3:69.

[104] Fuller, "Discourse XXII," in *Works*, 3:63

Christ comes to the believer. It is a work of God's grace to consider those who are unrighteous in themselves as righteous in his sight. Fuller was careful to maintain this distinction throughout his discourse on Abraham. As is seen in the previous remarks, Fuller wove various applications throughout his explanation of the text as he reminded his listeners of the continuity between the Old and New Testaments.

"Bless the kindreds of the earth":
Preaching the Mission of Christ

Perhaps Fuller's greatest legacy among Baptists in England and across the Atlantic was his commitment to support the cause of Christ around the globe.[105] Behind his missional activism was a theology of missions that permeated his writings and his preaching. This may be seen in his abiding concern for the souls of his listeners in all his sermons and in his ability to demonstrate God's heart for the nations as he interpreted the Scriptures. His discourses on Genesis illustrate each of these points. The fourth and final way Fuller preached Christ in his expositions was by pointing his listeners to the mission of Christ to advance his kingdom to every corner of the earth.

In his discourse on Genesis 12:1–4, Fuller infused his zeal for evangelism into his explanation and application of God's initial promise to bless Abraham and the world through him. Humanly speaking, all the blessings of salvation enjoyed by people today trace their roots to this patriarch and his family. Fuller declared, "Through them we have a Bible, a Saviour, and a gospel. They are the stock on which the Christian church is grafted."[106] Christians may rejoice in the fact that they are included in the blessing of

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[105] Brewster summarizes Fuller's missional heart in this way, "His concern for the souls of those who would hear him preach illustrates Fuller's greatest legacy among the Baptists: to support a missionary-oriented theology that helped foster deep concern for the salvation of the lost." Brewster, *Andrew Fuller*, 106. For an overview of Fuller's role in the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society, see Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, and Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2015), 105–10.

[106] Fuller, "Discourse XVIII," in *Works*, 3:52.

Abraham. Additionally, they must recognize that they are now called to participate in furthering this blessing to the nations. The recipients of the promise now carry that promise forward so that others might join them as well.

Fuller demonstrated a keen grasp of biblical theology as he traced the promise of Abraham through Peter and Paul's words in the New Testament. Abraham was "made a blessing" as the gospel went to the Jews through Peter's preaching at Pentecost and to the Gentiles through Paul's missionary activity.[107] Jesus, the promised seed of Abraham, blesses the nations as people respond to him in repentance and faith. As a result, they are now considered true descendants of Abraham and may begin to bless others due to their newly inherited place in the family of God:

> God sent his Son first to you, to bless you, and to prepare you for blessing them; as though it were yours to be a nation of ministers, or missionaries to the world. But how if, instead of blessing others, you should continue accursed yourselves? You must first be blessed, ere you can, as the true seed of Abraham, bless the kindreds of the earth, and that by every one of you being turned from his iniquities.[108]

Fuller continued to highlight the importance of God's promise to bless the nations through Abraham's seed as he moved through the Genesis narrative. Having already identified Joseph as a type of Christ, Fuller noted the partial fulfillment of the blessing in his life as Egypt prospered through his work on their behalf. The first sign of Joseph's success in Egypt came when Potiphar who promoted him over all the other servants of his household. As a result, the Lord blessed Potiphar on account of Joseph. Looking back to Abraham and forward to Christ, Fuller noticed the connection. "Here also we see the promise to Abraham fulfilled in his posterity: he not only blesses them, but 'makes them a blessing.'"[109] As he continued, he expanded his view: "Such was Jacob to Laban; such is Joseph to Potiphar, and afterwards to all Egypt; and such has

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[107] Fuller, "Discourse XVIII," in *Works*, 3:52.

[108] Fuller, "Discourse XVIII," in *Works*, 3:52.

[109] Fuller, "Discourse XLVI," in *Works*, 3:151.

