

# HELP

FOR THE TRUE

## DISCIPLES OF IMMANUEL:

BEING

AN ANSWER TO A BOOK,

PUBLISHED

BY THE LATE REV. ANDREW FULLER,

ENTITLED

THE GOSPEL WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION;

OR, THE

DUTY OF SINNERS TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST.

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*THIRD EDITION,*

INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF THE SCRIPTURES USUALLY ADDUCED ON  
THE SUBJECT.

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London:

PRINTED BY J. BRISCOE, BANNER STREET, ST. LUKE.

PUBLISHED BY SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT; AND  
M. AND S. HIGHAM, CHISWELL STREET; SOLD IN THE  
VESTRY OF SALEM CHAPEL; AND MAY BE OBTAINED  
BY APPLYING TO ALMOST ANY BOOKSELLER.

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1841.

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## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

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It is about fifty-four years since the first edition of "*The Gospel worthy of all acceptation*" was published by Mr. Fuller; and it is about thirty-nine years since the second edition came out. The first was opposed by several ministers, who, conceiving that it was of hurtful tendency, endeavoured to withstand the inconsistent statements made by Mr. Fuller therein; but the day was come for the spreading of a more general system of preaching than had for some time been admitted amongst the baptized churches. And the same ministers, who had carefully aided in the formation of "*The Gospel worthy of all acceptation*," became the zealous coadjutors of Mr. Fuller, and the successful promoters of the desired ends sought by the publication of his book. The attempt succeeded to the great satisfaction of more than it disoblighed; and, ever since, Arminianism has been making its unsuspected progress amongst the churches, both of the Independents and the Baptists; until the difference between them and the Methodists, is now scarcely perceptible, as to the matter and scope of their ministrations. We therefore find no open contradiction arises between the Wesleyans, and the Moderate Calvinists; they all *so naturally* agree, that their pulpits are becoming common, and each party is elated in testifying, that the other is spreading the gospel, and making converts: so that almost all things would be universally comfortable, were it not for here and there a few Hyper-Calvinists, that by times occasion a painful feeling. In 1787 Mr. Fuller wrote a defence of his treatise, occasioned by *Mr. Button's Remarks* thereon; and by *Mr. Dan Taylor's Letters* on the same subject. This last gentleman was of the General Baptist denomination, who, when he saw Mr. Fuller coming over so far towards his views, warmly congratulated him on the happy change; and invited him forward into the open plains of Arminianism. This excess of kindness had hardly been expected by Mr. Fuller, and he was not prepared to receive it; but, seemed inclined to deem Mr. Taylor intrusive and troublesome! In 1786, Philip Withers, D. D. addressed a singular letter to Mr. Fuller, in reply to his book, which book the Doctor called, not *The Gospel*, &c. but *A treatise on damnation*. Though he shews the fallacy of Mr. F.'s system in a forcible manner, yet he drew up his piece so scholastically, and blended with many excellent ideas, others so highly objectionable, that his work was not likely to gain much

attention among plain christians. In 1788, Mr. John Martin also published "*Thoughts on the duty of man relative to faith in Jesus Christ.*" With this Mr. Fuller felt a good deal vexed, and wrote five letters thereon to a friend, in the year 1789, evidently under a feverish excitation. Mr. Martin's manner was provoking, and he exposed things in a way that was not likely to give any pleasure to Mr. Fuller: many of his thoughts, however, are valuable and weighty. Mr. Fuller's second edition appeared in 1801, and in 1803 I was induced to publish the first part of the following work in reply thereto: the second part was not published till 1814. In 1829 a second edition was called for, in which some new arrangements were adopted, and considerable additions were made. The present one is almost an exact reprint of that, except that two or three sentences are suppressed; and the many errors of the press, in the former edition, are corrected in this. And the following introductory pages are now added to the preceding remarks.

Although the divinely commissioned apostles of our Lord have been long removed from their official labours and sufferings, into their heavenly rest, they are still proclaiming to the nations the wonderful works of God our Saviour. And their doctrines and directions are as valuable as ever, and are no less worthy of the most cordial acceptance. It is also observable that, wherever the holy doctrines of the everlasting gospel are made known through the Holy Spirit, their tendency is evidently the same as in the apostolic age. The kind of men who deemed them foolishness then, entertain the same opinion of them now. No man, however, has any just cause to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ *now*, any more than the apostle Paul had in his day.

Truth itself neither suffers loss, nor acquires improvement, through a succession of periods; but remains through all ages the same. And though certain ministers of the Baptist denomination have united in saying that the sentiments here alluded to, "are become too gross and absurd to be *now* entertained;" their unproved assertions, can only merit a firm and serious renunciation. For egregiously false affirmations are not converted into sterling truths by any association of ministers and churches. But such unwarranted asseverations prove to us "the necessity of earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints."

