

## The Life and Times of Dr. John Gill

- **1687, November 23.** Born at Kettering, in Northamptonshire, England.
- **1716, November 1.** Makes a public confession of faith in Christ and is baptized.  
**1716, November 4.** On this Lord's Day he was received as a member into the church, Mr. Thomas Wallis, pastor, and partook of the Lord's Supper.
- **1716, November 11.** During the evening service he preached a sermon on 1 Corinthians 2:2.
- **1718,** Marries Elizabeth Negus of London.
- **1719, September 20.** Accepts the call to pastor Hosly-down, Fair-street, Southwark, about a mile from London Bridge.
- **1720, March 22.** Ordained to the ministry in a public ceremony with the laying on of hands. Soon after his ordination he drew up *A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ at Horsly-down*.
- **1723.** Dr. Gill is taken ill with numerous afflictions including a severe fever that threatened his life.
- **1724.** Begins an exposition of the *Song of Solomon*, preaching 122 sermons to his congregation from this book. In the same year his first printing was a sermon preached from Romans 5:20,21 on the death of Mr. John Smith, a deacon of his church.
- **1725.** Publishes a work entitled, *The Urim and Thummim found with Christ*, from Deuteronomy 33:8.
- **1726.** Publishes a pamphlet called, *The Manner of baptizing with water, cleared up from the Word of God and right Reason, etc.* and another work, *A Defense of the ancient Mode, etc.*
- **1728.** Publishes his *Exposition of the Song of Solomon*. Other publications this year included *The Prophecies of the Old Testament respecting the Messiah*.
- **1730.** Publishes a work on *The Resurrection of the Dead* and another work on *Justification, and The Necessity of good Works to Salvation*.
- **1731** Publishes his *Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity*.
- **1735.** Publishes *The Cause of God and Truth* setting forth the doctrines of grace.
- **1736.** Publishes *Truth Defended*, a response to an anonymous writer who examined the *Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme*.

- **1737, December 31.** Preaches an important sermon, *The Doctrine of Grace cleared from the Charge of Licentiousness*.
  - **1738.** Publishes *Remarks on Mr. Samuel Chandler's Sermon preached to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, relating to the moral Nature and Fitness of Things*. The origin of evil is considered and the vindication of God is upheld (*theodicy*).
- 1738, May 30.** Death of daughter Elizabeth Gill, age thirteen. Her father preached her funeral from 1 Thessalonians 4:13,14.
- **1746.** The first volume of his *Exposition of the whole New Testament* is published. The second in 1747 and the third in 1748.
  - **1748.** Receives a diploma from the Marischal College and University at Aberdeen creating him Doctor in Divinity.
  - **1749.** Dr. Gill writes a treatise, called, *The Divine Rite of Infant Baptism examined and disproved*.
  - **1752.** Publishes his pamphlet on the *Doctrine of the Saints' final Perseverance*.
  - **1752, March 15.** Escapes being killed in his study from a violent hurricane.
  - **1753.** Publishes a pamphlet entitled *Anti-Paedobaptism*.
  - **1755.** Dr. Gill publishes Dr. Crisp's *Works* having written a brief *Memoir* of the doctor's life and taking the opportunity to exonerate himself from the charge of Anti-nomianism.
  - **1756, March 24.** Dr. Gill preaches his farewell sermon at a Wednesday evening lecture from Acts 26:22,23. He desires to devote his time to finishing *An Exposition of the whole Old Testament*.
  - **1757.** Dedicates a new church in Carter-lane, Saint Olave's-street, near London Bridge, preaching two sermons on Exodus 20:24, which are published as *Attendance in Places of religious Worship, where the divine Name is recorded, encouraged*.
  - **1757-58.** Publishes his *Exposition of the Prophets*, and an *Exposition of the Revelation*.
  - **1764, October 10.** Mrs. John Gills dies at age 68 after being married for more than 46 years.
  - **1767.** Publishes his Dissertation concerning the *Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowels, Points, and Accents*.
  - **1769.** Publishes *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*.

- **1770.** Publishes *A Body of Practical Divinity*.
- **1771, October 14.** Dr. John Gill dies about 11:00 AM at his house in Camberwell, Surrey, aged seventy three years, ten months, and ten days He is buried near Moorfields in the family tomb.
- **1773, January.** Death of daughter Mary who had married Mr. George Keith, a bookseller in Gracechurch-street.
- **1774-1777.** The second edition of the New Testament Exposition is published.
- **1804, May 22.** Death of John, the son of Dr. Gill. John was a goldsmith who lived in Walworth, about a mile and a half from London. He was 78 years old.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN GILL

A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of  
The Late Rev. John Gill, D. D.

by

John Rippon

Edited by

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*

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Psalm 60:4

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE  
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN GILL, D. D.  
BY JOHN RIPPON, D. D.

Late Pastor of the Church of Christ Assembling  
At Carter Lane Meeting House, Tooley Street.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF DR. GILL,

BY

BENJAMIN FRANCIS.

ADVERTISEMENT

The late Dr. John Gill was, in various respects, so distinguished an individual, whether we have regard to his talents, his industry in improving them, the eminence to which he attained in oriental and classical literature, or his Christian character, that one may be justly surprised so little is generally known of his life and labors.

Were we to have recourse to any of our biographical dictionaries for information on the subject, we should find the article dismissed in about twenty lines, giving us a meager outline of the place of his birth, his family, education, and the various publications with which he enriched the literature of his country, while the most interesting and instructive parts of his biography are wholly un-noticed.

The reason of this is, that the only full and authentic account of this great and learned man, is that which was compiled by the late Dr. John Rippon, his successor in the work of the ministry, and prefixed to Dr. Gill's "*Exposition of the Bible,*" in nine volumes, quarto — of course accessible only to those who happen to be in possession of that laborious undertaking, the number of whom must be comparatively few.

It is presumed that a re-publication of the former, in a detached form, and at a moderate price, can scarcely fail of meeting with a favorable acceptance at the hands of the religious community, more especially, as tending to bring this great and learned man more prominently before the public, and so doing his character that justice which hitherto it has not received. The following has been printed verbatim from the above-mentioned memoir, which will account for an occasional reference to the Commentary which will be observed in the perusal.

Three Tun Passage, Newgate Street, March 1838.

## A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

JOHN GILL, DD

THE Reverend Dr. JOHN GILL was certainly one of the greatest and best of men. In contemplating a summary Memoir of him, it cannot be the province of wisdom sedulously to neglect any authentic documents or traits of his character, merely from an apprehension that they have been previously known. Such there are; but as it is not probable that one of his warmest admirers in a thousand can possibly have enjoyed the perusal of them, this Sketch of his Life and Writings unceremoniously avails itself, at once, of every such assistance-proposing, when the superfluous is rejected, to retain the valuable; and then, with the interspersions of what is illustrative, to introduce other articles of general interest, all of which, unquestionably, are not before the public.

The subject of this Memoir was born at Kettering, in Northamptonshire, Nov. 23, 1697, of amiable and serious parents, Edward Gill, and Elizabeth his wife, whose maiden name was Walker. By the indulgent providence of God, they were equally delivered from the snares of poverty and affluence. *'Beneath the dome, above the hut,'* by peaceful industry, and genuine religion, they spent their days, a blessing to the pious circle which Heaven had assigned them. The father, Mr. Edward Gill, first became a member of the Dissenting congregation in that place, consisting then of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists. Besides their pastor, they had a teaching elder of the Baptist denomination, Mr. William Wallis, who was the administrator of baptism, by immersion, to such adult persons among them as desired it. But, at length, the Baptists having been rendered uncomfortable in their communion, by some particular persons, they were obliged to separate, with Mr. William Wallis, their teacher, and soon formed themselves into a distinct church of the Particular Baptist denomination, over which the Reverend Andrew Fuller is now, and for many years has been pastor. Mr. Edward Gill was one of their number, and, in due time, was chosen to the office of deacon among them; and, to the very last, obtained a good report for his *'grace, his piety, and holy conversation.'*

His young son, with the dawn of reason, discovered a fine capacity for instruction; and, being soon out of the reach of common teachers, he was very early sent to the grammar-school in the town, which he attended with uncommon diligence, and unwearied application; quickly surpassing those of his own age, and others who were considerably his seniors. Here he continued till he was about eleven years old. During this time, notwithstanding the tedious manner in which grammatical knowledge was then conveyed, besides going through the common school-books, he mastered the principal Latin classics, and made such a proficiency in the Greek, as obtained for him marks of distinction from several of the neighboring clergy, who condescended, occasionally, to examine and encourage his progress, when they met him at a bookseller's shop in the town, which he constantly attended, on market-days, when only it was opened. Here he so regularly attended,

*'for the sake of consulting different authors, that it became an usual asseveration with the people of the neighborhood, when speaking of anything which they considered certain, it is as sure, said they, as that John Gill is in the bookseller's shop.'*

And, as the same studious disposition attended him through life, so did nearly the same remarks — those who knew him usually employing this mode of affirmation, *'as surely as Dr. Gill is in his study.'*

His leaving the grammar-school, so early in life, is attributed to an impropitious accident — the master of it insisted that the children of Dissenters, as well as others, should go with him to church, on week-days, at the hours of prayer. The parents, considering this as an imposition, removed their children from under his care, and our young friend was among the number. Affluent families placed their children at a distance to finish their education, but this, not being as convenient to his parents, proved a discouraging circumstance.

Various methods, however, were devised by his friends, but all proved fruitless. Ministers also, of different denominations, endeavored to place him under the patronage of one or other of the Funds in London that he might enjoy the additional advantages, which the most liberal Dissenters provide for the education of young men in their seminaries of learning, who are considered by competent judges, as persons of real piety, and of promising talents for the work of the ministry.

With this view, specimens of his attainments were sent to the proper persons in town, who replied, that he was too young, at pre-sent, to be admitted on their foundations; and that should he continue, which was a very supposable thing, to make such rapid advances in his studies, he would pass through the common circle of learning, quite in his juvenile days, before it was usual to employ young persons in the sacred service of the sanctuary.

Yet, with all the obstructions thrown in the way of his becoming a scholar, such was his thirst for learning, he not only retained the knowledge of the Latin and of the Greek he had acquired, but incessantly improved himself in both. At length he studied logic, rhetoric, as also natural and moral philosophy. He likewise learned Hebrew without any living assistance, by the help of Buxtorf's Grammar and Lexicon.

With these only he surmounted the chief difficulties of that language, and could soon read Hebrew with great ease and pleasure. In this language he always took particular delight. He was next improving his mind by reading Latin authors in the various branches of literature, and particularly some of those systems of divinity, by the foreign professors, of which he afterwards made so liberal an use, and which give such a distinction to various of his publications. Indeed his object was always near his heart; and though, for several years, some part of his time was now employed in his father's business, which was the woolen trade, the other part of it was religiously consecrated to his studies, till he was about the nineteenth year of his age. He had slight convictions of the evil of sin, and occasional thoughts of a future state, from his very childhood.



Sometimes he was terrified with the fear of death, and hell, and then elated with thinking on the joys of heaven; but his impressions were superficial and temporary, till he was about twelve years of age, when the operations of his mind became more serious, especially after hearing Mr. William Wallis preach a sermon on Genesis 3:9,

*And the Lord God called unto Adam,  
and said unto him, where art thou?*

For a while the text and subject continually sounded in his ears, and these interrogatories were addressed to his heart — *Sinner, where art thou? What a wretched state and condition art thou in? — How miserable wilt thou be, living and dying in an unconverted state?* He considered himself as summoned before the Judge of all, to answer for his conduct. Such effects following the discourse, he considered Mr. Wallis, *if any one*, his spiritual father; but that good man died soon after.

Now he began more clearly to see the depravity of his nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, his need of the Savior, and of a better righteousness than his own, even the righteousness of Christ, to be received by faith. Shortly after he was favored with a comfortable persuasion of interest in him, through the application of several exceedingly great and precious promises to his heart, by the blessed Spirit of God.

