

Andrew Fuller

by Michael Haykin

The sermon explores the life and ministry of Andrew Fuller, a Baptist theologian who lived in the 18th century and developed a theology that emphasized the importance of the gospel and the need for personal faith.

Duration: 1:28:35

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 12:37, Romans 6:14

Topics: "Evangelism", "Conversion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the teachings of Andrew Fuller, particularly his book 'The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation.' Fuller emphasized that unbelievers and sinners should trust in Christ rather than focusing on whether they are among the elect. The urgency of sharing the gospel is highlighted through two examples, where ministers preached early in the morning to ensure that those who needed to hear the word could do so. Fuller also learned from his experiences that looking within oneself is not necessary for coming to Christ, conversion leads to a change in lifestyle, and there is a transformation in the affections of the heart.

Transcript

And our thoughts are going to be focused on a man named Andrew Fuller. And I suspect that unlike the other figures that we have thought of in the past few weeks that we have spoken of, men like Wedley, and Whitfield, and Edwards, that the name of Andrew Fuller is not a familiar one. And yet, I hope to, in looking at Fuller, I hope to show you that he has much in a number of areas to teach us.

There will be, in fact, a number of names mentioned tonight that are not familiar names. John Gill, Andrew Fuller, John Ryland, Jr., and maybe a number of others. And yet, they are men from whom we can learn much.

Now, I want to speak something more broadly before we look at Fuller's life about the 18th century. We have been speaking of the 18th century over the last few weeks as a century of revival and blessing upon the Church of God. And when we consider the lives of men like Wedley, John and Charles Wedley, and George Whitfield, and Johnson Edwards, and his wife Sarah, we're thinking of some of the great blessings that God gave to His Church in the form of these individuals, their experiences, and their writings.

And yet, I'm sure you're also aware, if you've ever taken a course in Western civilization, or if you cast your thoughts back maybe to courses you did on history in high school or university, you'll be aware that

the 18th century is often described as the age of reason. It's not, it's Christians who remember it as the age of revival, or the age of rapture, the age in which God poured out His Spirit and great blessing upon His Church, and in many respects laid the foundations for what we call the Victorian Era, and many of the kind of moral advances of that period are laid in the foundations of the 18th century. But the 18th century is also the period of the age of reason, in which there came to be a great emphasis, at least among intellectuals, and by the end of the century, beginning to peter down, as it were, into other classes of society, that human reason was to be the supreme judge of truth and falsehood, right and wrong.

And I want to spend a little time on this, a few minutes, and then, because it has some import for what we want to think about, with Andrew Fuller. The origins of that great emphasis can be traced back into the 17th century, and sometimes it's helpful to identify individuals who characterize this way of thinking, and often the figures who are chosen are a French philosopher, René Descartes, who died in the year 1650, D-E-S-C-A-R-T-E-S, and Isaac Newton, the English scientist, physicist, very interested in religious matters, who would die in 1727. It is Descartes who, in the 1620s, as Europe at that time was in the midst of a massive religious war, at least Central Europe, was gripped by Protestants and Catholic armies, marching back and forth, laying waste to villages and towns, killing each other on the battlefields of Central Europe.

Descartes, somewhat perplexed, he was a Roman Catholic, somewhat perplexed about this scenario, began an experiment in the mind by which he sought to doubt all things, and wanted to find, as it were, an unshakable foundation for the Christian faith. He hoped that his philosophical reflections would provide a good, solid underpinning for Roman Catholicism. What he did not foresee was the way in which his thoughts would be used in the years to come to undermine Christianity, to attack Christianity, and to lay foundations for what we have seen in the last hundred or so years as a very secular society.

Because as Descartes began to doubt all things, he began with the various external things that he would doubt, and kind of pared his way down to eventually he doubted the existence of God, and then came to that point where he felt he could no longer doubt, and that was the point at which he was thinking. He argued that when he was doubting, he could not doubt that he was doubting, and therefore thinking, and thus he comes up with a very famous line, not original to him, but he had found it actually in Augustine, but he gives it new meaning in the Western world, I think, therefore I am. I think, therefore I am.

And then from that foundation, as it were, he rebuilt what he thought was the whole framework of human knowledge of the world and of God, and so on. And what he did by that experiment, unknowingly, very likely, was to reduce humanity to being thinking beings. What is the essence of us as human beings? It is that we are thinkers, that our reason is what defines our humanity.

And I hope as Christians you see that there is something wrong with that, there is something lacking in that. It's not the whole story, it's not the complete story of what it means for us to be human. But it's very much part of the Western thinking over the last 200 or so years.

And reason eventually is divorced from any sort of religious framework and becomes the arbiter of truth. And that position was being enunciated in the early 1700s, within 50 years of Descartes' death. A variety of things had taken place, most of them actually in the areas we call the British Isles.

There was a reaction against Puritanism, there was a reaction against the English Civil War, and there began to be great emphasis on human reason. Human reason is the arbiter of truth. It's the sieve through which all ideas have to pass.

Some are accepted, some are rejected. The other key figure who stands at the fountainhead of the modern world is Isaac Newton. A very religious individual, often touted as a Christian scientist.

If you believe that one can hold that the Lord Jesus Christ is not fully God, but was a creation of the Father, and that you believe that that can be described as Christianity, then I think you could describe Newton as a Christian. I do not believe that. Newton, as his notebooks were read after his death in 1727, it became clear he did not believe in the full deity of our Lord Jesus.

He had deep problems with it. He accepted what is historically known as Arianism. He denied the deity of Christ, his eternal deity, and argued that Christ, the pre-incarnate Christ, the pre-incarnate Son of God, was a creation of God the Father.

But he was a very religious individual, and spent, in fact, his last dozen years of his life poring over the book of Revelation, writing out schema after schema as to how this book was to be understood, and how the history of the world was going to end. Interestingly enough, those notebooks still exist, I think in Cambridge, one of the archives in Cambridge University, have never been published, and most likely probably never will be published. But Newton is remembered by us as the architect of that understanding of the universe, which dominated Western science until this century, until Einstein.

And the men and women of the 1700s and 1800s lived in what we call the Newtonian universe. And Newton's great emphasis was that all of the physical phenomena we see around us can ultimately be understood by human reason, and reduced to mathematical formulae, which the human mind can grasp and understand, and so on. And thus he argued that God, in effect, was a great machine maker.

He was the one who, to use an image of that period, of a particular type of machine, he was a great clockmaker. He had made the universe as a great clock. And if only we know enough, we would understand perfectly how the whole thing works.