Israel been to the world, who from them derive a Saviour, and all that they possess of true religion. Even the casting away of them has proved the reconciling of the world."[110] God's blessing of Potiphar was a picture of his subsequent blessing of the nations. Also significant for Fuller was the manner in which the blessing came to Potiphar and his household. It was not due to his own goodness or even his own faith in Joseph. Rather, God prospered him because "it was Joseph to whom the eye of the Lord was directed."[111] Potiphar was blessed by means of a mediator just as Christians are blessed through their own mediator, Jesus Christ.

The promise to Abraham is reiterated again in the final pages of the Genesis narrative as his grandson, Jacob, blesses his twelve sons. To Judah he gives the promise of a kingdom and the obedience of the nations. Fuller spent considerable time unfolding this promise as it related to the future calling of the Gentiles to faith in Christ.[112] Just as the tribes of Israel would gather to anoint David king in Hebron, the land occupied by Judah, so would all the tribes of humanity one day submit to the kingdom of Christ. Fuller expanded on this idea: "During his ministry, his enemies, touched with fear and envy, were ready to say, Behold, the world is gone after him! And no sooner was he lifted up upon the cross than he began to draw all men unto him."[113] For Fuller, the greater part of all those who Christ would call unto himself was still yet to be realized. This supplied him with the biblical foundation to issue even more pressing exhortations to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. When given a warrant in the text, Fuller was quick to invite his people to see themselves within the promises to Abraham, Joseph, and Judah.

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[110] Fuller, "Discourse XLVI," in *Works*, 3:151.

[111] Fuller, "Discourse XLVI," in *Works*, 3:151.

[112] Fuller, "Discourse LVII," in *Works*, 3:191.

[113] Fuller, "Discourse LVII," in *Works*, 3:191.

As heirs of the same promises, the mission of Christ moved through them to all the nations of the world.

A final aspect of Christ's mission in the world is embedded within the promise to Judah that "thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (Gen 49:8). The ruler from the tribe of Judah would govern God's people as they submit to his sovereign will. To him belongs their obedience. Fuller understood the primary way this ruler would lead his people was by exercising his rule over their lives through his authoritative Word. In his concluding remarks, Fuller summarized how the entire Genesis narrative acted as an instructive guide for God's people from the mouth of their king. In it "you see human nature, as created, as depraved, and as renewed by the grace of God; you see the motives of men, and the reason of things, so as to enable you to draw from every story some important lesson, some warning, caution, counsel, encouragement, or instruction in righteousness."[114] The blessing of Christ extends to the nations as they respond to him in faith and learn how to live as citizens of his heavenly kingdom.

Conclusion

The present chapter examined Fuller's approach to biblical exposition through his *Expository Discourses on Genesis*. Similar to his sermons, Fuller's primary aim was to discern the true meaning of the passage in its context and apply it faithfully for his audience. Unlike his sermons, Fuller did not confine himself to the same set of rules regarding the discourse's unity and divisions. Only on rare occasions did he identify a leading theme or doctrine and expound it using propositions that developed his main idea. More commonly, he proceeded methodically through his preaching passage, section by section, pausing only briefly to make application when he deemed appropriate. While Claude's fingerprints are clearly seen throughout Fuller's sermons, they are far less

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[114] Fuller, "Conclusion," in *Works*, 3:199.

recognizable in his expositions. Instead, Fuller adopted the expository model of select

contemporaries and predecessors in order to give his people a more comprehensive view

of the Scriptures.

Throughout his expositions, Fuller exhibited his commitment to connect the

text of Scripture to some aspect of Christ's person, his work, his role as the object of

saving faith, and his mission to the lost. Aware of the abuses of allegorical preaching and

other interpretive missteps, Fuller was neither artificial nor predictable in the way he

expounded Christ from the Old Testament. Taking larger sections of the narrative in his

preaching passages enabled him to find legitimate avenues from the text to its *telos*.

Many of the interpretive tools he employed—analogy, typology, contrast, promise-

fulfillment, redemptive-historical patterns, and New Testament references—are similar to

those used by expositors of the Old Testament in the modern day.[115] For Fuller, the Old

Testament, and indeed all Scripture, provided ample opportunity for ministers to

proclaim the mysteries of Christ without worrying that they may exhaust their material.