It was, moreover, his happy lot, in those early days, to have his mind irradiated with the light and knowledge of the evangelical doctrines, under the ministry of several Gospel preachers, in those parts of the country, whom, at times, he had the opportunity of hearing. And as these sublime truths came to him, not in word only, but in power, and also in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, he felt himself free from the bondage of the law, as a covenant of works, and was filled with joy and peace in believing.

Yet, though he had arrived at some degree of satisfaction in his mind, concerning the safety of his eternal state, he did not make a public profession of religion until he was almost nineteen years of age. This delay, at first, was occasioned by a consideration of his youth, and the solemnity of making a profession; and, afterwards, by finding that the eyes of the church were upon him to call him to the ministerial work, as soon as convenient, should he become a member of it. To this they were the more inclined, as their pastor, at that time, was greatly taken up in his temporal occupations, and much needed ministerial assistance.

**1716** — On the 1st of November, Mr. Gill made a public profession of his faith in Christ, declaring satisfactorily to the church, the dealings of God with his soul; and the same day Mr. Thomas Wallis, their pastor, who succeeded Mr. William Wallis in his office, administered the ordinance of baptism to him by immersion in a river, according to the command of Christ and the practice of his apostles, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Many spectators beheld the solemn sight. The following Lord's Day, November the 4th, he was received a member of the church, and partook of the Lord's Supper. The same evening, at a meeting of members and of others for prayer, in a private house, he read the chapter of Isaiah, as suitable to the preceding duties of the day, and expounded some passages of it. Those who were present estimated the service as a favorable specimen of the ministerial talents the Lord of Zion

had conferred upon him; and he was encouraged to proceed in the exercise of his gifts. Accordingly, the next Lord's Day evening, at the same place, he delivered a discourse on 1 Corinthians 2:2.

*“For I determined not to know any thing among you,  
save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”*

It was a charming season to the godly people. An aged matron, who, in her youth, was present and heard him deliver this very first sermon, at Kettering, has frequently mentioned to his successor in Carter-lane, Southwark, the manner of his rising from his seat, and placing himself behind the back of a chair when he was about to speak; as also the solemnity with which he discussed his subject, and the seriousness, affection, and joy, with which it was heard.

Soon after this, at the instance of some of his friends in London, who had seen and conversed with him at Kettering, he removed to Higham-Ferrets, a distance of six or seven computed miles. His own view in this was, that he might prosecute his studies under the Reverend Mr. John Davis, of that place, with whom he was to board — a gentle-man of learning, who had just before come from Wales, and settled as pastor of a new church, lately planted at Higham.

Of this felicity, however, the young man was disappointed. But the design of his London friends, in removing him, was, chiefly, that he might assist this new interest, help the young converts of it, and preach occasionally in the adjacent villages. Here he continued the year following, and contracted an acquaintance with a young lady, whose name was Elizabeth Negus, a member of the new-gathered church, whom he married in 1718.

His marriage with this excellent person he always considered as the principal thing for which God, in his providence, sent him to that place; for she proved affectionate, discreet, and careful; and, by her unremitting prudence, delivered him from all domestic avocations; so that he could, with leisure and greater ease of mind, pursue his studies, and devote himself to his ministerial work. She was continued to him more than forty-six years, and died October 10, 1764, in the sixty, eighth year of her age. His sermon on her death has been printed, and is esteemed one of the best funeral discourses he published. The text of it is, Hebrews 11:16.

*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly:  
wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath  
prepared for them a city.*

At the close of it, but in the form of a note, is given an honorable account of her, from early life to her departing moments; but it seems he was so very much overpowered at the end of the sermon, where the account might have been given, that he was not able to deliver it. By this amiable woman he had many children, all of whom died in their infancy, except three. Elizabeth, ‘a most lovely and desirable child, for person, sense, and grace,’ died May the 30th, 1738, in the thirteenth year of her age. Her funeral sermon was preached by her father, from 1 Thessalonians 4:13,14, and was printed, with a pleasing account of parts of her experience. Mary, who was a member of her father's church, was married to Mr. George Keith, a bookseller in Gracechurch-

street, and died in January, 1773. John was a goldsmith, who lived many years in the same street, till he retired from business to Walworth, about a mile and a half from London, where he departed this life, May 22, 1804, in the 78th year of his age. Both these children were a great happiness to their parents, and the family had always reason to be thankful to God for their domestic comfort, peace, and harmony.

During Mr. Gill's stay at Higham-Ferrers, he frequently preached to the church at Kettering; and, the circumstances of its pastor requiring assistance, Mr. Gill, soon after his marriage, wholly removed thither. Here his ministry, from the beginning, had been blessed, not only to the comfort but to the conversion of many, who long continued the seals of his ministry. Yet his stay here was only short; for, in the beginning of the year 1719, the church at Horsly-down, Fair-street, Southwark, near a mile from London-bridge, having by death lost their pastor, Mr. Benjamin Stinton, son-in-law to the famous Mr. Benjamin Keach, and his successor in the pastoral office; some of the members, hearing of Mr. Gill, desired a friend of his to invite him to come up, and preach to them; which he did, in the months of April and May, the same year, and then returned into the country.

About two months after, the church at Horsly-down requested his return. He complied, and preached to them till the beginning of September following. On Thursday evening, the 10th of that month, the church having been duly convened, it was put to the vote, '*Whether they should, on the next Lord's Day evening, proceed to the election of Mr. Gill' to the pastoral office* — '*the question was carried in the affirmative by the whole except twelve or thirteen persons.*'

On the Lord's Day evening the same question '*passed in the affirmative by a very great majority.*' On the following Lord's Day, September the 20th, he accepted the call. But as trouble and opposition now began, and much time was lost in obtaining the old meeting-house, a lease of which at length was secured for the term of forty years, he was not ordained till March 22, 1720, the day appointed for the solemn transaction. The early part of the meeting being intended chiefly for the members and serious hearers, they spent some time in prayer among themselves, and, when they had sung an hymn, paused.

This was a pleasant preparation for the more public work before them. Accordingly, as soon as the pastors of the churches, who had been invited to be present on the occasion, came in, the Reverend Mr. John Skepp, author of that valuable book, entitled *Divine Energy*, proposed several questions to the church; which were answered by Mr. Thomas Crosby, a deacon, afterwards author of *The History of the Baptists*; who stated, in the course of what he said, that on the day which had previously been appointed by the church to proceed to the election of a pastor, '*Mr. Gill was chosen by a very great majority.*'

The Reverend Messrs. Matthews and Ridgeway now prayed, when the Reverend Mr. Noble desired the members of the church to recognize their choice of Mr. Gill to the pastoral office. This done, he requested Mr. Gill to confirm his acceptance of the call; which he did with a full and solemn declaration. The Reverend Mr. Curtis, and the aged and Reverend Mr. Mark Key, then pastor of the church near Devonshire-square, were appointed to take the lead in the distinctive part of ordination — and the excellent man '*was ordained by laying on of hands.*' Three brethren also were immediately '*ordained and set apart*' to the office of deacons, '*Mr.*

*Gill joining with the other elders in the imposition of hands.* Mr. Noble then went into the pulpit, and delivered an exhortation to the pastor and deacons from Acts 20:28.

*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood.*

Mr. Skepp now addressed the church from Hebrews 13:17.

*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, etc.*

The church-records say that the sermons were suitable to the work of the day, and excellent. Mr. Gill then went up and called on the Lord; and after the assembly had sung the 133d Psalm he dismissed the assembly, with one of the apostolical benedictions.

The substance of the preceding pages is taken from the church-book belonging to Dr. Gill's congregation, and from an ancient *Manuscript* volume in the possession of the Doctor's successor. But the *Confession of Faith*, as such, is not recorded in either; nor could it reasonably have been expected in them. The substance, however, of his creed, at the time, may be seen in the *Declaration of Faith and Practice*, which he drew up soon after for his people, or else modified for them, perhaps, from his personal confession.

This is inserted in his own hand-writing, in the church-book, instead of the *Church Covenant*, printed in 1697 by one of his predecessors, the Reverend Benjamin Keach; which paper, at that time, was assented to by each member introductoryly to communion, as the *Declaration*, written by Dr. Gill, was afterwards, and is at this time. Apprehending that this explicit document may not be unacceptable in our Memoir, it is here given from the church-book, and will serve to show how this eminent servant of Christ, from the beginning, united faith and practice together; in which also the people, who continued in his communion, were cordially one with him.

A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ at  
*Horsly-down, under the Pastoral Care of MY. John Gill, ,Sic.*

Having been enabled, through divine grace, to give up ourselves to the Lord, and likewise to one another by the will of God; we account it a duty incumbent upon us to make a declaration of our faith and practice, to the honor of Christ, and the glory of his name; knowing, that as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation — our declaration is as follows: —

- We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
- We believe that there is but one only living and true God; that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are equal in nature, power, and glory; and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are as truly and as properly God as the Father.
- We believe that, before the world began, God did elect a certain number of men unto everlasting salvation, *whom he did predestinate to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, of his own free grace, and according to the good pleasure of his will:* and that, in pursuance of this gracious design, he did contrive and make a covenant of grace and peace with his Son Jesus Christ, on the behalf of those persons, wherein a Savior was appointed, and all spiritual blessings provided for them; as also that their persons, with all their grace and glory, were put into the hands of Christ, and made his care and charge.
- We believe that God created the first man, Adam, after his own image, and in His likeness; an upright, holy, and innocent creature, capable of serving and glorifying him; but, he sinning, all his posterity sinned in him, and came short of the glory of God: the guilt of whose sin is imputed, and a corrupt nature derived, to all his offspring, descending from him by ordinary and natural generation: that they are by their first birth carnal and unclean, averse to all that is good, incapable of doing any, and prone to every sin; and are also by nature children of wrath, and under a sentence of condemnation, and so are subject not only to a corporal death, and involved in a moral one, commonly called spiritual, but are also liable to an eternal death, as considered in the first Adam, fallen and sinners; from all which there is no deliverance but by Christ, the second Adam.
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the new covenant, and he, having engaged to be the surety of his people, did, in the fullness of time, really assume human nature, and not before, neither in whole nor in part; his human soul, being a creature, existed not from eternity, but was created and formed in his body by him that forms the spirit of man within him, when that was conceived in the womb of the virgin; and so his human nature consists of a true body and a reasonable soul; both which, together, and at once, the Son of God assumed into union with his divine Person, when made of a woman, and not before; in which nature he really suffered and died as their substitute, in their room and stead, whereby he made all that satisfaction for their sins, which the law and justice of God could require, as well as made way for all those blessings, which are needful for them both for time and eternity.
- We believe that that eternal redemption which Christ has obtained, by the shedding of his blood, is special and particular, that is to say, that it was only intentionally designed for the elect of God, and sheep of Christ, who only share the special and peculiar blessings of it.
- We believe that the justification of God's elect is only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, without the consideration of any works of righteousness done by them; and that the full and free pardon of all their sins and transgressions, past, present, and to come, is only through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of his grace.