And it can, in fact, many of the basic workings of the universe can be reduced to formulae that we can use to exploit and develop nature for our own benefit. And so these two ideas, the idea that the universe is understandable, it is a way to objective truth, and the idea that human reason is to be the arbiter of truth, in many respects laid the foundations for the modern world. Because in the modern world, especially revealed in this century, the human mind is the thing which determines what is true and what is false.

And in this century, science has been hailed as the pathway to true knowledge, the idea being that science is objective. The way that, say, theology or history or other humanities are not. Now, in recent days, all of this has been challenged.

We're obviously not going to be getting into this. In the last 30 years, there has been a massive assault on this whole worldview. So much so that observers of contemporary culture now talk about us living in a post-modern world.

So there's something of a conundrum, how you can live in the modern times, but it's post-modern, it's after the modern era. But that's the term that is used. We no longer live, and I think the key point is that we no longer live in a world that is shaped by the intellectual assumptions of a Descartes or a Newton, where we assume that human reason is the determiner of truth and falsehood.

And that science is going to give us true knowledge. We increasingly live in a world which has turned its back on that, and where there is the idea that there is no such thing as truth. And it introduces a whole set

of different problems for us as Christians.

Now, in the 18th century, the way that this impacted the Church was in the beginning of the 18th century, there were massive assaults on some key aspects of the Christian faith. The Trinity is the first one to come under heavy attack in the 1690s through to around 1715, and then from there on it was assumed by many that the doctrine of the Trinity is not rational. It cannot be demonstrated to be true in accord with human reason.

Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, among other things, one of the great chemists of the late 18th century, whose main preoccupation, though, was theology, and who was the father of Unitarianism in Britain and here in North America, and for whom Andrew Fuller was one of his main antagonists. Fuller had a major work published against Priestley. Priestley argued mathematically $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$, and it doesn't equal 1. Therefore, there's no way that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can be one God.

There are three gods there, he argued, if you're going to accept that sort of argument that has been the traditional argument of the Church. Now, what you're dealing with here, obviously, and again, I'm not going to take a lot of time to develop this, what we're dealing here, obviously, is one of the mysteries of the Christian faith. That Christianity, while it is not irrational, is indeed super rational.

That the heart of the Christian faith, many of the deep truths that we hold dear, they are not irrational, but they go beyond our human reason to grasp and to understand, and not surprisingly so. If God is God, as we declare him to be, it should not be surprising that he surpasses our finite, fallible minds. And the doctrine of the Trinity is an excellent illustration of this.

There are others, we'll look at one tonight, the whole issue of conversion and salvation. There are others, though. The Incarnation is another here.

It's not surprisingly, again, in the 18th century, the Incarnation came under heavy attack. It is in the 1700s, particularly, that books are starting to be published that deny the deity of Christ, that assert his mere humanity, and so on. But again, we are confronted by a mystery.

Who among us can fully understand the way in which our Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man? We can see the attributes of both at work, but how can he be both in one and the same person? How can these two natures be in one person? So the 18th century, then, is a period in which there are great attacks being leveled against the Christian faith. There are some, in the early part of that period, men like Joseph Butler, in his analogy of religion, who feel that they have to defend the Christian faith, but they do so at the expense of giving away the heart of the Christian faith. Because what the opponents of Christianity in this early period, when their opponents say to them, well, the Scripture says this, they'll say, oh, no, no, you can't use Scripture in our arguments.

Because the inspiration of Scripture is one of the things we call into question. So if you're going to argue against it, you've got to argue on our grounds. Well, whenever you're choosing, if you know anything about military history, whenever you're choosing a battlefield, you don't allow the opponents to choose the ground.

One of the periods of history I have a great interest in, recent years, actually it's been going back a long time, is the American Civil War. And probably the key battle of the American Civil War is Gettysburg. And the great push of the battle of Gettysburg was to get what was called the high ground.

That area of land at Gettysburg, and if you ever go there, you can go to it, that overlooked the rest of the field. And the realization was, if that was controlled, it would determine the course of the battle. And both Confederates and the Union wanted the high ground, and the Confederates lost enormous numbers of men trying to attain the high ground.

Well, in the same way, in the theological battle, the early defenders of Christianity in the 18th century, those who sought to defend Christianity, gave away the high ground to their opponents. They said, okay, you don't believe in the inspiration of Scripture, we will not argue with you from Scripture, we'll simply use our human reason. And that gave away, in many respects, the high ground.

And they were forced to fight on the field that their theological opponents chose. Ultimately, God's answer, and this is very important to note, God's answer to the anti-Christian attacks on the church and on the faith in the 18th century, God's answer was the revival that we've been thinking about. It was raising up a Whitefield or a Wesley to proclaim the faith.

Now, if you read especially Wesley's writings, you will read his defense of the faith from time to time in what we will call reasoned arguments. And yet he knew ultimately that it is the proclamation of the word that is the means by which God overcomes the foes of the church. Well, we want to turn then to looking at Andrew Fuller.

His dates are 1754 to 1815. He was a man who had little formal education, and I was thinking on the way here what grade we would put the end of that education at. Possibly grade 8, most likely grade 6. In other words, he was in his very early teens, 12 or 13, when his formal education really stopped.

And his parents were farmers, dairy farmers. They rented a series of dairy farms, basically trained him to work on the farm. He'd already had some experience, but he was brought up through his teens expecting that he would follow in their footsteps, be a dairy farmer like them.

It's a very important lesson that his life has for us, which is that God does not always use those who have gone through the formal channels of education. Formal education is not the most important thing in God's service. One thinks of numerous other individuals who you could put in the same category as Andrew Fuller.

John Bunyan is in that category. William Carey, who was a very good friend of Andrew Fuller, is in that category. Charles Haddon Spurgeon is in that category.

What was critical in all of these men's lives, though, was a hunger for knowledge. Yes, they didn't attain it in a formal sense, but they gave themselves to study in private and so on. Now, Fuller would become what one man has said to be the greatest theologian that the Baptists, and he was a Baptist, had in the 18th century.

He, Spurgeon, in fact, looking back on his life, and he was born many, many years later after Fuller lived, Spurgeon could say he was the greatest theologian of the 18th century. And he's thinking here of greatest in terms of Baptist theologian. He was the youngest of three brothers.

He was born in 1754, raised in an area near Cambridge, a little village actually called Wiccan, not that far from Cambridge, and he would eventually settle down in his early years, into his teen years, at a place called Soham. And these are very small villages, maybe even we would want to describe them as hamlets, not far from the university town of Cambridge. His parents were members of the Baptist church

there.