In his own words, "If you preach Christ, you need not fear for want of matter. His person

and work are rich in fulness. Every Divine attribute is seen in him. All the types prefigure

him. The prophecies point to him. Every truth bears relation to him."[116]

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[115] For the most thorough treatment of this subject, see Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Model* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

[116] Fuller, "Preaching Christ," in *Works*, 1:503.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has argued that Jean Claude's influential *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon* supplied Fuller with a coherent homiletical method that he modified to fit his own theological convictions and ministerial context. Fuller conceived of the pastor's pulpit ministry in two broad categories: sermons and expositions. Through each branch of his pulpit ministry, Fuller sought to convey both the depth and the breadth of the Scriptures. Sermons afforded him the opportunity to delve into the depths of doctrinal truths and explore various practical matters. Expositions allowed him to cover vast amounts of biblical material in succession to give his people a sense of how God's revelation unfolded over time.

Neither an innovator nor an imitator, Fuller carefully developed his own homiletical approach while drawing on the work of those who came before him. In his sermons on doctrinal subjects, Fuller leaned on Claude's instructions for composing sermons by way of explication and proposition. Claude's advice on each of these categories gave Fuller a framework within which to build his doctrinal sermons. Fuller's sermons on justification demonstrate his reliance on Claude's method as he carefully expounded the doctrine through the successive use of propositions, each of which connected to a central leading theme. Similarly, Fuller's sermons on practical subjects drew upon Claude's principles for composing sermons by way of observation and application. Through these methods, preachers were able to show the relevance of their subject from start to finish as there was little need to explain difficult terms or themes. Fuller appeared not to have carried any of Claude's specific rules into his expositional preaching. Rather, he retained some general principles and allowed for more freedom in

the composition of these discourses. Moreover, he was not as strict in applying his own requirements for sermons in his expositions, such as the necessity for each of them to contain an errand, a unifying theme, or an explicit offer of salvation.[1]

When surveying Fuller's instructions on preaching and his sermon material, the first modification to Claude's method relates to the preparation of the preacher himself. For Fuller, the preacher's personal piety was his top priority, before he ever set pen to paper. In other words, genuine spirituality was a necessary prerequisite to the task of preaching. Throughout his instructions to his fellow ministers, Fuller urged them to embrace a real interest in Christ and his gospel for themselves. Theological knowledge and homiletical expertise are no substitutes for experimental religion. Only those preachers who personally possess what they proclaim may accomplish the great end of preaching, which was to promote "the glory of God in the advancement of his kingdom in the world."[2]

As for the composition of his sermons, Fuller modified Claude's scheme in both his doctrinal and practical discourses. In his doctrinal sermons on justification, Fuller clothed his theological acumen in homiletical simplicity as he sought to define, defend, and apply his chosen doctrine for his audience. Crucial to this endeavor was the need for Fuller to connect the doctrine he was expounding to The Doctrine—the cross of Christ. The homiletical necessity of the atonement did not feature as prominently in Claude's *Essay*, and he did not require preachers to include the doctrine of the cross in every sermon. Additional modifications included Fuller's biblical-theological defense of the doctrine of justification and his apologetic uses for the doctrine found throughout these sermons.

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[1] Assuming Fuller preached a sermon on the Lord's Day morning alongside his exposition, he likely would have issued the call to salvation at this point in the service.

[2] John Ryland Jr., *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope Illustrated in the Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller*, 2nd ed. (London: Button & Son, 1818), 382.

In his practical sermons, Fuller simply sought to introduce and apply some biblical exhortation for his audience. He made observations or applications according to Claude's rules, but only loosely followed the French preacher's model. His primary method was to inquire into the meaning of an exhortation, or command, and then to enforce it on evangelical principles. While Claude would not have opposed Fuller's insistence that preachers must ground their moral exhortations in gospel imperatives, he did not articulate it as an essential element of the sermon. Likely reacting against certain popular strands of moralistic preaching in his day, Fuller chose to make this point explicit. In his mind, the pursuit of personal holiness was itself a gift of divine grace. As such, the people's motivation must not merely be sin-management or self-improvement, but conformity to Christ.