- We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith, is not an act of man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God.
- We believe that all those who are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Spirit, shall certainly and finally persevere, so that not one of them shall ever perish, but shall have everlasting life.
- We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; and that Christ will come a second time to judge both quick and dead, when he will take vengeance on the wicked, and introduce his own people into his kingdom and glory, where they shall be for ever with him.
- We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until his second coming; and that the former is absolutely requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those only are to be admitted into the communion of the church, and to participate of all ordinances in it, who upon profession of their faith, have been baptized by immersion, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
- We also believe that singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, vocally, is an ordinance of the Gospel to be performed by believers; but that as to time, place, and manner, every one ought to be left to their liberty in using it. Now all, and each of these doctrines and ordinances, we look upon ourselves under the greatest obligations to embrace, maintain, and defend; believing it to be our duty to stand fast, in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.
- And whereas we are very sensible, that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, ought to be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, we judge it our incumbent duty to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, to exercise a conscience void of offense towards God and men, by living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.
- And as to our regards to each other, in our church-communion, we esteem it our duty to walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love: to watch over each other's conversation; to stir up one another to love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to his revealed will; and, when the case requires, to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another, according to the rules of the Gospel.
- Moreover, we think ourselves obliged to sympathize with each other, in all conditions, both inward and outward, which God, in his providence, may bring us into; as also to bear with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities, and particularly to pray for one another, and that the Gospel and the ordinances thereof might be blessed to the edification and comfort of each other's souls, and for the gathering in of others to Christ, besides those who are already gathered — all which duties we desire to be found in the performance of, through the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, whilst we both admire and adore the grace which has given us a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

This form of sound words, containing the sub-stance of his early creed, he maintained, without deviation, to the very end of his days; and few are the formulas which have at any time been more closely united with *duty*. The term and the thing are remarkable, in this confession — and no man was more fond of either in their proper place, and fairly understood. Mr. Gill's '*preaching had been very acceptable from the beginning,*' and his '*auditory became so numerous, that the place of worship, though a large one, could hardly contain them.*' And now being settled, '*his people were very zealous in manifesting their affections towards him, and, to the utmost of their abilities, raised him a suitable maintenance.*'

**1723** — In the early part of life he was subject to frequent fevers, and often to fainting fits, which have come upon him whilst engaged in his public work. And, when he was between twenty-five and twenty-six years of age, an hectic fever, and other disorders of body, greatly reduced him, and threatened his life: but means for the restoration of his health were blessed of God, as he had much work for him to do in his church, and to promote the general interests of religion.

**1724** — He was now twenty-six years of age, when he began his Exposition of the *Book of Solomon's Song*; which was delivered on Lord's Day mornings, to the church under his care, in one hundred and twenty-two sermons, until the whole was finished. This year he published a sermon on the death of Mr. John Smith, a deacon of his church, from Romans 5:20,21, which was the first thing printed by him. And another Sermon the following year, entitled, *The Urim and Thummim found with Christ*, from Deuteronomy 33:8.

**1726** — A pamphlet was published, called, *The Manner of baptizing with water, cleared up from the Word of God and right Reason, etc.* written dialogue-wise; the author of which afterwards appears to have been Mr. Matthias Maurice, an Independent minister, at Rowel, in Northampton-shire. The Baptists in those parts, and especially at Kettering, two computed miles from Rowel, thought themselves struck at by this piece; and therefore Sent it up to Mr. Gill, that he might answer it. He accordingly soon gratified them, by publishing a piece called, *The ancient mode of Baptism by Immersion, etc.* to which Mr. Maurice replied, in a pamphlet published in 1727, and which was answered, the same year, by Mr. Gill, in a tract, called, *A Defence of the ancient Mode, etc.* One Cogan, an apothecary, and a member of Mr. Maurice's church, wrote some remarks on Mr. Gill's rejoinder, in a most violent and defamatory manner, which carried its own confutation with it. Cogan himself, it seems, was afterwards ashamed, and repented, of his having written it. Mr. Maurice sent several of his pamphlets into North America; and the Baptists there, hearing of Mr. Gill's answer, wrote for some of them; and the remaining part of the impression was sent over, at the expense of the Baptist fund. On account of this controversy, Mr. Gill received from Tilbury-fort, in Essex, a very spirited anonymous letter, animating him to continue in it, and not to be intimidated by his puny adversary; concluding with these lines: —

*Stennett, at first his furious foe did meet,  
Cleanly compell'd him to a swift retreat:  
Next powerful Gale, by mighty blast made fall  
The church's Dagon, the gigantic Wall:*

*May you with like success be victor still,  
And give your rude antagonist his fill,  
To see that Gale is yet alive in Gill.*

1727 — Mr. Gill finished his Exposition of the Song of Solomon this year; when the church, as well as many others of his hearers, to whom he had delivered it from the pulpit, most earnestly pressed him to make it public. To their solicitations he at length yielded, though reluctantly. But his principal inducement to comply was a desire of contributing what he could to vindicate the authority and credit of this part of the sacred writings; which has not only been ridiculed by Deists, but called in question by some pretended friends of divine revelation.

The year before he entered upon this exposition, a pamphlet was published by Mr. Whiston, called, *A Supplement to Mr. Whiston's late Essay towards restoring the true Text of the Old Testament*, 8vo. 1723, in which he endeavors to discredit the authority of the *Book of Solomon's Song*, as a spurious book, and not fit to stand in the canon of Scripture. His objections against the authority of it are answered by Mr. Gill, in his Introduction to this Exposition, or rather in his exposition of the first verse of the book, which contains the title of it.

Whether Mr. Whiston ever saw, this work, is not certain; it seems as if he had not by a very strange passage in the *Memoirs of his own Life and Writings*, published by himself, part 2, p. 575, which shews his obstinate and inveterate opposition to this part of divine inspiration, to the last: his words are these:

*“About August this year [1748] I was informed of one Dr. Gill, a particular or Calvinist Baptist, of whose skill in the Oriental languages I had heard a great character: so I had a mind to hear him preach: but being informed that he had written a folio book on the Canticles, I declined to go and hear him.”*

What a sublime reason is here!

The first edition of Mr. Gill's Exposition of the Song of Solomon was published in folio, in 1728, with a translation of the Chaldee Paraphrase, or Targum of that book, and notes on the same. In 1751 a new edition of it appeared in quarto, more correct, and with some additions. His pious, learned, and ingenious friend, the Reverend Mr. Hervey, in his *Theron and Aspasio*, volume 3. p. 145, edition 5, was pleased to give this high encomium of the work: —

*“It has such a copious vein of sanctified invention running through it, and is interspersed with such a variety of delicate and brilliant images, as cannot but highly entertain a curious mind. It presents us also with such rich and charming displays of the glory of Christ's person, the freeness of his grace to sinners, and the tenderness of his love to the church, as cannot but administer the most exquisite delight to the believing soul. Considered in both these views, I think the work resembles the paradisaical garden described by MILTON, in which*



*'Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue  
"Appeared, with gay enamell'd colors mix'd.'*

The publication of this Exposition served very much to make Mr. Gill known, and to recommend him to the esteem of spiritual persons, who love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity; and, it is thought that no one effort of his pen has been more useful to devotional Christians than this volume. Dr. Owen on the Person of Christ, referring to the Canticles, says,

*"Blessed is he who understands the sayings of that book,  
and hath the experience of them in his heart."*

The third edition of this Exposition was published in 1767, with many additions. And, having lately met with an objection or two respecting the antiquity and authority of the book itself, he thought it necessary to consider and remove them. He also gave a summary of the contents of each chapter, which was wanting in the former editions. And though he had, in many parts of the work, attended to the literal sense of the passages, yet not so frequently as in his shorter notes on this book, published in his Exposition of the whole Bible. He therefore inserted, from thence, many things relating to the literal sense, adding numerous others, which served greatly to enrich this edition; to shew the propriety of the allusions, figures, and metaphors, used throughout the whole; and to illustrate and confirm the spiritual meaning of this sublime and mysterious book. But he left out at the end of this edition the *Targum* or *Chaldee* paraphrase, with his notes thereon, which were in the former copies, *'they being,'* as he himself expresses it, *'of little use and benefit, especially to common readers.'* The fourth edition of this work was printed in 1776.

In 1728, he also published a treatise in octavo, concerning *The Prophecies of the Old Testament* respecting the Messiah, occasioned by a book published in 1724, called *A Discourse of the Grounds of the Christian Religion, etc.* well known to be written by Anthony Collins, Esq., a Deistical writer. Many answers were given to one part or other of this production, to which the author of it replied, in another book, called, *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy*, considered, etc. published in 1727, which was chiefly pointed at Dr. Edward Chandler, Bishop of Durham, who had written against the former: it was to this latter book, chiefly, Mr. Gill made answer. He was led to it by the ill-directed zeal of a certain gentleman, who asserted in conversation, that no Calvinist could write in this controversy to any advantage. Some of Mr. Gill's friends being present, thought of him; and took an opportunity of importuning him to turn his attention to the subject.

Upon which he preached a course of sermons on the prophecies relating to the Messiah, in a regular order, suited to the history of the life of Jesus; and then made extracts out of them, which he published, entitled, *The Prophecies of the Old Testament, respecting the Messiah, considered and proved to be literally fulfilled in Jesus.* This answer to the above work met the approbation of some men of learning and judgment, and even of the very person above mentioned, whose assertion was the occasion of it. And it sufficiently reprobates the mistaken notion that the character of the Messiah cannot be established from the prophecies of the Old

Testament, without a mystical and allegorical sense of them — maintaining that they are to be understood in their first, literal, and obvious sense concerning our Redeemer.

The ministry of Mr. Gill being acceptable not only to his own people, but likewise to many in other churches of different denominations, several gentlemen proposed among themselves to set up a week-day lecture, that they might have the opportunity of hearing him. Accordingly they met together, and, forming themselves into a society, agreed to have a lecture on Wednesday evenings in Great Eastcheap; and set on foot a subscription to support it. Upon their invitation, Mr. Gill undertook the lectureship, and continued in it with great constancy, applause and usefulness; with very little interruption for want of health. He opened it in the year 1729, with a discourse or two on Psalm 71:16.

*“I will go in the strength of the Lord God;  
I will make mention of  
thy righteousness, even of thine only.”*

He selected those words, partly to shew that he undertook the service of the lecture, not in his own strength, but in the strength of Christ, expecting the assistance of his Spirit and grace: and partly to shew that his resolutions were to preach that great and glorious doctrine of a sinner’s free justification before God, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, with all others connected therewith — a doctrine which Luther rightly denominated “*the article by which the church stands or falls*”; and which has since been called the center-arch of that bridge by which we pass out of time into a blissful eternity. And, through divine grace, he was enabled to abide by his resolutions, to the edification of many. This lecture was productive not only of many of his single Annual Sermons, on various subjects, but of whole Treatises: as on the Trinity, — Justification, — the first and second part of the Cause of God and Truth, — and of several of his *Commentaries* on some of the books, both of the Old and New Testament.

**1730** — About this time the hearts of many were trembling for the ark of God. They apprehended that error never raged with greater violence, and that lukewarmness never discovered itself more generally.

*‘The sufficiency of the light of nature was warmly contended for,  
by such as did not profess to reject revelation; and the doctrines of  
religion were given up, one after another, by some who yet  
declared that the Bible was their religion.’*

It was therefore thought high time for the friends of truth to bear their testimony against the errors of the day, not by a controversy with proper deists, but by stating the great doctrines of scripture, in opposition to *‘erroneous professors of Christianity.’*

With this view a number of gentlemen, chiefly of the independent denomination, thought fit to set up a temporary lecture for one winter and spring season; and chose nine ministers to preach on some of the most important doctrines of the divine word, each having his subject allotted to him. The ministers were, Messrs. Robert Bragge, Thomas Bradbury, John Hurrion,

Thomas Hall, Peter Goodwill, John Sladen, Abraham Taylor, Samuel Wilson, and John Gill. The first seven were In-dependents, the two last Baptists.

Having accepted the invitation, the lecture was begun November 12, 1730, at the meeting-house in Lime-street, where the Reverend Mr. Bragge then stately preached, and was continued weekly, till April 8th, 1731. The ministers preached two discourses each, on the subject respectively assigned them: and when they had finished the course the gentlemen unanimously desired the sermons might be printed; as they accordingly were, in two volumes, 8vo. in 1732. Mr. Gill's subject was The Resurrection of the Dead. His two sermons upon it have since been printed separately.