As the holy apostles still speak through their written epistles, so does *Mr. Fuller* through his writings, although he has been called from his labours on earth twenty-five years. His treatise called "*The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation,*" is as erroneous, contrarious, and misleading, as heretofore. Its contrariety to absolute election; real and particular redemption; the sure and

effectual conversion of all the redeemed; is fully shewn in the ensuing pages, and the ungracious tendency of its sentiments is noted, and especially in the last section.

The present work is not republished in opposition to any person; but to detect and refute the erroneous ideas of many persons. It seems that *Mr. Fuller* really imagined, about fifty-five years ago, "That had matters gone on but a few years longer, the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill in society." Now, we all know, that dunghills, though frequently *useful* on the earth, are very apt to be *offensive*. It was this latter property of the Baptists, it is presumed, which excited the zeal of our pious author, to do what he could to prevent such a public nuisance being perfected. And it should seem that, through his foresight and timely aid, the evil was warded off in a great degree; certain brethren of like prescience and thoughtfulness concurring with him in the prevention of what was coming on the unsuspecting Baptists in a few more years of inertitude. I well remember that in places where there had been but one church before, that one soon became divided into two; and no small contention arose amongst many who had dwelt in quietness together, before what then obtained the name of *Fullerism* was known among them. Thus the inertness gave place to agitation and dissention, and many humble quiet souls became sorely unsettled and distressed in diverse places. Hence the Baptist churches, instead of becoming "perfect dunghills," became otherwise greatly changed, and not a few of them since that memorable period are become extensive swamps of a very fungous quality. To prove this we need only refer to the Circular Letter of the ministers and churches of the Midland Association.\*

The following is an extract drawn therefrom; and is addressed to the thirty-six churches of the association, by their unworthy ministers, who say to them, "You cherish no misgivings on the sufficiency and universality of the atonement, page 15. That it is equally provided for every rational creature, page 15. That to set bounds to the extent of the blood-shedding of Christ, and to view it as not a public satisfaction for the relief of mankind indiscriminately, is now become too gross and absurd to be entertained, page 14. That salvation by Christ is of unbounded efficacy, page 15. That the means are as efficacious as the salvation is illimitable, page 16. That men at large possess sufficient facilities for enabling them to make themselves new hearts, and return to the Lord, page 17. That the Spirit is embodied in

\* See Protestant Popery delineated, in a smart pamphlet containing the above Circular, with some pungent remarks thereon. Price 6d. By a Watchman.

the means themselves as the principle of life is blended with the different forms of matter, page 18. That the objection of incapability is stale, and has perniciously operated, page 18. That all men may avail themselves of the gift of the Holy Spirit, page 20. That we have the mighty Saviour *to offer to the world*, page 24. That the sinner finds an impassable bar thrown across his way,—which renders his recovery morally impossible, except, as it is imagined, that the presence of some extraneous and supernatural agency, bordering on the miraculous, if not emphatically so, is evinced, page 15. That this bar is the creation of human invention, in times less illumined and more stringent, page 16. That every member of our churches should be resolved each to attempt the conversion at least of one sinner, page 24.” These things certainly belong to “another gospel,” and not to that which is of the power of God unto salvation, Gal. i. 6.

The preceding extract amply shews the fruits of *Mr. Fuller's* treatise, with others of the same description published since his time; and also proves that the Baptist churches are indeed very greatly changed, and certainly not for the better since the days of Dr. Gill and John Brine, and others who laboured with them in the gospel of God. It is now but a short distance further for the midland ministers to go, and they will have arrived through moderate Calvinism in the depths of Pelagianism; which are only a little way from Socinianism; where, having once found a sojournment, it will be but a step further to Deism. May the Holy Spirit enlighten their minds, impede their progress, and bring them to a settlement in the spiritual knowledge of Christ and his glorious gospel. Charity would fain hope that the thirty-six churches are not all so deeply fallen from grace, (Gal. v. 4.) as the Circular Letter would represent them to be. If they do really approve of the faith set at the head of the Letter, and of the Letter itself, in which that faith is openly denied, they must be an unenviable people!

It is hoped that the extract made, may be a mean of leading inquiring disciples to take heed what they hear. And it may serve to warn other churches to beware lest they also be drawn into the same hurtful errors, to the exclusion of the doctrines of distinguishing grace, and real redemption, which the Spirit of God is engaged to accompany with his presence and power, to the sure salvation of all whom God the Father has sovereignly chosen, and God the Son has absolutely redeemed from all iniquity, to endless blessedness.