And it was a church which had had some blessing in the past, but in the period when Fuller was going there, it had plateaued or stagnated. And in many respects that was because of the theology of the minister, a man named John Eve. He was what we would describe as a hyper-Calvinist.

He was a man who believed that when God intended to save an individual, God would do it, and it didn't need any of his help, or anybody else's help. And the consequence was that he did not encourage his congregation to put their faith in Christ. He expected God would save them, independently of his ever urging any of them to respond to the gospel.

And so Fuller grew up in this context, and soon came to realize the man had nothing to say for anybody who was unconverted in the congregation. And what is interesting, or what is important to note, is that Eve's theology was prominent in many Baptist circles in England. Not completely, it didn't dominate the entire scene, but many Baptist circles in England were like this in this period of time.

And if we had time we could trace it back to various causes and roots and so on. But Fuller grew up then in a context where he felt that the minister had nothing to say to him, because he was an unconverted individual. The man had nothing to say to those who were not converted.

And so Fuller basically turned off anything the man said from the pulpit. And yet, because he's in that environment, he is hearing some things. And he knows he's not a Christian, and he's wrestling with various areas.

And he goes through a number of experiences in his teen years which are very important. The first is in 1767, when he was around 13 or 14, possibly, years of age. He, like many of the culture, that kind of Christian subculture of which he was a part, believed that if a Bible verse came to your mind with great force and great suddenness, if you had not been thinking about a Bible verse, and suddenly it was there with great power and force, the idea was that this was a message from God, speaking to you personally.

So it is on this particular day, he was out in the fields, and Romans 6, verse 14, came with such power to him that he felt God was speaking through the verse. And the verse was, Romans 6, verse 14, King James Version. And he took this as a sign of God telling him that he was converted.

That he was not outside of Christ, he was actually converted. And the experience brought from within the depths of his heart such overwhelming gratitude that he felt to God that he began to weep profusely. The following day, though, he said he returned to his former vices as eagerly as ever.

And for the next six months, he lived without prayer, without any thought of God, and with no evident change in his life. He had had a deep religious experience, but no change. But six months later, and by this time it's the year 1768, so the first event must have been the late summer or fall of 1767.

By 1768, about six months later, he began to think about that earlier experience. And began to think, why is it, though, that I haven't lived like a Christian for these last six months? Well, he concluded, I must be fact-driven. And again, he had a profound, deep religious experience.

He again went through a time of weeping. In fact, so much did he weep, he said the next day he woke up and his eyes were swollen from the evening before. But again, over the next year, he lived with no victory over sin, no victory over sin's temptations, and with a total neglect of prayer.

Looking back many years later, he could say, the great deep of my heart's depravity has not yet been broken up. And one of the things I think is very important about Fuller's experience is it teaches us that people can have what appear to be profound religious and emotional experiences, but doesn't necessarily mean that they're conversion. I'm sure if Fuller had been in a typical evangelical church in North America and had gone forward in an altar call and had been weeping so profusely, the people would have said to him, you're converted.

It was not until the autumn of 1769 he begins to think about the meaning of his life and begins to think about these past experiences and begins to realize he was fooling himself. He was not backslidden, he never prayed, he had no interest in Scripture, he had no desire for the Word of God, he went to church out of force of habit or to please his parents. He realized that he was not a Christian.

He said later, the fire and brimstone in the bottomless pit seemed to burn within my bosom. I saw that God would be perfectly just in sending me to hell, and to hell I must go unless I was saved of mere grace. He realized he needed both cleansing and pardoning.

He needed to be pardoned and purified. And yet the theology of the church of which he was part argued, and this is a very interesting twist, argued that because it is God who saves sinners, which I think is a biblical point, and yet they pushed it beyond that. Because it is God who saves sinners, men and women cannot respond in their own strength.

In fact, the argument was, you have to know you're among the elect to go to Christ for salvation. Which is crazy, it's ugly crazy. Because how can I know I'm among the elect until I'm actually converted? But Fuller then is in 1769, he is in the throes of an actual conversion.

But he thinks he has no warrant to go to Christ for salvation. He needs something inwardly that will tell him that Christ is going to save him as one of the elect. Finally though, he is reduced to such a pitch.

He said that he felt like Queen Esther in the story of Esther and Ahasuerus. And if you recall the story, one of the customs of the Persian king was that his wife could not enter. In fact, no one could enter into their presence unless they were bidden to do so.

And given the nod as it were, the royal nod, yes you can come in. If they came into the presence of the king without being encouraged to do so, they did so at risk of their own lives. Well, Fuller said, I felt I was like Queen Esther.

But he said, I will trust my soul, my sinful lost soul in Christ's hands if I perish. That was November of 1769 and Fuller in that experience finally came to the point where he said he found peace with God. And that the great deep of his heart was broken up.

There are three things that Fuller learned out of that experience. First, it is wrong to maintain that men and women need to look within themselves to find out that they've got something in themselves to come to Christ. The gospel is to look to Christ and not in themselves.

The second thing that he found is that conversion is issues in a radical change of lifestyle. Things change. Prayer starts now to become a part of the Christian life.

A love for the people of God and so on. And thirdly, and this is building on that, there is a change in the affections. And that latter point is very important.

Fuller would eventually come to the realization that at the heart of conversion is the changing of the heart's affections. Not merely intellectual knowledge, but there is a reorientation. There is now a love for Christ, and a love for his word, and a love for his people.

The church of which he became a member, Soham Baptist Church, and he became a member in 1770, was soon thrown into a controversy. And the controversy had to do with a man who was a member of that church who habitually got drunk. It was discovered.

And he told, in fact it was Fuller who discovered the man. The man was regularly getting drunk. And Fuller told the man it was wrong for him to do so.

The man's response was, this is typical of the environment, he'd love to stop getting drunk if only God gave him the power. But he was waiting, and when God gave him the power, he stopped getting drunk. In other words, I'd love to stop sinning, but until God gives me the power to stop sinning, I can't help it.

Well, Fuller thought there was something screwy about that. Something wrong about that kind of theology. But it fits with the whole environment.

The whole environment is we have to wait for God to do, as it were, everything for us. Well, the pastor got involved, and the whole congregation was involved in this kind of theological controversy. Does, do sinners have any power? And should they be encouraged? Do sinners have a responsibility before God to live in a way that honors Him? That's the issue.