An displeasing incident happened on the printing the above volumes. Messrs. Taylor, Gill, and one or two more of the lecturers, agreed to read their sermons in private concert with each other, before they were printed: with a view to a mutual friendly assistance, in the correction and improvement of them as necessity might require. Now as Mr. Gill had observed some passages in Mr. Taylor's sermons, when delivered from the pulpit, which he thought injurious to truth, and calculated to offend many worthy persons; he determined, when the sermons should be read at this private and friendly meeting, to point out in the kindest and most respectful manner, such passages as he wished to see softened or expunged, proposing to give his reasons; but when the sermons were read those passages, to the great pleasure and satisfaction of Mr. Gill, did not appear.

Hence he supposed that Mr. Taylor had seen reason in his own mind to strike them out. But, when the volumes were published Mr. Gill was much surprised to find that these passages yet stood, and, as he, thought, with additional keenness and severity. This obliged him to send Mr. Taylor a printed letter on *the doctrine of God's everlasting love to his elect, their eternal union with Christ*, and on other things; some of which Mr. Taylor had reproached with great vehemence. This letter was generally considered to have been written with great respect, temper and candor without any undue heat or unbecoming reflections. Nevertheless, this, together with a treatise on *Justification*, which Mr. Gill had published a little before, containing the substance of certain sermons, preached at his evening lecture, and which the supporters of it desired might be printed, induced some persons to raise an hideous outcry of Antinomianism against him. The only thing in it objected to was, what is said concerning the date of justification: and which yet was said in agreement with some of the best and most learned Divines, whose testimonies were produced by Mr. Gill in favor of his sentiments.

Mr. Taylor had expressly called the doctrine of eternal union with Christ an *immoral conceit*, and those ministers who had heretofore preached it, *ignorant enthusiastic preachers*; and, through them, struck at others who were his contemporaries. Mr. Gill thought his opponent might well have spared this severe reflection, for the sake of many eminent characters, who were as far from any just charge of *ignorance* and *enthusiasm*, as they were from being the patrons of *immoral conceits*. He instances Dr. Goodwin, who frequently speaks of an election union, a representative one, which the elect have in Christ, before the foundation of the world; representing union to Christ as antecedent to the gift of the Spirit, and before faith, or any grace is implanted in the heart. He next produces the great and immortal *Witsius*, who says, *'the elect are united to Christ — In the eternal decree of God —*

- By the union of the eternal compact, in which Christ was constituted, by the Father, the head of all those who are to be saved —
- By a true and real union, but which on their part is only passive, they are united to Christ when the Spirit of Christ first lays hold on them, and infuses a principle of new life —

moreover, since faith is an act flowing from a principle of spiritual life, it is plain that it may be said, in a sound sense, *that an elect man may BE TRULY and REALLY united to Christ, BEFORE actual faith.* ‘So far Witsius, who allows not only an union to Christ in God’s eternal purpose, but a federal union with him from eternity, as the head of the elect.

Now Mr. Gill thought, for the sake of *these* men and others, that Mr. Taylor might have spared the charge of *ignorance* and enthusiasm; but if not for their sake, yet surely for the sake of his own FATHER, Mr. Richard Taylor, who asserts an *eternal representative union with Christ*, and that in a book of which the Son himself was the editor. Mr. Abraham Taylor must surely have felt this, as a long quotation was given from the father’s treatise itself, at the end of which Mr. Gill adds —

*‘You see that all wise and thoughtful men do not abhor eternal union, as an immoral conceit. But if you say that these men plead for a real and actual union by faith, you cannot deny that they also assert an union before faith, yea, in some sense, an eternal union.’*

It deserves to be mentioned also, that in the printed letter addressed to Mr. Taylor, Mr. Gill had employed about twelve octavo pages, in stating his opinion concerning the disputed subject, Whether good works are necessary to salvation. He affirmed, that good works, though they are of vast importance in their proper place, have no concern, as CAUSES of salvation; it being declared in Scripture that God ‘hath saved and called his people, with an holy calling, *not according to their works*, but according to his purpose and grace, given them in Christ Jesus before the world began.’

- That they are not the impulsive causes of salvation, election being of *grace*, *but if it be of works, then is it no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work.* That they are not the *efficient procuring*, or *meritorious* causes of salvation, as they are imperfect in the best of men, and destitute of the requisites which constitute merit. — That they are not *co-efficient* causes or *co-causes* of salvation with Christ, who will not admit of any rivalry in this matter, *his own arm having brought salvation.* — That good works are not conditions of salvation, without which persons cannot be saved; which he thought evident from the instances of the thief upon the cross, of infants dying in their infancy, and of such persons whom God calls upon their death-beds, who live not to perform good works. And then, not being necessary as CAUSES of salvation, he proceeded to show they were not necessary as MEANS.

Not as the means of *procuring* salvation, for that is procured by Christ alone, without them; nor the means of *applying* it in regeneration; because, properly speaking, before regeneration no good works are done by the sons of men. He then turns the medal, and shows, *at some length*, as he does in numerous parts of his works besides, in what sense good works *are* necessary. They are necessary, *on the account of God*, who has commanded them. We are under his law as creatures, and ought to do his will; and as new creatures are under greater obligations *still*.

- *On the account of ourselves*, as they evidence the truth of our faith to the world, and discover to ourselves the certainty of our election and vocation.
- *On the account of our neighbors*, whom we are to love as ourselves, and who are helped and profited by the good works of righteous men.
- *On the account of the enemies of religion*, silencing the ignorance of foolish men, and shaming those who reproach the Gospel of Christ as a licentious doctrine. These are the ‘necessary uses,’ for which believers ‘are to maintain good works,’ and not, according to the Papists and Socinians, to merit salvation by them. Now, Mr. Gill having so explicitly stated his views of the subject, it was exceedingly unhappy that, six years after this, Mr. Taylor not only resumed the controversy, which he certainly had a right to do at any time, but employed such opprobrious terms as are seldom used, and never justifiable, between respectable antagonists,
- and such these are acknowledged to have been. Mr. Taylor having now been made Doctor in Divinity, and placed at the head of an academy, *published An Address to young Students in Divinity*; in which he cautioned them against certain positions as leading to Antinomianism. This performance Mr. Gill considered as having several acrimonious flings at different good men, and their writings, and particularly at himself, and at a section of his concerning good works, in the printed letter mentioned before. Dr. Taylor, in his *Address*, very unhandsomely, and with an illiberal temper, as it appeared to Mr. Gill, called the particular tenet in question, ‘a filthy dream, an extravagant position, a dangerous tenet, big with absurdity, a rude ignorant horrible blasphemy, invented by one of the vilest and lewdest heretics; and, to close all, an *Antinomian* paradox.’ This induced Mr. Gill, in addition to all he had written before, to publish a small treatise concerning *The Necessity of good Works to Salvation*; in which, he yet more fully, if possible, stated, explained, and defended his views of the subject.

Towards the close of this pamphlet, being warmed with a quick sensibility of the reviling language used by his adversary, whom he considered as insolent, and feeling confident in the goodness of his cause, some lines were forced from him in self-vindication, which sufficiently discovered enough of the same temporary disposition, which he considered as so very censurable in Dr. Taylor’s *Address*.

The truth seems to be, that, towards the termination of the dispute, both the good men, forgetting that disputants are to use soft words and hard arguments, employed intemperate language; which, it is very probable, each afterwards lamented. Mr. Gill, it is *certain*, possessed magnanimity enough to acknowledge, in a following piece, that he had '*said some things in the heat of controversy, which, though they were consistent with truth, were not agreeable to his natural inclination.*'

However, he firmly stood his ground, resolved never to put off his armor till he was to put on his shroud. For, to use his own words, he 'had chosen to suffer reproach, the loss of good name and reputation, to forego popularity, *wealth*, and friends, yea, to be traduced as an *Antinomian*, rather than to drop, or conceal, any one branch of truth, respecting Christ and free grace.' He was quite in the spirit of this resolution, at the time to which the following anecdote relates, here stated as it was told by the Reverend John Ryland, senior, to the Reverend Mr. Toplady. '*When Dr. Gill first wrote against Dr. Abraham Taylor, some of the friends of the latter called on the former, and dissuaded him from going on; urging, among other things, that Gill would lose the esteem, and, of course, the subscriptions of some wealthy persons, who were Taylor's friends.*

*'Don't tell me of losing, said Gill; I value nothing, in comparison of  
Gospel truths. I AM NOT AFRAID TO BE POOR.'*

And there is no reason to believe that he feared poverty, either at this time, or to the end of his days — of this his family had every pleasing proof — nor was he ever called to endure it.

In 1731, he published his *Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity*, which was the substance of several discourses delivered on that subject at his Wednesday evening lecture, and published at the request of the society. This was occasioned by the progress of Sabellianism among some of the Baptist churches at that time; and it is considered a master-piece on the subject. Nor did our champion ever vary from his point. Hence, in the decline of life, he had the honor of leaving the following record concerning the publication here announced —

*'My treatise on the Trinity was written near forty years ago, and when I was a young man. And had I now departed from some words and phrases, I then used, it need not, after such a distance of time, be wondered at. But so far from it, that upon a late revival of the piece, I see no reason to retract any thing I have written, either as to sense or expressions; save only, in a passage or two of Scripture, which then did not stand so clear in my mind, as proofs of the eternal generation of the Son of God. But upon a more mature consideration of them, I am inclined to think otherwise, and have accordingly altered my sense of them; which alteration, as it is no ways inconsistent with the doctrine as before held by me, so it serves but the more strongly to confirm it.'*

A society of young men, who kept up an exercise of prayer, on Lord's-Day mornings, at Mr. Gill's meeting-house at Horsly-down, desired him to preach a sermon to them, December 25, 1732, which he did, on the subject of *Prayer*: and, in the year following, on the same day of the month, he preached another, to the same society, on *singing of Psalms*; both sermons were from 1 Corinthians 14:15. These discourses were successively printed at their request, and both

were afterwards reprinted together. That upon singing, some years after the first publication of it, fell into the hands of Mr. Solomon Lowe, a learned and celebrated Grammarian of Hammer-smith; who wrote Mr. Gill a letter upon it, dated September, 1747, in which he informs him,

*'he took pleasure, at his vacant hours, to read every thing that is useful, in order to extract the quintessence of its flowers for the Supplement to Chambers' Cyclopaedia;'*

to the carrying on of which work, he was nominated, to the proprietors, as the properest person, by Mr. Chambers himself, a little before his death, and had the offer of it, which he declined because of his stated business. However, having a great regard to that work, Mr. Lowe was willing to help it forward to the best of his power: and, meeting with the above discourse on singing, he extracted from it for the article on Psalmody; and was pleased to give the following commendation of it:

*'I find there is no dealing with you, as with the generality of writers. The aforementioned piece is all quintessence; so that, instead of extracting, I have been obliged to copy the greatest part of it, to do justice to the article of Psalmody, and know not where to find any hints for the improvement of it.'*

But, Mr. Lowe dying quickly after, it does not appear that any extract from Mr. Gill's sermon was introduced into the Supplement.

About the year 1733, or 1784, *Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points* was reprinting. It was judged to be a master-piece on the subject in the English tongue; and extolled as unanswerable; and almost every opponent of the Calvinists asked, Why do you not answer Dr. Whitby? Induced hereby, Mr. Gill determined to give it another reading, and finding himself inclined to answer it, he entered on the work; and in 1735, and the three following years, he published, in separate parts, *The Cause of God and Truth*, in four volumes, octavo.

