

Gadsby and Fuller

"Mr. Gadsby always considered, and often stated publicly, that Andrew Fuller was the greatest enemy the church of God ever had, as his sentiments were so much cloaked with the sheep's clothing... Mr. Gadsby was no great friend to missionary societies, as he believed that the bulk of missionaries went out to publish erroneous doctrine. He also considered that there was great fraud practiced by some of the missionaries, even in temporal things... Mr. Gadsby was also averse to musical instruments in a place of worship. In a chapel that was on one occasion hired for him, there was an organ. When it began to play, Mr. Gadsby started up and requested that it be stopped" (Life of William Gadsby).

On the account of his preaching a limited atonement, particular redemption and that all Christ died for would be saved, he was accused of being an Antinomian and a Hyper-Calvinist. He was not unfaithful to the trust committed to him. As to faithfulness, he paid no more regard to offending Arminians and Fullerites than he would to Satan and his agents; for the sentiments of these classes he abhorred, and always set his face as an iron pillar and brazen wall against them. His "Everlasting Task for Arminians" will, we believe, live while the world stands, as an unanswerable testimony against the doctrines of man's free will. "He loved me and gave Himself for me," says Paul. But Gadsby would sometimes remark, "If Christ died for the whole human race, the damned in hell might get up and say the same, 'He gave Himself for me, and yet I am damned. So what's the use of Paul making so much fuss about that? He gave Himself for me, but that has not kept me out of hell. So something else must have saved Paul and he does not know it.' But no. Christ died for all whom He loved, and all for whom He died will be saved."

Andrew Fuller and those allied with him did not believe the death of Christ was sufficient to save all He died for; "He died for the human race; while He made an atonement for the elect only, the atonement was sufficient to save the non-elect if they would only believe. The atonement was sufficient to save and would save the elect," says Mr. Fuller, "regardless of whether they ever heard the gospel or believed in Jesus or the atonement; but the non-elect must believe in the atonement in order for it to be able to save them." If one of the non-elect has believed and was saved by the atonement, there is one person in heaven that God did not choose to be there. This was the Fullerite position, briefly stated.

"Mr. Gadsby was called to the work of the ministry about the time Baptist associations and academies were springing up. He invariably kept aloof from them all; and certainly the labours of none of these associating and academy-taught ministers have been blessed like his.. Mr. Gadsby always objected to the term 'Reverend' being applied to any human being" (Life of William Gadsby).

William Gadsby believed in personal election; he believed that the atonement was limited; he believed that all Christ died for will be saved; he believed that the salvation of all the Lord's people was made sure by the work of the Son of God. He was opposed to Fuller's doctrine and practice; he objected to instrumental music in his churches, and he did not endorse modern missions and missionary societies. In other words, William Gadsby (1773-1844), a Strict Baptist of England, was in doctrine and practice of the same sentiments as the Old School or Primitive Baptists in America. And be it noted that the majority of Regular Baptists in both countries stood for these same principles prior to the movement under Andrew Fuller and William Carey. It would be a wonderful day if all our people professing the name of "Baptist" would stand upon the same "faith of our fathers" now - even if all the people who profess to be "Bible-based," "Conservative," or "Calvinistic" Baptists would so stand! And if they truly experienced the grace of God in a manner comparable to Gadsby and the great high-Calvinist Baptist commentator John Gill, I believe they would stand for these old points of doctrine!

- Editor, TFT, adapted from The Baptists in All Ages by Elder J. S. Newman, of Texas, written about the year 1902.

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