And the pastor actually found himself arguing against his own theology. Eventually, the pastor had to resign. And within three years, Andrew Fuller found himself as pastor, 19 years old.

And they call him to be pastor. And he struggled in those early years. He will be pastor of the church until 1782.

From 1774 to 1782. It's a period of time in which he talks about his life as going through a theological labyrinth. He struggles.

Because the only style of preaching he has heard is one which never urges the unconverted to do anything. And although he had gone through that, he knew no other style of preaching. And so he begins to preach like that.

He doesn't preach anything to the unconverted. But he's reading scripture. He's reading especially the Book of Acts and the Gospel of John, in which he sees a different style of exhortation, which we'll mention actually in a few minutes, in the Gospel of John from our Lord Jesus.

And he realizes that there's a dissonance between his preaching and the preaching of scripture. Now one of the ways in which the hyper-Calvinists got around this, was they argued, well, the early Christian preachers, they had a special gift from God to urge the unconverted to respond to the Gospel. We don't have that anymore.

And Fuller is not satisfied with that. He doesn't know what the answer is. He's a young man.

He has basic gifts in terms of the reading and writing, but he has to educate himself. And so the 1770s are a period of education. Thankfully, he will be appointed.

He will be appointed to the writings of Jonathan Edwards. And in the writings of Jonathan Edwards, you'll see how the sovereignty of God in salvation can be faithfully combined with human responsibility. That yes, it is God who saves sinners from beginning to end.

But yes, it is true that men and women have to respond to the Gospel, and that they are held responsible to respond to the Gospel. That it is their duty to respond. And if they do not respond to the Gospel and reject the Gospel, God will hold them guilty, and they'll be judged for that.

And that when it comes to conversion and the actual repenting and believing, the human individual has to do that. Yes, they're gifts from God, but they're also duties for men. And so Fuller is wrestling with all of this in the 1770s.

Eventually, he will write a book. And I want to speak a little bit about this book. Now, you might be thinking, what has all this got to do with the Age of Reason? Well, Fuller will go on, as we will see in the next hour, to write against some of the things that we've mentioned right at the beginning.

But what is fascinating about what we're talking about is that unseen by those who adhere to this hyper-Calvinist theology, they actually were shaped by their age. The age was an age of reason. Who saves sinners? It is God.

And what they did was they pushed that thought to its rational, logical limit. If God saves sinners, then He doesn't need anything we do. And they were against missions, they were against preaching and urging the lost, and they were against emphasizing the duty of the unconverted, and so on.

It all sounds very logical, but it's just not biblical. And unbeknownst to the men who held this view, they thought they were being biblical. But actually, they were being shaped by their age that could only be seen upon hindsight.

Looking back, you could see how their theology was shaped by the age of reason. And that's why it is a very good thing for us as Christians to be aware of what our culture thinks, and how it thinks, and how it reasons. Because if we don't, it will be all too easy for us to get pressed into the impress and the mold of our culture.

We're not to live as Christians. You may disagree with me. But we're not to live as Christians with our heads in the ground.

We're only looking back. We're to live as men and women fixed in Scripture, understanding the Word of God, but also knowing the culture in which we live, so we know how to address that culture, how to speak to that culture, and how to avoid some of the pitfalls of that culture. And these men, and some of these men and women whom we've been talking to, these hyper-Calvinists, they thought they were being faithful to Scripture, but what they were actually doing is they were allowing their culture, which had become focused on human reason, to shape their understanding of Scripture.

Now, Fuller would write a book, and it's called *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* is a phrase from 1 Timothy. It's a very important book.

He started work on the book in the 1770s. He knew the book would bring him into controversy, and there would be odium poured upon his head, and he didn't like the idea of that. And yet he felt constrained to push on and to write the book.

It was finished by 1781. It was not published until 1785. He rightly saw that a book like this would cause great controversy, and it did cause great controversy.

It split Baptists in England and North America and others, congregationalists, into two groups. Fullerites, those who followed Fuller, and those who followed a great theologian who preceded Fuller, a man named John Gill. And John Gill was a bit of a hyper-Calvinist.

He wasn't a complete hyper-Calvinist, but he was a bit of one. And so you had Gillites and Fullerites. And Fuller knew that controversy would come, and in the next hour we'll detail a little of that.

The title of the book, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, the subtitle is this, *The Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ*. The Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ. That tells you the theme of the book.

That what he is going to seek to do from the word of God is to lay out the responsibility of men and women to believe the gospel, to respond in faith to the gospel. And the parallel of the ancillary truth, which is if it is a duty for men and women to believe the gospel, it is also a duty for the church to proclaim the gospel to sinners. And he recognized that men like John Eve, no matter how good they may have thought they were doing, were guilty before God of the blood of men and women who sat in their congregations, lulled to sleep, thinking, if God's going to save me, God's going to do it, and I'd love to get saved, but until He does it, I'm not going to feel any need to respond.

And Fuller knew it. Sitting in Christian congregations where these men and women was this false thinking. It is also important to note that Andrew Fuller was a very close friend of William Carey.

And William Carey would never have been gripped, as we saw two weeks ago, by the need to take the gospel to the nations if he had not learned much of his theology from Andrew Fuller. Many years later, long after Fuller was dead, near the end of Carey's life in the 1830s, Carey would say that his theology, as he thought back, who was it who taught him among those who he remembered? Well, I want to mention a couple of things in the book. One of the first things that Fuller emphasizes is that faith is focused outward.

It's not focused inward. It's not looking within to see when you come to faith if I'm among the elect or if Jesus wants to save me. It's focused outward.

The scriptures, Fuller writes, always represent faith as terminating on something without us, namely on Christ and the truths concerning Him. Faith is not curved inward. It is looking out, embracing what He has done.

In the second part of the work, which is the biggest part of the work, and that's the first part where he takes the idea of what faith is. In the second part of the work, he has six arguments why men and women are responsible to believe the gospel and God will hold them responsible. Why it is a duty of unbelievers to put their faith in Christ.

The first argument is that this is the way that you find our Lord teaching and preaching. And let me take you through a number of passages he refers to. For instance, John 12, 36.

And I have a King James version that I'm reading from because this is the version that Fuller used. John 12, verse 36. And that's a passage in which our Lord says, Why ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

Why ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. And Fuller focuses on that exhortation, believe in the light. Who is he talking to? Well, first, who is he talking about? Well, he's talking about himself.

He is the light. He's urging men and women to put their faith in Him. But who is he talking to? Well, Fuller looks at the context.