- Part *the first* is an *Examination* of the principal passages of Scripture made use of by the Arminians in favor of their scheme; particularly by Dr. Whitby, in his *Discourse on the Five Points*: Here, the arguments founded on the said passages of Scripture, are answered; the objections taken from them removed, and the genuine sense of them given.
- Part the second contains a *Vindication* of the principal passages of Scripture, and the argument founded upon them, in favor of the doctrines of eternal election, particular redemption, the efficacy of God's grace, and the impotence of man's will in conversion; and the final perseverance of the saints; from the exceptions of the Arminians; particularly Dr. Whitby.
- Part the *third* is a *Confutation* of the arguments from reason, used by the Arminians; and particularly by Dr. Whitby, *against* the above doctrines; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favor of them. From whence it appears that they

are no more inharmonious with right reason than they are with divine *revelation*, which the pretended rationalists of our day shamefully neglect; pushing forward, as if impatient to relinquish the sacred volume, in favor of Deism. But '*to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*' This part also considers, Whether the Calvinistic doctrines bear any likeness to the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes, and the stoic philosophers, concerning liberty, necessity, and fate. To which is added, a defense of the objections to the universal scheme, which are taken from the prescience and providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

- Part the *fourth* contains the Judgment of the ancient Christian church, or the sense of *the Christian writers* of the first four centuries after Christ, and before Austin, concerning predestination, redemption, original sin, free will, efficacious grace, the perseverance of the saints, and the case of the Heathens. Wherein also are considered, the testimonies in favor of the universal scheme, produced by Gerardus Vossius, Monsieur Daille, and Dr. Whitby. Our indefatigable author instituted this inquiry into the opinion of the early fathers, not from any apprehension that the faith of Christians should stand upon the testimony of men; for, had these writers been entirely on the contrary side, truth would not have been a whit less truth; but he performed the laborious service '*to show that the Arminians have no great reason to boast of antiquity on their side:*' and, after some time had elapsed, he flattered himself that 'his point was gained.'

This last part of the work was nibbled at by one Heywood, a pert man who translated Dr. Whitby's treatise on Original Sin, in the introduction to which he brings several impertinent charges against Mr. Gill respecting his translation and sense of some passages in the ancients. The first instance of the three which he produces of great ignorance in translating, is that Mr. Gill renders *antiqua serpentis plaga*, the old plague of the serpent. Heywood, in the plenitude of his wisdom, rendered *plaga serpentis*, the disease of the serpent.

The other instances are of a similar description, and could have been expected only from a mere sciolist, and not from any man of erudition. Mr. Gill replied in a *Postscript* to his Answer to the Second Part of the Birmingham Dialogue Writer, 1739, consisting of about eight octavo pages. Heywood, upon this, published a pamphlet, called, *A Defence of the Introduction, etc.* full of cavils, calumnies, and defamations, which was answered by Mr. Gill, in a tract, entitled, *A Vindication of the Cause of God and Truth*, Part the Fourth, *relating to the sense of the ancient Christian writers, from the cavils, calumnies, and defamations of Mr. Henry Heywood.* In this piece more pains seem to have been taken than such an opponent deserved.

This elaborate work, *The Cause of God, etc.* issued from the press at a time when the nation was generally alarmed with the growth of Popery; and several learned men were employed in preaching against some of its distinguishing tenets: but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes, contrary to divine revelation, which were now propagated. Of a similar opinion were our fathers, in the last century, who therefore joined these errors and Popery together among their religious grievances.



“*And, indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the  
axe should be laid to the root of the tree Arminianism and  
Pelagianism, which are the very life and soul of Popery.*”

At the close of the *fourth* part of the work is given a very interesting table of the *ancient writers* cited in the *fourth part*, with the *editions* of their works which are used in it. This will be of considerable utility to those readers who wish to examine any particular quotations our author has made from them, in the various parts of his writings. And had the table been extended, so as to include the editions of all the principal works to which he has referred, it could not but have been highly acceptable to the first scholars, some of whom consult his labors, chiefly under the consideration of his being a *learned* Divine.

This table, if not to be found in every edition of *The Cause of God and Truth*, is given in the *third*, which is a quarto one, page the 650th, printed in 1772, and, as we learn from the title, *corrected and improved, by the Author* — which, perhaps, is announced in the second edition also. Here it is proper to note, that the corrections in this work, which the invaluable author of it made, after his publication of the *first* edition, relate chiefly, it is supposed, to the dispute concerning what has been commonly called the *Modern Question*; in other words, Whether it is the duty of unconverted men, who are favored with the sacred Scriptures, to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls?

Some of the best of men, about the year 1707, and after 1730, took different sides on this question; as men, equal in learning and piety to each other, have since done. The controversy has been supposed very much to turn on the definition which should be given of *believing*, or, of believing in Christ. Some of those who have maintained the *high* side of the question, as it is termed, seem to have thought, that special faith is no other than a sinner’s personal assurance that Christ died for him in particular, and is unquestionably his, with all the blessings of his mediation. This faith, say they, is not the duty of any unconverted person. True, reply the people on the low side of the question, we maintain this as much as you, and assert that it is not the duty of any one, in a state of unregeneracy, so to believe; but, they add, you misapprehend our statement, and also what we conceive to be the meaning of Scripture when *believing in Christ* is mentioned.

To believe in Christ, is not for the sinner to assure himself that Christ died for him in particular, which every *Arminian* who maintains universal redemption must certainly do, though multitudes of such give demonstrable evidence that they have not the faith connected with salvation; but to *believe in him*, is to give such a practical credit to the Scriptural testimony concerning Christ as is connected with our personal application to him that he may save us.

Thus, to believe in Christ, say they, is the duty of all whose heart the Gospel report concerning him; and if any, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, according to the divine testimony, as sinners helpless and entirely lost in themselves, are enabled in this manner to apply to him, they *shall be saved*. Here it is observable that neither of the parties, in any respect, denied the doctrine of efficacious grace, as absolutely necessary to regeneration and faith; nor has either maintained, or implied, that a fallen ruined creature is capable, either more or less, of restoring the divine image to himself; or of possessing his own soul with evangelical faith.

But both have unequivocally asserted, that every man who has descended from Adam by ordinary generation, is *dead in trespasses and sins*, — so ‘involved in a *moral* death, commonly called *spiritual*,’ that no *POWER* but the almighty energy which raised the Savior himself from the grave can effectually quicken one soul; nor any thing short of the *exceeding abundant GRACE* which was displayed in the conversion of Saul, accompanied with *FAITH and love in Christ Jesus*, can ever make an individual sinner a partaker of that divine nature, by which he is enabled to believe to the saving of the soul.

But then capable judges, who were temperate, and by no means the partisans of either side, have expressed it as their opinion, in which, perhaps, they have been correct, that had some of the gentlemen in this controversy but carried to the full length such of their own views which their opponents admired, and considered as fundamental to a fair statement and decision on the subject; *both* sides agreeing in a cardinal point, and pursuing it to its legitimate consequences, might certainly have approximated considerably nearer to each other, if they had not entirely settled and relinquished the dispute. The one point to which those refer who have so temperately observed both sides, is the essential difference that *subsists* between a *natural* and a moral inability of doing what is spiritually and evangelically good in the sight of God.

This distinction our Author understood as clearly as ally of his contemporaries; and maintains in his Cause of God and Truth, and elsewhere, that the inability of man is of the latter description, viz. of a moral kind, and relates eminently to the will — and therefore is censurable, and sinful. And thus he wrote, in different places, on John 5:40.

“*Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*”

‘*A spiritual coming to Christ, or a coming to him by faith, is here meant,*’ — but ‘*these men,*’ the Jews, ‘*had no inclination, desire, or will to come to him, any more than power, which is an argument against and not for the free will of man, unless it be to that which is evil.*’ But, ‘*though man lies under such a disability [that is, a moral one,] and has neither power nor will of himself to come to Christ for life; yet his not coming to Christ, when revealed in the external ministry of the Gospel, as God’s way of salvation, is criminal and blameworthy; since the disability and perverseness of his will are not owing to any decree of God, but to the corruption and vitiosity of his nature through sin. And therefore, since this vitiosity of nature is blameworthy, that which follows upon it, and is the effect of it [viz. Not coming to Christ], must be so too.*’

Here Friendship and Fidelity embrace each other, while we proceed to observe, that this quotation, if we mistake not, contains the substance of what the patrons of the low side of the modern question plead for, when they maintain that it is the duty of men to believe with the heart the divine testimony concerning our Lord, so as to apply to him for life and salvation. And summarily thus they write — If it be *criminal* and *blameworthy* not to come to Christ in a spiritual manner by faith (the ideas given above), then it can be no other than right to come to him, surely say they it cannot be *wrong*: and if it be right in any poor sinner to come to Christ, it is his *duty* to do what is right, whether he is inclined to it or not. These are free observations.

But, in contemplating the life and writings of the renowned John Gill, second to no one in his day, affection cannot be absent, if we protract this section just to add, that, while it will not be easy to name any individual writer who was more universally consistent with himself than the excellent subject of this Memoir, yet it is pretty evident, from his latter writings, that he was more decidedly on the *high* side of the question, we have mentioned, than he had been before it was agitated by Mr. Lewis Wayman and others, probably between the years 1730 and 1740. Though it is certain, from his own declaration, that he had no hand in the early part of this controversy, of which, nevertheless, he had been suspected.

In 1736 was published, by an anonymous writer, a pamphlet, called, *Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme examined, etc.* The author, it is said, was one Job Burt, of Warwick; a man very ill qualified for polemical discussion. But as he pointed chiefly at some of Mr. Gill's writings, respecting the doctrines of God's everlasting love, eternal union, justification, etc. he thought fit to answer it, the same year, in a tract, called *Truth Defended, etc.* The stupidity which Burr manifested in some parts of his piece, the insolence in others, and the ignorance which he displayed through the whole, — the consummate ignorance of the scheme he undertook to expose, induced Mr. Gill to administer to him a little of the wholesome discipline which is so proper in such cases; and which Solomon probably intends, when he recommends *a rod for the fool's back.*

So entirely ignorant was this writer of his subject that he represents those as Supralapsarians, who refuse to pray for the pardon of sin any otherwise than for the manifestation of it to their consciences. 'Strange that this should be reckoned a Supralapsarian point, when pardon of sin supposes sin, and sin supposes the fall, — it is therefore a Sublapsarian, and not a Supralapsarian doctrine.' But he is *quite* certain that the doctrine of eternal justification is *Supralapsarianism*, proceeding upon this false notion, that whatever is thought or said to be done in eternity, must be of this description. Whereas the Sublapsarians themselves allow election to be from eternity, before the foundation of the world, and so before the fall of Adam, though not without the consideration of it. 'For my own part,' says our judicious friend,

*'I must confess I never considered justification from eternity any other than a Sublapsarian doctrine, proceeding upon the suretyship-engagements of Christ, and his future satisfaction and righteousness; upon which footing the Old Testament saints were openly justified, and went to heaven long before the satisfaction was really made, or the justifying righteousness brought in. And, indeed, if the objects of justification are the ungodly, as the Scripture represents them, they must be considered as fallen creatures.'*

This is indubitably fair statement, with which Mr. Gill's account must be accredited. But if it be asked, whether this great Divine himself was a Supralapsarian or a Sublapsarian? the following is the best answer we are prepared to give. It is pretty observable that when he is speaking of the Supralapsarians, who believe that God chose his people in the pure mass of creatureship, without considering them either as fallen or unfallen, he is as clear in his definition of their scheme, as he is respectful to its patrons. Nor is it less observable, in the far greatest parts of his works, his Exposition not excepted, that he so unites God's everlasting love to his people

with their being chosen *in Christ*, before the foundation of the world, that they might in time be holy, as to make it the grand center of the magnificent circle which has in it all the parts of the salvation of the chosen, and all their desire.

Mr. Toplady, who was no incompetent judge, fixing his eye upon this last-mentioned fact, and recollecting the many sermons he had heard Mr. Gill preach, would commonly say, that in the writings of Gill the scale preponderated in favor of Sublapsarianism. But Mr. Gill knew as well as any man, that the Contra-Remonstrants, in Holland, were not all of a mind concerning the object of predestination, yet did not think it worth their while to divide, on that account, Being agreed in the most material points concerning it, *'they agreed to differ, as they should, and not charge one another with unsoundness and heterodoxy, for which there was no reason.'*

Nay, *'some of them were of opinion, that it was not necessary to be decided, whether God in choosing men, considered them as fallen, or as not yet fallen: provided it was but allowed that God in choosing, considered men in an equal state, so that he who is chosen was not considered by God, either of himself, or by his own merit, or by any gracious estimation, more worthy than he who is not chosen.'*

Calvin held that God chose his people in the corrupt mass. Beza, who was co-pastor with him, and his successor in the church of Geneva, preferred their being considered in the pure mass; and yet they lived in great peace and harmony. *'Dr. Twiss the great Supralapsarian,'* confesses that the difference between the two parties was only, a point in logic. And as to our author, there is a section which seems as much as any other, to determine what was his personal opinion respecting the Supra and the Sublapsarian schemes.