Christianity has been planted on the earth eighteen hundred years, and has answered the purpose of its divine institutor through the ages past. While notions most contrarious have been

blended with its progress ; yet, in its efficient results, it has never exemplified "the universality of the atonement," so much talked of by many. But in every rolling age, man has had before his eyes a selected people, as "a people bought from among men, redeemed from the earth:" for all the chosen and ransomed have been converted in every age. Whatever designs men may entertain, and whatever ends they propose to themselves, God ever keeps his own end in view. They have often gone forth with the general notion of saving all, while the Lord has ever gathered his elect. Whoever arises to preach, with a view to save all, God constantly keeps in sight his chosen and blood-bought people ; and it is easy to see that, as far as he condescends to work by the instrumentality of his ministers, in the conversion of sinners, it is all along according to the election of grace. He knows where his chosen dwell, and therefore he sends his merciful message to them, and causes them to receive it, with knowledge, affection, and joy. The doctrine of salvation goes to the people in general ; but the salvation of the doctrine is intended for and made known to the elect amongst them. In agreement herewith, the Lord said to his servant Paul, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee ; for *I have much people in this city*, Acts xviii. 9, 10. God's election rules the dispensation of the gospel : where he has a people, thither he sends the word of his grace. And so Paul, in writing to his son Timothy, said, "Therefore I endure all things for *the elect's sake*, that *they may also* obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Ministers in our day, talk more like men of humane feelings for sinners ; than men of mighty faith in the Saviour : more for the bettering of the condition of guilty mortals, than for the manifestation of the Christ of the living God. In long and eloquent speeches how very small a portion of gospel truth escapes the orator's lips. Reasons, I doubt not, might be rendered for this ; but whether they would vindicate the deficiency noted, may be safely questioned, and must at present be left.

Our Lord's commissioned Apostles and others under their directions were missionaries sent forth by Christ himself to preach his gospel among all nations. They were of one mind, and had only one gospel, and one baptism. Were we to assert this of our missionaries, who would expect us to confirm our assertion ? It is not to be questioned but that the first missionaries preached much more real gospel, and spent a vast deal less money in doing so, than do our modern missionaries ; whose zeal and fortitude have often done honour to the cause ; while their want of consistent views of the sovereign design of God by the gospel, has been



lamentable. While we call to mind the deep degeneracy and helpless ignorance of the heathen world, we may reasonably hope that much useful light will be imparted, to greatly better their condition, though the missionary preachers sent, will teach little else than very general principles. When the gospel first came to our island, the ministry by which it came was miserably fraught with error and superstition; yet the light gradually brightened, though very slowly. When by our missionaries the word of the living God has become spread among heathen men, and some of them become so far taught as to be able to read it for themselves, we may rationally expect that, men of good natural powers will rise up among them, who, through the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit will be led into the wisdom and grace of the glorious gospel, far beyond the low and generalizing views of the men who are sent out from our country to teach them: but this must be a work of time, as it has been in all past instances.

The ability and conclusiveness with which the Baptist ministers have maintained their just sentiment, respecting the translation of God's holy word, cannot fail to prove convincing, honourable, and useful; while their unscriptural indulgence of open communion in their churches; as well as their forwardness to avow and propagate Arminian principles, as plainly evidence their inconsistency, and constantly minister cause for serious regret. I may be told, that upon the principles pleaded for in the ensuing work, *no* missionary cause could exist. This will not be easily proved. Only suppose that good men proceeded, as the apostles and primitive servants of Christ did, and then less money would be wanted, and the spiritual church would be under less temptation to please men of no real religion, and be less dependent on worldly favour. It is true less ground would be occupied, but the seed-corn would be more clean, and would produce stronger crops. These, however, are not the times for even thinking of anything but *universalities* and *human capabilities*: things contrary to these, are stale now; and yet we have no other testament than what the saints relied on in the first ages.

I have not studied very closely the Rev. J. H. Hinton's metaphysical distinctions and verbal particularities; but, from the very slight view I have taken, his doctrine of *power* to act spiritually, is no way essentially different from the common distinction usually entertained, of *natural ability*, which *Mr. Fuller* called *power*, and *moral ability*, which he called *inclination* or *disposition*. On this part of the controversy, see especially the 14th and 15th sections of the following work.

Mr. H. has said, "*All* we have maintained is, that man has the means of being what he ought to be." Is not this enough?