Very, very good way, always, of interpreting scripture. You look at the context of a verse or a passage. Well, he says, if you look at the context, you'll find out in verse 37, John 12, 37, that these were people who didn't believe in Jesus.

Though He had done many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him. In other words, here is our Lord exhorting unbelievers to believe in Him. He doesn't simply tell them about the light and then leave them with information.

He urges them in the response of their wills to turn to Him and believe in Him. He doesn't just give information for their minds, but through their minds giving information, He challenges their wills. Believe in Me.

Or John 6, 29 is another verse that Fuller notes. John 6, verse 29, where Jesus says this, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him, whom He, that is God, hath sent. Now, who, again, Fuller looks at the context.

Who is Christ talking to? Well, He's talking to men, verse 26, who saw the miracles, the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. They were fed, but they didn't believe. They only followed Christ, not because of any spiritual wisdom, but for material needs, for their stomach's sake.

Notice verse 26, Yea, verily I say unto you, ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Moreover, the context tells us, verse 36, these are people who are unbelievers. You've seen Me, Christ tells them, but believe not.

In fact, at a certain point in that whole discussion, they actually ask Christ, What is the work that God requires of us? What is it He requires of us? Look at verse 28. Then they said unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? It's at that point He says to them, Believe. Again, very clear from his point of view, from Fuller's point of view, and I think rightly so, that Christ here is urging unbelievers about their duty to put their faith.

There are other passages that He brings forward. He brings forward, for instance, the case of Simon Magus in Acts chapter 8, and where Simon Magus was urged by Peter to repent and to pray for forgiveness. Now the big thing that the Hyper-Calvinists argued, and the important thing, as I've said, in the background of this, there are a number of important things going on, but the important thing of the Age of Reason is the allowing of human reason to shape your theology unduly.

The Hyper-Calvinists responded with passages like John 6, verse 44, a passage you may well know, where our Lord says to His hearers in John 6, verse 44, and they argue, look, it's clear from this passage that conversion is not our work. It's got nothing to do with us at all. It's God's work.

He has to bring us to God. And Fuller's response is, how then do you make sense of these other passages? Yes, it's quite clear from this that conversion is a gift of God, but it's also clear from those other

passages it's a duty. And you have this paradox.

You have this mystery, then, at the heart of conversion. It is something that God requires of us, but it's something that only God can enable us to do. And how can you hold the two? And Fuller's point can be seen, though, in context with other great truths of the Christian faith.

Here, Fuller is determined to hold on to a different way of thinking that preceded a great emphasis on human reason. Where there is the recognition at the heart of the Christian faith there is mystery and paradox. We don't understand the deepest things of the Christian faith, the doctrine of Trinity, the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the doctrine of salvation.

It is both a gift and a duty. And it would appear the Hyper-Calvinists were, as I said, shaped by the age of reason. They felt that if it was a gift, as John 6, verse 44 indicates, it cannot be a duty.

That which God gives, we don't need the Holy Spirit. Or if God urges us to do something and commands us to do something, we don't need God to help us to do it. But the paradox is God commands us to do a host of things, and we cannot do any of them without his strength.

And here we have the beginning, I think, and this is the first area that Fuller answers, an area of false thinking, false theological thinking. And it's the beginning of grappling with his age, the age of reason. He begins to notice how rationalism has shaped the theology of these Hyper-Calvinists.

When we come back after the break, we want to think about some other practical conclusions that flow out of this. And we want to think about some of the other books that Fuller wrote against those who argued from rationalistic perspectives. And I also want to think about some of the practical conclusions or the way in which all of this worked itself out in daily life, in the life of a friend of Andrew Forrest.

We'll also have some time for questions, so we'll break now for about 10 or 12 minutes. Well, let me pick up where I left off and emphasize that Fuller, at the end of his book, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, came to emphasize that there are two practical conclusions to what he wanted his readers to take home, as it were. One is that unbelievers and sinners have every encouragement to trust in Christ.

They're not to turn inward to find out, am I among the elect? Are there the marks of election in me, as it were? But they're to look out, not to focus inward, but to look out to Christ. Secondly, the whole area of those who are responsible for sharing and preaching the gospel. Ultimately, this is everyone.

Fuller would emphasize that everyone has a responsibility, every Christian has a responsibility to sharing the gospel as God gives opportunity, but especially those in leadership, those who are set apart for the preaching of the Word. They are to urge the lost to put their faith in Christ. They are to use every means at their disposal, as it were, to open the Scriptures and with passion encourage the lost to put their faith in Christ.

All too many ministers in Fuller's day, at least in the circles in which he moved, were like John Eve, who were content simply to announce that God had done this in Christ, but not seek to press his home on the consciences and hearts of men and women in their congregations and boys and girls. The upshot was there were men and women sitting in those congregations who felt no pressure at all. And they could come week after week saying, if God wants to save me, I'd love to get saved and here I am, but until then I'll go on sinning and so on.

And they were sitting, as it were, at ease in Zion. And thus Fuller, when he moved from Soham in 1782 to the town of Kettering, a market town, a town of about 3,000, when he was inducted as the pastor of the church in Kettering, he said, I believe it is the duty of every minister of Christ plainly and faithfully to preach the gospel to all who will hear it, that it is their dearest duty to love the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in Him for salvation. I therefore believe free and solemn addresses, invitations, and calls and warnings to unbelievers to be consistent as the means and the hand of the Spirit of God to bring them to Christ.

I consider it part of my duty which I could not admit without being guilty of the blood of souls. And here Fuller was able to, in an age that was increasingly shaped by reason and rationalism, stay true to something of the mystery here of salvation. Salvation is both a gift and a duty.

Now, this launched Fuller on a career of writing. We could take time to look at his pastoral ministry and he sought to be a faithful pastor. The church in which he went to in Kettering was probably around a couple of hundred.

By the end of his ministry there in 1815, a date probably known to you also as the end of the Napoleonic Wars, by the end of his ministry there the church had grown to about fifteen, sixteen hundred. Sometimes they even had to have meetings during the week for special groups. They had a young people's meeting on Friday evenings where Fuller could talk around could talk of numbers around two thousand.

This was in a town of three thousand. And he could say that they came from all over. And you can still go to Kettering at Gold Street Baptist Church or Fuller Street, Fuller Baptist Church on Gold Street in Kettering.

And the building there can hold thirteen, fourteen hundred. And it was that building that was redesigned during Fuller's lifetime. But it launched Fuller into a career of writing.