While Fuller did not carry the same sermonic structure into his expositions, he continued to prioritize the genuine meaning of the text as the principal aim of these discourses. He seldom articulated this meaning in one leading truth or doctrinal statement. More often than not, he explained a portion of the passage, offered a brief application, then moved on to the next part until his exposition was complete. When appropriate, Fuller connected his Old Testament text to some aspect of Christ's person, his work, his role as the object of saving faith, and his mission to the lost. For him, the meaning of a particular passage was most thoroughly understood when seen in the light of the entire biblical revelation.

The rediscovery of Andrew Fuller as a pastor, theologian, apologist, and missions advocate has afforded Baptists a better understanding of their historical roots and enabled them to recover the robustly theological vision for church ministry that flourished among Fuller and his peers. Through exploring Fuller's role as a preacher, the present work has sought to place this essential aspect of his life alongside the others as an indispensable part of his legacy. By most accounts, Fuller was a powerful, affectionate preacher and a capable expositor. To more critical ears, his delivery was unremarkable,

and he lacked some of the polished eloquence of more skilled orators. Preachers, however, are not ultimately judged by their critics, but by their congregations. To the ordinary listener, he was faithful, earnest, sincere, affectionate, and effective. As Fuller himself once observed, "Illiterate hearers may be very poor judges of preaching; yet the effect which it produces upon them is the best criterion of its real excellence."[3] For preachers exist, not to please their peers, but to feed their sheep.

From an historical perspective, the Particular Baptists as a whole warrant a place in any discussion concerning the evolution of modern homiletics. Robinson's translation of Claude's *Essay* and its distribution among his fellow ministers ignited a movement that other authors beyond his own denomination carried forward and developed in the years to come. Interestingly, the modern shape of expository preaching resembles a combination of Claude's model and the older expositional method. Contemporary expositors often speak of preaching passages, or pericopes, that are comprised of several verses or entire paragraphs.[4] They aim to discern the genuine meaning of the passage before designing the structure of the sermon, which often reflects the structure of the text itself. These same authors also commonly argue for preachers to develop a single dominant truth that summarizes the meaning, primary application, or theological focus, of the passage.[5] Additionally, Claude's insistence on the unity and movement of the sermon is alive and well within many homiletical textbooks today.[6]

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[3] Fuller, "Letter III. The Composition of a Sermon," in *Works*, 1:717.

[4] Walter C Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981); Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018); Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 2013).

[5] Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014); Abraham Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching: The Journey from Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

[6] Dennis M. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice in Sermon Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor: A Field Guide for Word-Drive Disciple Makers* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2016); Sugel Michelén, *From and Before God: A Practical Introduction to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: B & H, 2019).

Fuller's pulpit ministry offers an interesting glimpse into the development of modern expository preaching as he recognized the tension between preaching sermons on specific subjects and expositions on larger passages. In his view, both models were valuable for maintaining the health of any local congregation, with priority being given to the latter. Modern expositors would benefit from thinking in doctrinal and practical categories, even if they do not explicitly label their sermons as such. Some have found it useful to instruct their people on doctrinal or practical issues in settings beyond the Sunday morning worship gathering. Whatever the context, preaching in every age must communicate principles for people to believe and precepts for people to follow.

The purpose of this dissertation has been to recover Fuller's role as a preacher by examining his homiletical method and the influences that shaped it. An area for future research that would supplement the findings of the present work pertains to Fuller's homiletical theology. If Claude was Fuller's primary methodological mentor, who was his primary theological mentor or mentors? In addition to his commitment to the authority of Scripture and the centrality of the gospel, what other theological convictions shaped his approach to sermon preparation and delivery? Another useful study would be to compare Fuller's sermons on justification with those of Jonathan Edwards, given his indebtedness to Edwards as both a theologian and a preacher. With the ability to now decipher Fuller's shorthand notes, scholars will have access to more of his sermon material than ever before, which should provide ample opportunity for further research.