*"The difference between them,"* says he, *"lies in the ordering and arranging the decrees of God; and for MY OWN part, I THINK both [schemes] may be taken in. That in the decree of the end, the ultimate end [according to the Supralapsarians], the glory of God, for which he does all things, men might be considered in the divine mind as creable, not yet created and fallen: and that in the decree of the means [according to the Sub-lapsarian plan], which, among other things, takes in the mediation of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit; men might be considered as created, fallen, and sinful, which these things imply. Nor does this suppose separate acts and decrees in God, or any priority and posteriority in them, for in him they are but one and together; but our finite minds are obliged to consider them one after another, not being able to take them in together and at once."*

A new meeting-house being erected by the Baptists, at Birmingham, in Warwickshire; and their interest a little reviving through the preaching of several ministers who went thither and assisted them; the jealousy, it seems, of Mr. Samuel Bourne, a Presbyterian minister of that town, was excited. Hereupon he wrote *A Dialogue between a Baptist and a Churchman*, under the name of a *Consistent Christian*, Part I. This piece was intended to set the Baptist ministers, who preached at Birmingham, in a most ridiculous light. He also fell foul on the doctrines of Christ's divinity, election, original sin, irresistible grace in conversion, imputed righteousness, perseverance in grace, and adult baptism by immersion.

The Baptists in that neighborhood thought it proper that this effusion should be noticed; and, application being made to Mr. Gill, he published a refutation of it in 1737. The author of the Dialogue then wrote a second Part, on the same subjects; taking but tittle notice of what Mr. Gill had writ-ten-not so much as mentioning his name.

To this also he returned an answer in 1739, but had no reply to either of his pieces at that time, except some abusive paragraphs in a newspaper, the St. James's Evening Post, of December 31, 1737. In the first of these paragraphs, Mr. Bourne complains of a false charge of *plagiarism* brought against him, or of stealing what he had written, on the article of election, from Dr. Whitby. But of this Mr. Gill made proof, in a *Postscript* to a Sermon of his, called ***The Doctrine of Grace cleared from the Charge of Licentiousness***, preached December 28, 1737, by placing Dr. Whitby's words and this author's in parallel columns, which occupy six or seven pages in the octavo edition.

It is no pleasure to add, that these pages are entirely omitted in the posthumous edition of ***A Collection of the Sermons and Tracts*** of our author, in *three* volumes, *quarto*, without any single reason assigned for the omission, or any mention of it, either at the end of the Sermon where they originally appeared, or at the close of the *second* part of ***The Answer to the Dialogue Writer***, which might have been thought a proper situation for them, in the new edition. But the omission is certainly to the injury of Mr. Gill, who, in these pages, justified the accusations he brought against his opponent, of having pirated Dr. Whitby's sections, which Mr. Bourne at first denied. But his defense was his conviction. It ought also to be mentioned, that this is not the only omission of consequence, which is chargeable on the said posthumous volumes; acceptable as they were to the public in general: — One instance is noticed before.

**1738** — He published ***Remarks on Mr. Samuel*** (afterwards Dr.) ***Chandler's Sermon preached to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, relating to the moral Nature and Fitness of Things***. The author of this Sermon, not content with asserting that the difference between moral good and evil is certain and immutable, which is readily granted, further asserts, that "*this arises from the nature of things; is strictly and properly eternal; is prior to the will of God, and independent of it; is the invariable and eternal rule of the divine conduct, by which God regulates and determines his own will and conduct to his creatures: the great reason and measure of all his actions towards them, and is the supreme, original, universal, and most perfect rule of action to all reasonable beings whatsoever.*"

Mr. Gill said,

"*if all this is true, one would be tempted to think that this same nature and fitness of things is Deity, and rather deserves the name of God than he whom we so call — but before we fall down and prostrate ourselves before this new Deity, it will be proper first to examine the several magnificent things which are predicated of it.*"

As he proceeds in the discussion, he remarks, "*either this nature and fitness of things is something in God, or something without him; if it is something in him, it must be a perfection of his nature, it must be himself, and therefore ought not to be considered as abstracted from him; if it is something without him, apart from him, which exists 'independent of his will,' that is*

*necessarily; then there must be two necessarily existing beings, that is, two GODS. All moral good takes its rise from him, and the moral perfections of his nature; which, and not the nature of things, are the rule of his will, determinations, and actions. As for things morally evil, which lie in a defect of moral good, are a privation of it, and opposition to it, though they are not of God, nor does he put their evil nature into them, for he cannot be the author of any thing that is sinful; yet these things become so by being contrary to his nature and will. The difference between moral good and evil lies in, and the fitness and un-fitnesses of these things are no other than, the agreement and disagreement of them with the will of God.”*

And Mr. Chandler himself in one place says,

*“that the will of God is not any thing distinct from the everlasting fitnesses of things, but included in them, and a necessary and essential branch of them.”*

On this it was natural for his examiner to reply —

*“If the will of God is not distinct from them, but is included in them, and is a necessary and essential branch of them, then the nature and fitness of things is not without the will of God, is not prior to it, and independent of it.”*

And he afterwards adds,

*“if the original and unalterable fitnesses of things be ‘the most perfect rule of action to all reasonable beings whatsoever,’ we may be led to question whether there be any law binding upon us, — as arising from the will of God. Indeed, we are told, that “the will of God is a real and immutable obligation upon us, to which we should always pay the highest deference!” What! says Mr. Gill, the highest deference? No, that must be paid to the most perfect rule, that rule ‘which regulates and determines the will of God.’ — On this gentleman’s principles, “Sin was wrongly defined by our forefathers,” who say ‘sin is any want of conformity unto and transgression of the law of God;’ and by John, who says, that sin is the transgression of the law; they should have said sin is any want of conformity to or transgression of the nature and fitness of things, which is the unerring rule of God himself, and the most perfect one to all reasonable creatures.”*

Towards the close of this argumentative piece, he says,

*“For my part I have been traduced as an Antinomian, for innocently asserting that the essence of justification [as of eternal election] lies in the will of God — I abhor the thoughts of setting the law of God aside as the rule of walk and conversation; and constantly affirm [according to Scripture] that all who believe in Christ for righteousness should be careful to maintain good works, for necessary uses. But here is a gentleman who talks of something prior to, and independent of the will of God, and antecedent to any law of his, as the supreme and most perfect rule of action; whereby all authority on God’s part, and all obedience on ours, are at once entirely destroyed. One should think, for the future, that not John Gill, but Samuel Chandler, must be reckoned the Antinomian.”*

He subjoins, and with these very remarkable sentences, concludes the pamphlet;

*“I would be far from suggesting any charge of libertinism against Mr. Chandler — but I cannot forbear saying, that for him to represent stage-plays, cards, and other fashionable games and diversions, by which the nation is so much debauched, as not strictly criminal in themselves, is acting out of character as a moral preacher; unsuitable to a reformation sermon; unserviceable to the design of the societies to whom he preached; and if these can be thought to be agreeable to the nature and fitness of things, from all such fitnesses the Lord deliver us.”*

When Mr. Gill, in 1719, settled in London, he became more intimately acquainted than before, with that worthy minister of the Gospel, Mr. John Skepp, pastor of the Baptist church at Cripplegate, London, and author of *The Divine Energy*: the second edition of which book his friend Gill revised, and divided the work into chapters, with contents, for the more easy reading and better understanding it; prefixing a recommendatory preface to it, the memory of that excellent man being dear to him.

This gentleman, though he had not a liberal education, yet, after he came into the ministry, through great diligence and industry, acquired a large acquaintance with the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written; and especially with the Hebrew language; in which he took immense pains, under the tuition of a Jew, and dipped into the Rabbinical Hebrew and writings pretty deeply. As Mr. Gill had previously taken great delight in the Hebrew, his conversation with this worthy minister rekindled a flame of fervent desire to obtain a more extensive knowledge of it; and especially of Rabbinical learning, which he then had but little acquaintance with, and scarcely any notion of its utility.

But he now began to perceive its importance, and saw it more fully afterwards. This gentleman dying a year or two after, Mr. Gill purchased most of his Hebrew and Rabbinical books; and now went to work with great eagerness, reading them, and. Many others, which he afterwards obtained of a Jewish Rabbi with whom he became acquainted. He plainly saw, that as the New Testament was written by men who had all of them been Jews, and who, notwithstanding their being inspired, must needs retain and use many of the idioms of their language, and allude to rites, ceremonies, and customs peculiar to that people; so the writings of the Jews, especially the more ancient ones, who lived nearest the times of the apostles, could not but be of use for the better understanding the phraseology of the New Testament, and the rites and customs to which it frequently alludes.

With this settled opinion, he set about reading their Targums, the Misnah, the Talmuds, the Rabbot, their ancient Commentaries, the book of Zohar and whatever else, of this kind, we could obtain. And in a course of between twenty and thirty years' acquaintance with this class of writings, he collected together a large number of learned observations. Having also, in this time, gone through certain books of the Old Testament, and almost the whole of the New Testament, by way of *Exposition*, in the course of his ministry, in a method which will be explained hereafter, he put all the expository, critical, and illustrative parts together, and in the year 1745 issued proposals for publishing his *Exposition of the whole New Testament*, in three volumes, folio. The work meeting due encouragement, it was put to press the same year, and was finished, the first volume in 1746, the second in 1747, and the third in 1748.

Towards the close of the publication of this work in 1748, Mr. Gill received a diploma from the Marischal College and University at Aberdeen, creating him Doctor in Divinity, on account of his knowledge of the Scriptures, of the Oriental languages, and of Jewish antiquities, as expressed in the diploma. On this he received two letters, one from Professor Osborn, Principal of the University, declaring to him, that ‘on account of the honest and learned defense of the true sense of the Holy Scriptures against the profane attacks of Deists and Infidels, and the reputation his other works had procured him in the learned world, as soon as it was moved in the University to confer the degree of Doctor in Divinity on him, it was readily agreed unto;’ and that he, as Primarius Professor, made a present to him of what was due to himself on such a promotion, — a promotion, which, the Professor observed, had been conferred entirely without the knowledge of Mr. Gill. Hence, when his deacons, in London, congratulated him on the respect which had been shown him, he thanked them, pleasantly adding, *I neither thought it, nor bought it, nor sought it.*

The other letter was from Professor Pollock, Professor of Divinity in the same University, and afterwards Principal of it: in which he handsomely congratulated Mr. Gill, and signified that their Marischal College had, with great cheerfulness, created him Doctor in Divinity, on account of that spirit of learning which appeared in his excellent Commentary on the New Testament.

In 1749, the Doctor wrote a treatise, called, *The Divine Rite of Infant Baptism examined and disproved*. This was occasioned by a pamphlet, printed at Boston, in New England, 1746, written by Mr. Jonathan Dickinson, of Elizabeth-Town, in New Jersey, afterwards president of the College there, entitled, *A brief Illustration and Confirmation of the divine Rite of Infant Baptism*; written, as it was supposed, on account of the increase of the Baptist denomination in New England, and the parts adjacent. This pamphlet being boasted of, and multitudes of them spread about, and printed in several places, the Baptists sent it over to Dr. Gill, requesting him to write an answer to it: which he did, in the treatise before mentioned. To this Peter Clark, M. A., pastor of a church in Salem, replied, in a book, called, *A Defense of the divine Rite of Infant Baptism*; consisting of 450 pages, or more, stuffed with things irrelevant to the controversy, printed at Boston, 1752. To this also Dr. Gill returned an answer, in a letter to a friend at Boston, which was printed there in 1754, with a fourth edition of a Sermon of the Doctor’s, preached at Barbican, upon Baptism, November 2, 1750.