Initially, writing against those who wrote against him in the Gospel worthy of all acceptance. It brought controversy. And the thing I like about Fuller is he knew how to conduct himself in controversy.

There were two men in particular, William Button and John Martin, who attacked him theologically. And yet he maintained an attitude of love to these men such that with William Button at least, he could work with Button over the years. They sat on committees together.

Even though Button disagreed radically with some of Fuller's views. Fuller was able to know how to conduct himself in controversy. Something that's not easy.

It's all too easy to fall into what we call ad hominem attacks. Attacks against the person of the opponent. But Fuller was able to separate the thinking from the individual.

And love the individual while being critical maybe of some of the person's thoughts. It did get him into controversy. Let me just pursue this thought for a little bit.

It got him into controversy on another level too. Not only books written against him to which he had to reply, but also some petty sniping. There was a church near Kettering called Rushton Baptist Church.

Another little village. In which the pastor radically disagreed with Fuller's view. He was a hyper-Calvinist of the ilk of John Eve.

And it came into the past around 1786, 1787. I've actually gone through the minute book of Fuller's church and seen these minutes. A woman, a Mrs. Wright sought to get a transfer of membership from Rushton Baptist Church to Kettering Baptist Church.

She was moving to Kettering from Rushton. And in a day in which 20 mile journey was a major undertaking. And Rushton was about 20 miles.

She wanted to move from Rushton to the Kettering church, understandably. She asked her pastor, a man named Knowles, if he would give her a letter of dismissal. That's the technical word or dismissal.

He refused. He said Fuller, as far as he was concerned, was completely misleading the people of God in his preaching and teaching. And there was no way he would sanction giving this woman a letter of transfer to Fuller's church.

Well the thing dragged on for about a dozen years. Fuller and the deacons of the church wrote to the man. Finally after about two or three years they told Mrs. Knowles Mrs. White, rather, that she'd be quite welcome to come with another letter of dismissal.

They knew her by this time. As far as they were concerned her Christian character was sterling and they could see evidently she was a solid Christian. Never quite willing to accept her.

But she wanted that letter. And she stayed until Pastor Knowles died. And then finally in 1795 about 10, 12 years later she got her letter.

And was able to be brought in to the Kettering church properly. That gives you some idea of the pettiness that faced Fuller. And all of this is detailed.

It's very fascinating. Detailed in the minute book. The replies of the other church and so on.

Now what Fuller as I said this launched Fuller into a career of writing. And he subsequently wrote he became a Christian apologist. In a number of areas.

He wrote books for instance against the denial of the eternity of hell. And the argument for annihilationism. That's a very old argument.

We tend to think maybe it's only in recent years that some have been raising this view. But he wrote books against a man named Alec not Alec but a man named Vidler. There is an Alec Vidler a more recent historian.

And it wasn't here. I've forgotten the man's Christian name at this point. But a man named Vidler who argued along these lines.

He wrote books against Thomas Paine who was a deist. Who argued that scripture is not true. That the only thing in scripture of which we need to take heed are passages that talk about the greatness of God and his creation of the world.

Thomas Paine argued that there is the idea of a verbal propositional revelation that God would speak in words simply isn't rational. Makes no sense at all he said. And Fuller found himself having to respond along these lines.

Showing something of the harmony and the infallibility of scripture. The trustworthiness of scripture. And so on against the views of Thomas Paine.

Joseph Priestley was one of his strongest opponents. Priestley was as I mentioned a chemist. His training had trained him to be a theologian.

He had gone to an academy which had turned him out an unbeliever. What we would describe today as a seminary. And he had become a major proponent of Unitarianism in England.

The idea that the Trinity is wrong. That our Lord Jesus Christ was a human. A good human being.

A great teacher. But he was not the incarnate son of God. And he propagated this primarily from his home in Birmingham.

Where he also had a major laboratory. In the 1790's 1793 he and a number of his friends had supported the French Revolution which had broken out a few years earlier. And the French Revolution was not well liked in England.

In fact it plunged England by that time into a war. And there was a major riot and it's called the Priestley Riot in Birmingham. And Priestley's laboratory and library were trashed by a mob.

And Priestley fled for his life to London. And felt England was no longer a safe place. And came over to what was the fledgling of the United States.

Invited by Benjamin Franklin. Also of a Unitarian stamp. Sometimes forgotten by some of our Christian brethren in the south of us.

That most of the fathers of the American Republic were not Evangelicals. Men like Thomas Jefferson was a Unitarian if anything. Benjamin Franklin the same.

And Franklin invited Priestley to come to Philadelphia. And eventually Priestley went up from Philadelphia and traveled up the Susquehanna River which runs right through Pennsylvania. And he landed in a place called Northumberland.

And if you ever go down through central Pennsylvania Highway 15 and it's not that far from Williamsport. Is it Williamsport? Maybe it's Lewisburg. Anyway.

It's right in the middle of Pennsylvania. There's a little village called Northumberland. And you'll see on the 15 markings to Joseph Priestley houses.

And you can go there as I did about two years ago and get a tour of the house where he set up a laboratory and where he carried out his experiments. It's fascinating. But also the tour guide will tell you that in his living room he had the first Unitarian church in America where he propagated Unitarianism in America.

And eventually it would decimate New England. And New England would be a wasteland. A place that would have been a glory filled with the glory of God and where revival had taken place in the 1740s and all through the 18th century would eventually by the mid 19th century be in desperate shape.

And today it is a barren wasteland from an evangelical point of view. Now Priestley wrote a number of books defending Unitarianism against Christianity. And his position was known as Socinianism.

S-O-C-I-N-I-A-N-I-S-M. Named after a man named Fausto Soffini or Socinus an Italian at the time of the Reformation who denied the deity of Christ. A very unusual position then but one that was becoming more popular in the 18th and early 19th century.

Fuller wrote a marvelous book against Priestley's view. And what he did in the book was he compared the lifestyle that emerged from the Unitarian point of view with the Christian point of view. And he did something which I think is a great import today.

That a very old style of apologetics in the Christian church has been to think about and talk about what is the lifestyle that issues forth from Christian thought and belief. And one of the things that early Christians maintained and I think there's a lot of truth in this is they outlived and outdied their pagan contemporaries. And I don't mean to be saying here that Christians live much more clearly morally superior lives to those who don't believe the Christian message in our culture around us.

But there are some in our culture around us who live exemplary lives. But that should be, if we believe what we do believe, surely part of the evidence of the truth of Christianity is the lives we live. That the integrity of our lives should be evidence and is part of the proof of what we claim as Christian truth.

