

consider to be “traditional” church music (hymns), in fact, represents a relative innovation dating from the 1800s. In advocating the revival of psalm singing in the church, this book provides an impasse to the “worship wars.” Rather than “traditional” or “contemporary” worship, we can pursue “biblical” worship through the singing of psalms.

—Jeffrey T. Riddle



Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010. 208 pp.

In the preface to this addition to the “Studies in Baptist Thought and Life” series, editor Michael Haykin notes that there is “a small renaissance” underway in the study of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) (xv). Timothy George has called Fuller “the most influential Baptist theologian between John Bunyan and the present day” (cf. 65). Paul Brewster, a Southern Baptist pastor in Madison, Indiana, and a church historian who holds a doctoral degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, contributes significantly to this revival of interest in Fuller with this book, presenting Fuller as “a model pastor-theologian” (6).

Brewster begins his study by offering a helpful biographical sketch of Fuller, covering his early years, his conversion and call to ministry, and his productive years in pastoral ministry at Kettering, including his pioneer and longtime service as Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society (8–35). Here and throughout the book, Brewster demonstrates a seemingly exhaustive familiarity with Fuller’s biographical material, from both primary and secondary sources, past and present.

He then proceeds to examine the theological method of Fuller (37–64), noting particularly his systematic evangelical Calvinism, in distinction from the “high Calvinism” of John Gill and John Brine. Like many of the new Calvinists in our own generation, Fuller was deeply influenced by the writings of Jonathan Edwards. Living during an age of Enlightenment and skepticism, Fuller upheld a high view of Scripture. He was willing to modify his theological system according to his interpretation of Scripture.

Brewster sees the doctrine of soteriology as the hub of Fuller’s theology (65–108). He emphasizes Fuller’s departure from the high

Calvinism of his day in his commitment “to extend the offer of salvation to all who would hear, regardless of their spiritual state” (77). Of note is his discussion of a shift in Fuller’s views on the atonement, under the influence of the “New Divinity” governmental view of the atonement, between the first and second editions of his noted work *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (87–89). This shift, in turn, had an influence of Fuller’s views on imputation and substitution (see 89–85).

In assessing Fuller’s influence, Brewster both notes the conclusion that “Fullerism became the new orthodoxy” among Particular Baptists (99), while also acknowledging that some, like David Benedict, believed that “Fullerism had led Baptists too far toward Arminianism” (103). Brewster notes that “it is appropriate to recognize that by relaxing the Calvinistic standards of the Particular Baptists, Fuller may have helped open the door to methodological changes that have sometimes had a less than beneficial impact on Baptist churches” (106). In other words, did *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* lead to the “four spiritual laws” and easy-believism? Brewster adds: “The degree to which the rise and spread of Fullerism is responsible for the acceptance of Arminianism in Baptist life is a hotly disputed question” (107). For those in the Strict and Particular Baptist camp, Fuller was “the chief instigator of this event, and hence a great enemy of the gospel” (107). Brewster concludes, however, that “it is probably best not to blame Fuller too heavily for what came into the denomination for quite some time after he lived and wrote” (108).

Brewster next transitions from Fuller’s doctrine to his practice of ministry (109–157). He begins by noting, “The doctrinal conclusions Fuller reached became the mainspring that powered the many facets of his active ministry” (109). Again, soteriology exerted the greatest influence on his practical ministry. It led Fuller to place a priority on preaching and upon evangelistic preaching in particular. Though his contemporaries agreed he was not the most eloquent and well-spoken of preachers, he was deeply influential among his fellow ministers. Evidence of this is seen in the fact that Fuller was often called upon to preach at ordination and pastoral installation services. Fuller also pressed those under his pastoral care to come to faith in Christ. His evangelistic concern also fueled his tireless labors in founding the Baptist Missionary Society and “holding the rope” for William Carey and others who were willing to go down into the mission mine. Finally, Brewster sketches Fuller’s ministry as a polemicist

and apologist, defending the faith against everything from Deism, to Socinianism, Universalism, Sandemanianism, and Antinomianism.

After the book's summarizing conclusion (159–79), Brewster also includes two appendices (181–92). The first is a Confession of Faith composed by Fuller upon his candidacy to become the pastor at Kettering. The second is Fuller's entry on "Calvinism" in a theological dictionary. Both appendices make plain Fuller's general commitment to the doctrines of grace. In his conclusion, Brewster suggests weaknesses in Fuller's practical ministry (e.g., lack of balance in neglecting local church ministry in favor of work for the missionary society and reluctance to delegate responsibilities to others) and in his theology (e.g., his adaptation of the governmental view of atonement). He also identifies several of Fuller's strengths. Most notable among these was Fuller's ability to serve as both an able pastor and able theologian. Brewster acknowledges his own sympathies with Fuller's evangelical Calvinism; he even suggests that with the rise of Calvinism in Baptist life, "No Baptist theologian can be read to greater profit on the dangers of hyper-Calvinism than Fuller" (175). One wonders, however, if there is really a significant threat of hyper-Calvinism looming in the "Young, Restless, Reformed" movement. A more obvious danger appears to be recidivism to Arminianism.

In his conclusion, Brewster anticipates and acknowledges a criticism that might be lodged against his study of Fuller: does his focus on soteriology, as the hub of Fuller's theology, neglect other salient angles of Fuller's thinking? This reviewer, for example, wondered how Fuller's post-millennialism radically affected his doctrine and ministry, including his wholesale commitment to the missionary movement. Brewster acknowledges that further work is needed on Fuller's doctrine of God, revelation, the ordinances, eschatology, and his impact on American Baptists (159–61). One might add to this that an assessment is needed of Fuller not merely by the standards of Calvinism's so-called "five points," but also according to a full-orbed Reformed theology (confessionalism, Regulative Principle, etc.). These quibbles aside, Brewster's work is to be heartily commended for providing an admirable and stimulating introduction to the life, theology, and ministry of Andrew Fuller that will profit both pastors and theologians.

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