A pamphlet, boasted of as unanswerable, appearing under the title of *The Baptism of Infants a reasonable Service, founded upon Scripture, and undoubted Appostolic Tradition*, he published an answer to it, in 1751, entitled, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition in favor of Infant Baptism, with others advanced, etc.* with which was printed, *An Answer to a Welsh Clergyman’s Twenty Arguments for Infant Baptism*; and to the whole were added, *The Dissenters’ reasons for separating from the Church of England*; written chiefly for the use of the Baptist churches in Wales; and translated into the Welsh language, as they had been occasioned by the reflections the said clergyman had cast upon those of the principality. On account of the first tract, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, etc.* the Doctor received two letters from a Franciscan Friar at Seville, in Spain, who signed himself James Henry, dated in 1754, and in 1755. In the first he requested to have sent him, by a master of a vessel whom he named, *The Dissertation the Tradition of the Church concerning Infant Baptism*; induced as it



should seem, by the title of the tract, and declaring himself a lover of all the learned men, of whatsoever profession.

The pamphlet was accordingly sent to him. In his second letter, he owns the receipt of it: says he had read it with great pleasure; and purposed to draw up a few observations upon it, in a candid and friendly manner; believing that Dr. Gill would yield to *inspired* apostolic tradition, if clearly made out or proved to him. He concludes with wishing for peaceable times, that he might have the pleasure of his correspondence. But the earthquake at Seville, at the same time with that at Lisbon, obliged him, as the Doctor understood by a master of a vessel, to go up further into the country; and he heard no more of him.

In 1752, he published his pamphlet on *The Doctrine of the Saints' final Perseverance*, in answer to one called *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*; written, as it afterwards appeared, by Mr. John Wesley: who, in another pamphlet, first shifted the controversy, from Perseverance, to Predestination; entitling his piece, *Predestination calmly considered*, and then chiefly 'harangued on reprobation, which he thought would best serve his purpose.' To this the Doctor returned an answer the same year, and to the exceptions Mr. Wesley had made to part of his treatise on Perseverance, respecting certain passages of Scripture employed in the controversy. It is very observable in it how 'he wanders to free will and irresistible grace, being sometimes for free will, sometimes for free grace; sometimes for resistible and sometimes for irresistible grace.'

Yet 'owning,' Dr. Gill says, '*that he had no understanding of the covenant of grace.*' *But the Doctor having stated and defended the doctrine of predestination largely from Scripture, next refers Mr. Wesley to the articles of his own church, particularly the seventh, part of which, when abridged, runs thus: — 'Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and condemnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor.'* And having made this reference, he solemnly adds, '*This is an article agreeable to the Scripture, an article of his own church, an article which he, as a true son of the church, has treacherously departed from, and an article which Mr. Wesley must have subscribed and sworn to; an article which will therefore stare him in the face, as long as subscriptions and oaths stand for any thing.*'

But Mr. Wesley, through the whole, did not so much as attempt "to refute any *one* argument" advanced by the Doctor in vindication of the certain perseverance of the saints in holiness to eternal felicity. To one of these pieces the subsequent paragraph by Mr. Toplady refers:

*"Between morning and afternoon service, read through Dr. Gill's excellent and nervous tract on Predestination, against Wesley. How sweet is that blessed and glorious doctrine to the soul, when it is received through the channel of inward experience! I remember, a few years ago, Mr. Wesley said to me, concerning Dr. Gill, 'he is a positive man, and fights for his own opinions through thick and thin.' Let the Doctor fight as he will, I'm sure he fights to good purpose: and, I believe it may be said of my learned friend, as it was of the Duke of Marlborough, that he never fought a battle which he did not win."*

This year the Doctor had a very memorable escape from being killed in his study. On March the 15th, in the morning, there was a violent hurricane, which much damaged many houses, both in London and Westminster. Soon after he had left his study, to go to preach, a stack of chimneys forced through the roof into his study, breaking his writing table to pieces, and must have killed him had the fall but happened a little sooner. Seriously noticing this remarkable preservation to a friend, who had some time before mentioned a saying of Dr. Halley, the great astronomer, "That close study prolonged a man's life, by keeping him out of harm's way;" he said,

*"What becomes of Dr. Halley's words now, since a man may come to danger and harm in his closet, as well as on the highway, if not protected by the special care of God's providence?"*

The same sentiment is conveyed in one of Mr. Newton's letters —

*"The Divine Providence, which is sufficient to deliver us, in our greatest extremity, is equally necessary to our preservation, in the most peaceful situations."*

**1753** — A pamphlet being published, entitled, *Paedobaptism; or, a Defence of Infant Baptism in point of Antiquity, etc.* by an anonymous writer; the Doctor replied to it, in a tract, called, *Antipaedobaptism ; or, Infant-sprinkling an Innovation:* To which the same author made a rejoinder; but as he advanced nothing new, nor cleared the antiquity of Paedobaptism, which was the point in question, the Doctor thought proper to take no notice of it.

**1755** — He republished Dr. CRISP'S Works, in two volumes, octavo, with *explanatory notes*, on such passages in them as had been considered exceptionable. To which he prefixed brief *Memoirs* of the Doctor's life. If ever Dr. Gill took unnecessary pains, some very respectable persons have intimated, he did so in these explanatory notes, many of which are intended to justify him from the charge of Antinomianism; for, say they, no man under heaven could more fully have expressed himself than Dr. Crisp has done, in some of the very sermons to which the notes are subjoined, concerning the moral law as a *rule* of conduct both for sinners and saints. And if this were his creed, they add, how can he be chargeable with Antinomianism, from which, in this publication, Dr. Gill defends him? It is pretty well known, and deserves to be repeated, that Dr. Crisp wanted not, in his day, the testimonies of men of the greatest figure in learning and religion, to his character and usefulness; particularly the famous Dr. *Twisse*, Prolocutor to the Assembly of Divines, who thus expressed him-self concerning him — that

*"he had read Dr. Crisp's Sermons, and could give no reason why they were opposed, but because so many were converted by his preaching; and, said he, so few by ours."* "That excellent Dutch professor of divinity, *Hoornbeck*, calls him a learned Divine, and observes, that he, with others of the same principles, had no ill design; but [were desirous] that the glory of Christ might more appear, casting down all the works, dispositions, and conditions of men, and confidence in every thing, besides him."

But that he went into real Antinomianism, either doctrinal or practical, must be peremptorily denied, in the most unqualified terms. Neale, in his History of the Puritans, says, that “he was certainly a learned and RELIGIOUS person, modest and humble in his behavior, fervent and laborious in his ministerial work, and EXACT IN HIS MORALS.” This testimony is sufficient and honorable respecting his Conduct; and, as for his *Doctrine*, his Sermons speak for themselves. This is the language of one of them. Writing of Christ’s mystical members, he says,

*“The law continues till the whole body of Christ be made complete, by an actual subsistence of every member in him. Now this seed will not be wholly complete till the consummation of all things.”*

But if it be objected that the apostle saith, Ye are not under the law, *but under grace*, he adds,

*“I answer, that in respect of the rules of righteousness, or the matter of obedience, we are under the law still, or else we are lawless, to live every man as seems good in his own eyes, which I know no true Christian dares so much as think.”*

On another Scripture he thus writes:

*“Men commonly dream of a strange kind of Gospel which never came into God’s mind; that, seeing Christ hath died, they may live as they list, letting themselves loose to all impiety, and yet go to heaven. Certainly, had God opened such a gap to let in such an inundation of impiety, he could never have justly complained of the deluge of it, that overflows the world. Far he it from the Holy God, whose purity abhors it, to allow such licentiousness to men. It is true, indeed, that Christ justifies the ungodly, that is, he finds them ungodly when he imputes his righteousness to them; but he doth not leave them ungodly after he hath justified them, but teacheth them to deny ungodliness. He that denies not ungodliness, him will Christ deny before his Father which is in heaven.”*

Also in his Sermon, on *The Revelation of Grace no Encouragement to Sin*; referring to such who are taxed with saying, that their sins are laid upon Christ, that they are believers, and therefore may live in sin, he *replies* —

*“If there be any such, let me deal plainly with them. For my part, I must account them the greatest monsters upon the face of the earth, the greatest enemies to the church that ever were; and I say of such disturbers of the consciences of God’s people, that they are carnal, sensual, devilish. They are the greatest enemies to the free grace of God, the greatest hinderers of the course of it, — and I dare be bold to say, open drunkards, harlots, and murderers, that profess not the Gospel of Christ, come infinitely short of these in abomination — and if there be any such here, let me tell them, their faith is no better than that of devils, for they believe and tremble; and that Christ will have heavier reckoning with such, when they come to judgment, than with any other under heaven besides.”*

Where, in all the regions of practical theology, can be found more explicit, more solemn, and more practical ideas than these? But he took the evangelical road in order to enforce duty, and his reigning principal in preaching seems to be this, which we give in his own words, **THAT THE REVEALING THE GRACE OF GOD IS THE BEST WAY IN THE WORLD TO TAKE MEN OFF FROM SIN.** To those remarks it may be necessary only to subjoin; that it will not be easy to find in the whole English language, among the best evangelical and practical writers, any sermons, which, for solidity of matter, precision of ideas, and “the circumnavigation of the subject,” equal, not to say excel, the substance of his four Discourses, in one hundred pages, entitled, *Free Grace the Teacher of good Works*. These should be read before Dr. Crisp is called an Antinomian. But if they are read and understood, and this opprobrious term is yet applied to their author, the charge of Antinomianism may then be fairly brought; — but, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, it will righteously apply, not to Dr. Crisp, but to the man who has audacity enough to sin against the law of God and man, by bearing *FALSE witness against his neighbor*.

If this had not been Dr. Gill’s full conviction respecting Dr. Crisp, he never would have written explanatory notes on some paragraphs of his Sermons, and commendatory notes on others, with exceptions against what appeared objectionable, of which there are not many instances. But Dr. Gill would have as soon allowed him to be an Atheist as an Antinomian, that is, a person who is *against the law* of God, considered, in its proper sense, as a rule of conduct for sinners and saints. Yet after all, many ingenuous persons, who are *acquainted* with his *whole* works, and whose sentiments correspond with his, allow, that he not only expresses himself freely, as he ought to do, but that he sometimes does it “with the least guard” of any of his contemporaries. But they maintain, that most, if not all the expressions, in his writings, which have been considered exceptionable, are capable of being explained in a favorable manner; and when seen in their connection, and compared with other pages of his works, must be so interpreted. But these very persons also agree with Dr. Gill, who says, in his letter to Dr. Taylor in 1732,

*“Dr. Crisp, I verily believe, used these expressions in a sound sense, and with a good design; not to encourage persons in sin, but to relieve and comfort the minds of believers, distressed with sin. Yet I must confess I do not like the expressions, but am of opinion they ought to be DISUSED.”*

In 1755, when he had read and thought twenty-three years more, he had not altered his mind, but says, in his notes on Dr. Crisp, immediately on his having made a quotation from Dr. Goodwin, in justification of Dr. Crisp’s sentiments — *“After all, I am of the same mind I was some years ago, that such expressions should be DISUSED; and heartily join in the same wish with the excellent WITSIUS, that nothing of this kind might drop from the mouth of a reformed Divine; for though sin cannot do any penal hurt to a believer, [cannot bring eternal damnation on him,] yet it may damp his spiritual joy, break his peace, interrupt communion between God and him, dishonor Christ, grieve the Spirit, and cause him to depart for a season.”*

Most good men, we conjecture, will be of the same mind.

Respecting the subject of, what is called, the Free Address to unconverted Sinners, certainly the two Doctors took different sides. Dr. Crisp was in the practice of it, Dr. Gill against it — nor did they perfectly agree in every other point; but as there was a vast coincidence of opinion, in many respects, between them; as the latter published notes on the Sermons of the former; and as their writings and sentiments have generally been considered of the same tendency, sometimes by persons who have read, and by others who never read a page of the works of either of them; more has been introduced, under this article, than might otherwise have appeared requisite.