And it's a marvelous argument and he has about 12 major points in the book in which he takes different aspects of living and seeks to show that the whole Christian doctrine issues in a lifestyle of integrity that is much more profound and integral in the sense of the life being in harmony with what is asserted to be true and the assertions and ideas of a man like Priestly and the Sassinian view. The other area that Fuller also came to think a lot about whole area of missions. And here we come back to that issue of hyper-Calvinism.

He argued very strongly that the church needed to think of itself as an evangelistic center. Not only that, but the church, he argued, should regard itself as an army of the Lamb. Notice that I'm going to read a long thing he wrote in 1806.

He's talking about the early churches. The early churches were not assemblies of men who agreed to meet together once or twice a week and to subscribe for the support of an accomplished man who should on those occasions deliver lectures on religion. And he's thinking here about Priestly's understanding of the church.

Unitarianism, if you know anything about the course of Unitarianism, that's basically what it has become. It's a place where people go once a week to chat about religion. And somebody will give them lectures on religion.

There's nothing else, he argues, in that sort of thinking. No, the early churches, he says, were men and women who gathered out of the world by the preaching of the cross, formed into a society for the promotion of Christ's kingdom in their own souls and in the world around them. And it was not the concern of the ministers or elders only.

The body of the people were interested in all that was done. Neither were they, those early churches, assemblies of heavy, high-minded, contentious people meeting together simply to argue about doctrine and converting the worship of God into scenes of strife. They spoke the truth, but it was in love.

They observed discipline, but like an army of chosen men, it was that they might attack the kingdom of Satan to greater advantage. In fact, he could say very strongly, the true churches of Jesus Christ prevail in birth for the salvation of men. They are the armies of the Lamb, the grand object of whose existence is to extend the Redeemer's kingdom.

Fuller was able to see that there are different ways in which the kingdom of Satan is to be attacked. On the one hand, there are those who have to write, as he did, against Unitarianism and against Universalism and against the denial of the eternity of hell and so on. There are others, though, who need to preach and share the gospel in other ways and so on.

What I'd like to do is think about what are some of the practical implications or import of this. What I'd like to do is finish by looking at some of the fruit of Fuller's thinking, not so much in his own life but in the life of a very close friend of his, a man named Samuel Pierce. One of the great books that Fuller wrote was a biography of this friend.

And the friend died at the age of 33. And it illustrates, I think, for us, and Fuller meant it to illustrate some of the truths that we've been talking about, especially the truth that deals with the whole issue of hyper-Calvinism. Samuel Pierce's life illustrates what Fuller was arguing for.

And in a certain way, what I'm stressing here is that theological ideas have legs. They have practical implications. And they play themselves out in the lives of men and women.

Samuel Pierce was born in 1766. He died in 1799. He was born in Plymouth in the south of England on the English Channel, one of the great ports of England.

His parents were Baptists and he was raised in the Baptist church there. He never knew his mother. His mother died very young and so it was.

He was raised by his father and his grandfather. He was converted around the age of 16. By the time he was 19 or so, by the time he was actually around 20, it was recognized that he had gifts for ministry.

The church had encouraged him to take prayer meetings from time to time or sometimes take cottage meetings out in small villages where you would have opportunities to share the scriptures or do a Bible study. And it became evident to them, this man has real gifts for pastoral ministry. And so they encouraged him to go to a seminary, the only seminary of the day, in Britain anyway, where you could train for the Baptist ministry and it was Bristol Baptist Academy.

He was there for three years from 1786 to 1789. Now 1789 was not the most propitious year to begin a ministry. It was the year of the French Revolution.

And within three years England would find herself at war with France. They'd been at war with France for most of the 18th century. The 18th century is one long century of war between England and France.

But this was particularly bloody. It lasted almost an entire generation, 22 years. Well 22 years, 1792 to 1815, but there was one year apiece in 1803.

And Fuller Pierce's whole ministry is played out against this backdrop. This will become very important at the end of my story because you ask an Englishman, what was a good Frenchman? A dead one. The French would say the same with the English.

There was no love loss between the English and the French. And unfortunately here in Canada we've had to experience some of that over the years. A lot of those problems, those deep roots of animosity go back to the period of In 1789, actually 1788, the summer of 1788, Pierce had a student pastor, if you want to describe it that way, in Cannon Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, England.

And Birmingham is becoming a large urban industrial center. It's the period of the industrial revolution where thousands of English men and women are being forced off the land into these large urban centers where many of them would find life radically changed. Instead of working the land and the rhythms of the land, maintaining a significant home life, they find all of that shattered and many of them putting in 14-16 hours in a factory where they never saw the sunlight, where their children were forced eventually to do the same.

And there's a shattering of home life and family life going on in the industrial revolution to some degree. And Birmingham is mushrooming. It's in this context that Pierce will have his ministry.

The ministry that's very fruitful in 10 years from 1789 to 1799. He sees around 330 converted under his ministry. It doesn't sound like many, but in 10 years that's a significant number converted and brought into membership.

There are other conversions as well, but those are brought into membership. He starts a Sunday school. Sunday schools are new in this period.

They didn't exist before. He starts a Sunday school. They always had them in the afternoon.

He starts that in 1795. By 1799 they have 1,200 students in the Sunday school. Many of them coming from the poor where they are taught to read and to write and then taught scripture.

Now, Fuller, Pierce rather, was a very close friend of Fuller's and he imbibed, he caught the spirit of Fuller, his passion for the Lord and Lord and his love for the Lord and his love for the Lord and his love Lord and his love for the his love for the Lord and his love for the Lord and Lord and Lord and Lord and Lord and his love for the Lord and his love for the Lord and his love for the Lord and his love Lord and his love for the Lord and his love for the his love for the for the Lord and his love for the Lord and his love Lord and his love for the Lord and his love for the Lord and Lord!!! Lord and his love for the Lord and his love for the Lord and his love in some ways. In fact, one thing I hadn't told you about Andrew Pollard was that when he was growing up, he was a wrestler. And he was quite a good wrestler.

In fact, when he was converted, he became convinced, I'm not sure why, that wrestling was sinful. But he said he never lost the thought. Whenever he shook somebody's hand, another man's hand, the thought went through his mind, could he throw him in wrestling? So that's the sort of guy Pollard is.