After maintaining a steady preaching ministry for over forty years, Fuller stepped into the pulpit for the final time on April 2, 1815. He addressed his congregation from Isaiah 66:1–2: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool."[7] His son noted the peculiar earnestness with which Fuller spoke to his people

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[7] See biblical reference for full passage citation. Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:100.

on this occasion, observing how he "seemed absorbed in the contemplation of a crucified, risen, and exalted Redeemer."[8] Having seen his health steadily decline in the final years of his life, Fuller continued to preach until his energy was spent. It was his utmost desire on this occasion, as with every other, to proclaim the glorious truths of the gospel and invite his people to respond in repentance and faith. For as he often reminded them, "Every sermon that we hear bears us either nearer to, or farther from, God; it never leaves us where it found us; it is either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death."[9]

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[8] Gunton Fuller, "A Memoir of His Life," in *Works*, 1:100.

[9] Fuller, "All things working together for good," in *Works*, 1:387.

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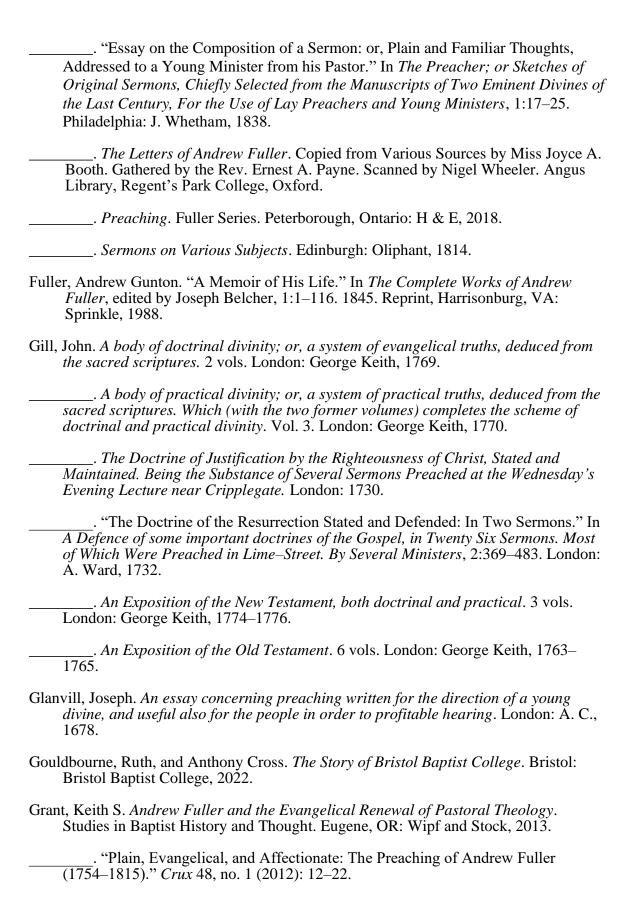
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ABSTRACT

"THE MATTER AND THE MANNER OF PREACHING": THE
INFLUENCE OF JEAN CLAUDE ON THE PREACHING
OF ANDREW FULLER

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The dissertation argues that Jean Claude's (1619–1687) influential *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon* supplied Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) with a coherent homiletical method that he modified to fit his own theological convictions and ministerial context. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis and methodology of the present study. This chapter also reexamines Fuller's reception as a preacher in his own day and explores several distinguishing characteristics of his preaching. Chapter 2 introduces Claude and traces the impact of his *Essay* on the history of homiletics. Chapter 3 reads Claude's *Essay* alongside Fuller's instructions on preaching to discern the extent to which Fuller relied on Claude when developing his own homiletical method. Chapters 4–6 show how Fuller employed his methodology in his preaching by examining a selection of his doctrinal, practical, and expositional sermons. These chapters also highlight the continuity and discontinuity between Fuller's preaching and Claude's instructions. Chapter 7 concludes the present study and details the significance of Fuller's preaching for historians and homileticians today.

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