God's holy law is the standard by which man's obligation must be measured and his ability tried ; and it can require no less than perfection of heart and action. The argument involved is, Man has the power of being what he ought to be, but man ought to be perfect, therefore, man has the power of being perfect. This is certainly a strange doctrine, and not to be found in our Lord's testament. That a fallen man is capable of being made sinless we can readily allow ; but that he can make himself so, is beyond all credence. It is also said that, "Power confers an adaptation for some superior kind of action." This indeed sets man above the brute ; but it no way proves that he, while in unregeneracy, can discover and relish the things of the Spirit of God. He that cannot perceive, cannot will ; and he that cannot will, cannot do. If God will have mercy on such a fallen creature, and enlighten his darkness, he will choose, in a divine light, the things which make for his highest welfare ; otherwise, however fatal the consequences of his abiding in darkness may appear to be in the eyes of others, he will never act as a child of light. Again, "Affirm," says Mr. H., "that man has no power to act right : does that abase him ?—It sinks his *nature*, but it does not impugn his *character*." This is not correct. Man's inability for moral obedience, according to the law of his creation-state, came upon him through his own original fault. He retained his reason, though he lost the upright use of it. How then does it appear that his character is not impugned ? If by acting right be meant acting spiritually, we firmly believe that no natural man (1 Cor. ii. 14.) has ever so acted, nor ever can. As is the state of the agent, such must his actions be ; the tree must be good before it can bear good fruit. The right use of our faculties is the spiritual use of them ; but except a man be born of the Spirit he can never act spiritually ; he must *live* in the Spirit, before he can possibly *walk* in the Spirit. We surely do not deny that fallen man has rational faculties, by asserting that he cannot make any spiritual use of them.

But Mr. H. supposes him in excuse to say "*Sin is natural to me. I could not help it.*" We do not pretend to say it is not natural to him ; but we assure him that punishment is inseparable from it. And we further ask him, how he expects to escape that punishment ? If he plead that he could not help being born in sin, we do not contradict him. But we ask what leads him to conclude that he was born in sin ? Whether he is aware of what he is exposed to through sin that is in him, and that is committed by him ; whether it has given him any pain of mind or not ? Whether he has any concern of heart to be saved from it ? Or if he fancies he can save himself therefrom ? Many other touching

questions we could put to such a character, and point out the ruinous tendencies of a wicked life, and of his presuming to maintain that he had *power* to be and do all he ought to be and do ; and we could also set before him the great and lasting advantages of a contrary life of godliness by faith in a once crucified Saviour.

We can preach against sin through the sufferings of Christ ; and we can preach the gospel of distinguishing grace through God's holy and irrevocable law ; and can also preach the law through the everlasting gospel. Through these two connected and comprehensive forms of truth we are prepared by the mighty power of God to instrumentally pull down the strong holds of false confidence, and to beat down the cursed pride of fallen man, and to withstand the erroneous and misleading notion of man's power to be and do all that God's perfect law can require him to be and do. *S. Charnock* says, "That men should exchange their pride for humility ; the pleasures of sin for a life of holiness ; —when before they could not have a divine thought ; to put off earthly affections for heavenly ; and all this by the foolishness of preaching ; it is an argument of *a divine power* rather than any *inherent strength in the means.*"

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## ABBREVIATIONS.

1st. Edit. and 2nd. Edit. refer to the Gospel worthy of all Acceptation. Rem. refers to Mr. Button's work. Def. to Mr. F.'s Defence against that work. Rep. to his defence against Mr. Taylor. Agnos. refers to another piece by Mr. F. in reply to Mr. Dan Taylor. W. D. Doctor Withers.

## SECTION I.

### PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS OF THE AUTHOR'S PRINCIPLES.

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ALTHOUGH the author of the ensuing pages is neither a Calvinist, an Arminian, nor a Baxterian, yet he believes many things in common with them all; while he claims the liberty of dissenting from them all, where, in his apprehension, they severally deviate from the straight line of inspired truth. As he most sincerely wishes to be understood, even by those who may continue to differ widely from him, in the important point at issue; it has seemed to him reasonable to lay before the reader, a condensed statement of the judgment he entertains, on those many points which have a bearing on the disputed question. The following outline is therefore most respectfully submitted to his consideration, who is not here to expect any argument to be offered in proof of what is stated; but a concise expression of certain particulars firmly believed by the writer, and that, as he hopes, on sacred authority.

That all mankind were blessed in Adam as their common parent, in the beginning—that they were all relatively under the law of works in him as their representative—that they all fell in him into the same condemnation—that they all became, through sin, entirely unable to fulfil the law—that to *re-produce* the lost principle of innocent rectitude was neither in their power, nor could be their duty—that the law continued to require perfect obedience, and threaten the penalty of death to disobedience, wherever it should be found—that all the offspring of Adam have proved disobedient—that the penalty of the law became their due—that the said penalty must be inevitably borne by all for whom the second Adam has not made absolute reconciliation, are truths evidently maintained in the holy scriptures, and therefore the writer of these pages believes them.