He's a bit of a... And so he says to Pierce, he wasn't happy with Pierce's response, that was the way the sermon turned out, and so he kept pressing him. And finally he heard this response. And this response was written down by a man many years later who was there, a young man, a man around 20, who had just started in the pastoral ministry, a man named F. A. Cox.

And this is Pierce's reply. Well, my brother, you shall have the secret if it must be so. Just at the moment I was about to resume my seat, thinking I had finished the sermon, the door opened.

And I saw a poor man enter the working class. From the sweat on his brow, the symptoms of his fatigue, I conjectured he had walked some miles for this early service, but he had been unable to reach the place to the close. A momentary thought glanced through my mind.

Here may be a man who never heard the gospel, or it may be he is one that regards the gospel as a feast. In either case, the effort on his part demands one of mine. And so with the hope of doing him good, I resolved at once to forget all else, and in spite of criticism and the apprehension of being thought tedious, to give him a quarter of an hour.

And apparently there was complete silence. And what impacted those men was Pierce's evident love for the lost, or for a man that he thought may have loved the gospel and had spent his whole morning trying to get there and had gotten there late. And Pierce, obviously, he says that there must have gone through his mind when he says, in spite of criticism, because in the front row are the ministers.

You've got four or five men, maybe more, and they know how to put sermons together. They put them together regularly. They know how sermons go together, how they flow, etc., etc.

And the worst critics of a preacher are fellow preachers. And it must have gone through Pierce's mind, if I do what I'm thinking, these guys will be down my throat. And he completely forgot about them and spoke.

The second example illustrates the same thing. My point is this, is that Fuller's conviction about the urgency with which the gospel is to be shared, it bears fruit in Pierce's life. But Pierce was not going to let an opportunity pass.

He was opening the gospel, and here was a man who never heard it, and he wanted to impress upon his heart. The second example comes to the end of Pierce's life. Pierce became involved with Cary, and Cary's going overseas to India.

He became involved in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society, and eventually became convinced that he should go to India himself with his wife, Sarah. And Sarah was in full support of him. And in fact, one of the things that is most delightful about Pierce's life, and we don't have time to look at this at all, are a series of letters that I've transcribed, most of them, about 80 letters, they've never been printed, the majority of them, of love letters to his wife.

Letters he wrote to her when he was away from her while they were courting, and then when he married her, letters he wrote on his various journeys. And they're fabulous letters. At least I've sometimes had the feeling when I've read them, that I'm reading something that was never meant for anybody else's eyes.

Not that there's anything in there that would offend, but it was just meant for Sarah's eyes. Anyway, Sarah and he were committed to going overseas on missions with Cary. That didn't work out, but Pierce became an ardent advocate of missions in England.

So much so that on one occasion, in the fall of 1798, he was returning from a meeting, Kettering where Fuller was, a missionary meeting, and he got caught in the rain. He wanted to get home to his wife in Birmingham, and he should have stopped at an inn, but he didn't. He pressed on, he was soaked to the skin, got home, he had a cold within a few days, didn't think much of it.

It worsened, became a cough. Thought he could get rid of it by what he called pulpit sweat, which is frequent preaching, and he sweated out of his system. Didn't help.

By Christmas of 1798, he was hoarse, completely hoarse and could hardly speak above a whisper. What he didn't realize is he'd gone into TB, and pulmonary tuberculosis, and it would kill him in October. In the spring of 1799, in fact, he goes down south of England, hoping to get better.

Eventually, it doesn't help him. He's brought back slowly to Birmingham with his wife, and he would die in October of 1799. In those last months of his life, he wrote a number of letters to William Carey.

In one of them, he told Carey that he's got this great idea, and the great idea is something he'd been praying about for quite a while, and that is going over to France. Now, you have to remember, England is at war with France. Very few people in England thought about the need of the French for the gospel.

The French were the enemy. They were Catholic, and England was Protestant and evangelical, and all of the things that the Reformation had brought about and went back to. The Catholic Church is an apostate church, and the French were all part of that.

There was an identification of church and people, which in some ways was unbiblical, because even if there is apostasy in the Catholic Church, in certain areas, the French needed the gospel. But Pierce isn't thinking along those lines. He tells Carey, I've been thinking about a mission to France, and he says this in one of his letters, I've been endeavouring for some years, he says, to get five of our ministers to agree that they'll apply themselves to the French language, and then we, he's on his deathbed, this is a critically important thing, he's dying, then we could spend two months annually in that country.

But England and France were at war, and at least satisfy ourselves that Christianity was not lost in France for want of a fair experiment in its favour. Who can tell what God might do? My suggestion is the following, is that Fuller's theological defence against Hyper-Calvinism, this is the proof of it. It's not merely words on paper, it's not merely a theological argument, it doesn't stay there, it bears fruit in the life of Pierce, praying, longing to see the French saved, to see the gospel established in France.

Pierce never went, he died in October of 1799. But those prayers were not lost, because 16 years later, a man did go, a man by the name of Robert Haldane. As soon as there was peace, and Haldane had known Pierce, and he knew Fuller, as soon as there was peace, Haldane crossed over to France, southern France and Geneva, and the remarkable thing happened, he goes to Geneva, he meets up with a number of students at the college that Calvin had established, completely liberal now, asks a dozen of them, would you like to come and study the Romans with me in my home? And over the course of about six months, they're all converted, all these men studying theology, none of them saved, they're all converted, and they become some of the great names in French evangelical history.

César Malin, and Adolphe Manon, and Jules Merle d'Aubigné, and Amy Bost, and so on, names that we hardly know, but for whom God brought revival to French-speaking Switzerland and southern France in the 1820s and 1830s and 1840s. That's the proof of what Fuller was arguing for, not allowing himself to be pressed into the rationalism of his age, but seeking to preserve the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of the way of salvation, seeking to be true to scripture, seeking, yes, to use human reason. Now, he hasn't junked human reason, but it's subordinate to scripture, subordinate to revelation.

And he gives us a pattern, I think, for our day. We live in a very different day in many respects. We do not confront the same problems that Fuller confronted.

We are increasingly not confronting a rationalism. In fact, we confront the opposite. There's been a massive swing away from trust in human reason to almost now a situation of superstition.

Who, 40 years ago, would have believed the sort of explosion of new interest in the new age and parapsychology and the occult that we've seen in the last 30 years? We are increasingly living in a very, very different world. Our apologetics have to be, therefore, tailored differently. But the model is still the same, using human reason in subjection to scripture and preserving the mystery.

Well, let me stop here and ask if there might be some questions on the life of Fuller or maybe comments that this might have raised.

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