**1756** — On March the 24th, the Doctor preached his farewell sermon, at the Wednesday evening lecture, in Great Eastcheap, from Acts 26:22,23. *Having therefore obtained help of God, continue to this day,* etc. His reason for quitting this service, in which he had been engaged more than twenty-six years, is given by himself.

*“I take my leave of this lecture,”* said he, *“not through any dislike of the work I have been so long engaged in; nor through any disgust at any thing I have met with; nor through any discouragement for want of attendance or subscription; I have nothing to complain of; the lecture was never in better circumstances than it now is. But I find my natural strength will not admit me to preach so frequently, and with so much constancy, as I have done, for many years past; being now on the decline of life, in the fortieth year of my ministry; so that it is time for me to have done with extra service, I mean, service out of the church of which I am pastor. But a more principal reason is, that I may have a little more time and leisure to attend to, and finish, an arduous work upon my hands, **An EXPOSITION of the whole OLD TESTAMENT**, part of which work I shall immediately propose for publication; and, if I meet with encouragement, the publishing of this will be an additional weight upon me; and I have no other way of easing myself, but by dropping the lecture; and these, and these only, are my reasons for so doing.”*

**1757** — This year the church under his care erected a new meeting-house for him in Carter-lane, Saint Olave’s-street, near London-Bridge, Southwark; which he opened, October 9, preaching two sermons on Exodus 20:24. These he afterwards printed, entitling them, **Attendance in Places of religious Worship, where the divine Name is recorded encouraged.** In one of these discourses is this paragraph —

*“As we have now opened a new place of worship, we enter upon it, recording the name of the Lord, by preaching the doctrines of the grace of God, and of free and full salvation alone, by Jesus Christ; and by the administration of Gospel ordinances, as they have been delivered to us. To do this, from time to time, is our present design, and what, by divine assistance, we shall endeavor to pursue, in the course of our worship and ministrations here. What doctrines may be taught in this place, after I am gone, is not for me to know; but, as for my own part, I am at a point; I am determined, and have been long ago, what to make the subject of my ministry. It is now upwards of forty years since I entered into the arduous work; and the first sermon I ever preached was from those words of the apostle, For I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and, through the grace of God, I have been enabled, in some good measure, to abide by the same resolution hitherto, as many of you here are my witnesses; and I hope, through divine assistance, I ever shall, as long as I am in this*

*tabernacle, and engaged in such a work. I am not afraid of the reproaches of men; I have been INURED TO THESE, FROM MY YOUTH upwards; none of these things move me.”*

**1757,1758** — Ever laborious and fruitful, under these dates, he published his **EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHETS**, both the larger, and the smaller, in two volumes, folio, with *an Introduction* to them on **PROPHECY**; and with a *Dissertation* at the close of them, on the **APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS**. How well he was prepared to discuss the prophetic Scriptures is generally known. His piece on the Fulfillment of the Prophecies respecting the Messiah, was an early specimen, but of fair promise, as to what might be expected from his pen, when sacred prediction should be his theme. His single Sermons, on this subject, have been, of late years, some of the most popular of his works; and their deserved value has caused them to pass through several editions. These *Sermons*, with the two folio volumes on the *Prophets*, and his Exposition of the *Revelation*, have gained him unfading honors, and induced such who have made those parts of the divine writings their study, to say, that if the works of Dr. Gill pre-eminently embrace almost every branch of sacred theology, *prophecy is his forte*. Indeed some of the interpretations of this part of Scripture which are properly his own, he lived to prove were not merely hypothetical. But had he survived and seen what has passed in our days, unless God had communicated to him new measures of humility, in addition to all he possessed before, and beyond what good men in common are favored with, he must have thought himself a peculiar favorite of heaven. But it is cheerfully recollected, that, when he waded most into the depths of this subject, and poured a flood of brilliancy upon the eras of his discussion; he fixes not his dates with positivity, nor appears with any lofty air, but expresses himself with these becoming acknowledgments:

*“In all that I have said concerning what will hereafter take place in the church, I do not pretend to any extraordinary impulse from God, or to any prophetic spirit; but I ground all upon his word. And if what I have said does not appear from thence, and upon the face of things in Providence, I have no pretensions to any thing else to support my opinion with; and as such only I deliver it.”*

**1761** — Proposals were now issued for printing the remainder of his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, beginning at Genesis and ending with Solomon’s Song. It was then his intention to give the whole in three volumes, but the work extended to four, and was printed in numbers, as the other parts of the Exposition had been. The first volume was published in the beginning of the year 1763; the second in 1764; the third in 1765; and the fourth and last in the beginning of the year 1766. These four volumes, with the two on the Prophets, and the three on the New Testament, being the five printed before, completed his Exposition of the whole Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Who can survey this wonderful production, and not exclaim, *“Here’s work, here’s labor!”*

Yet, Herculean as it is, it was achieved by one man. But, unless the writer of this paragraph is mistaken, Dr. Gill is the *only* man, who hath published both the Old and New Testament in the English language, so nearly including an exposition of *every verse*. Good Mr. Burkitt’s Expository Notes; Dr. Doddridge’s Paraphrase, with his practical improvement of each section: and Dr. Guyse’s Exposition; present their different claims to our regard; but all these, not to mention others, commence and terminate with the New Testament alone, which is not quite one fourth part of the sacred Scriptures. Mr. Henry lived to see his Exposition of the Old

Testament published, and had committed the New Testament to the press, “*as far as the Acts of the Apostles go,*” intending to proceed with the following part, which, said he, “*of all others, requires the most care and pains in expounding.*”

But “*he finished his course well himself, before he could finish*” this important design. Nor did he live to see his first volume on the New Testament printed. This, thousands must have deplored. But had he lived to execute his invaluable work to the end, with all its innumerable charms, it would have been an Exposition of the Sections, rather than of every sentence and verse of holy writ. In this way, to convey the general sense and design of Scripture, has been the object of other *excellent* Commentators, among whom with innocent ambition we mention Mr. Scott; whose labors admit of no ordinary commendation, but are, in their *holy* tendency, beyond all praise.

And this method certainly has its advantages, when such comments are used in families; but then, if at any time the interpretation of a particular verse is wanted, considerable attention may be necessary to search it out in the paragraph. Or else a greater infelicity is felt; for not unfrequently it happens, that but little explanation is given of the verse in question, or none at all. This is, sometimes, of great notoriety respecting the difficult and disputable passages of Scripture, which, surely, not less than others, seem to demand investigation. When the Doctor comes to any of these, he does not pass them with a short maxim, or a pretty saying; nor does he satisfy himself with shewing how expert he is in leaving a perplexity behind; but he meets the difficulty, examines it on every side; and, if he does not always remove it, he generally illuminates the subject for us; we see that he has labored his point, and are happy in having, so far, entered into the benefit of his labors.

In short, this Exposition is of unquestionable celebrity in the Republic of Letters, as well for its *unparalleled* learning, as for its profound research; and has obtained the affluence of fame, among all the *evangelical* denominations, at home and abroad. It yields to no **Theological Publication whatever, in Decision of Character, and in a manly Avowal of the GRAND FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL**, considered in their native dignity and in their practical influence. But it is somewhat observable, that it is the only Exposition of the Old and New Testament which the Baptists can, at present, peculiarly claim as their own, either in Great Britain, or in America. The second edition of the New Testament was printed, in five volumes, quarto, in the years 1774-1777.

And in 1778, and onward, the second edition of the Old Testament, beginning with Genesis and proceeding toward the conclusion of the book of Psalms, was printed in six volumes of the same size, the sixth indeed was not quite finished. But the death of Mr. George Keith, the publisher, Dr. Gill’s son-in-law, and other incidents, prevented the publication of the remaining part of the Old Testament, which has never yet appeared in *quarto*. It will be a circumstance truly felicitous, that the third edition, for which this Memoir is sketched, will appear with every advantage; the Parts already published are considered to be of so fair a promise, and the Publishers of such respectability, that the succeeding parts, there can be no doubt, will be equally excellent.

**1765** — This year some copies of Mr. Clark's *Defence of the Divine Rite of Infant Baptism*, being imported from America, and published here, the Doctor reprinted and re-published his reply to it.

Another treatise being also sent hither, and reprinted in London, nearly about the same time, called, *A fair and rational Vindication of the Right of Infants to the Ordinance of Baptism*; being the substance of several discourses from Acts 2:39, by David Bostwick, M. A., late minister of the Presbyterian church in the city of New York; the Doctor made some strictures on that performance, which are published at the end of the reply to Mr. Clark.

Soon after this, the Reverend Mr. Carmichael, a minister of the Gospel in Edinburgh, being convinced of the truth of believer's baptism by immersion, came to London to enjoy the institution; and was baptized by the Doctor at Barbican, who also preached a sermon on the occasion, from 1 John 5:3, which, a few days after, was reflected upon in one of the public newspapers. This obliged him, very contrary to his inclination: to *publish* his Sermon, which he declares in the Preface of it "*was not designed for the press, and that the warmest solicitations of his friends would never have prevailed on him to make it public, as he was unwilling to renew the controversy about baptism unnecessarily, and having determined to write [on this subject] only in self-defense, when attacked, or when the controversy is renewed by others.*"

Nor do we recollect that any single pamphlet or page of the Doctor's ever *revived* the dispute concerning this sacred ordinance. Conscious of this, he asks Mr. Matthias Maurice, to whose piece on Baptism he was replying, "Who is the aggressor? Who gave the first provocation?" And, to the close of his career, he might have repeated the hint, with ambition. Nor will his tract on the *Jewish Proselyte* Baptism, hereafter noticed, which appeared in his Body of Divinity, where it seems naturally to claim a situation, be considered as an exception to the spirit of this observation, or fairly be interpreted into a renewal of the controversy, as the tract has an aspect only to the multitude of such pamphlets *antecedently* published by the Paedobaptist brethren, though more than a century before, which pamphlets imply or maintain that infant baptism came in the room of Jewish proselyte baptism, or is sanctioned by it. The fore-mentioned strictures then, which appeared in the newspaper, having agitated the subject afresh, and introduced it again before the public, the Doctor felt himself called upon to publish his Sermon, which he entitled, *Baptism a divine Commandment to be observed*. It had also marginal notes, vindicating it from the gross abuses, misrepresentations, and cavils of the letter-writer in the newspaper. This affair made a great stir; and many things appeared in the said paper, on both sides the subject: until the conductor of the newspaper himself put a stop to it, by refusing to publish any more letters from the unyielding disputants. Some or other, however, of the Paedo-baptists, were yet desirous of protracting the debate; and, this their object, it was not unnatural for them attentively to look back, and examine what he had previously written on the subject. In this research, a paragraph was eagerly selected from the Preface of Dr. Gill's Reply to Mr. Clark's *Defense*, already mentioned. That the article may be seen in its true light, rendering the very bosom of the author transparent on the subject of baptism, as it was on every other, the whole section, which has appeared so objectionable to one side of the controversialists, and which has been so generally admired by the other, shall here be given at full length, without any variation.



*“The Paedobaptists are ever restless and uneasy, endeavoring to maintain, and support, if possible, their unscriptural practice of infant baptism; though it is no other than a pillar of Popery: that by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations; is the basis of national churches and wordly establishments: that which unites the church and world, and keeps them together; nor can there be a full separation of the one from the other, nor a thorough reformation in religion, until it is wholly removed; and though it has so long and largely obtained, and still does obtain, I believe with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is hastening on when infant baptism will be no more practiced in the world; when churches will be formed on the same plan they were in the times of the apostles.; when Gospel doctrine and discipline will be restored to their primitive luster and purity; when the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper will be administered as they were first delivered, clear of all present corruption and superstition; all which will be accomplished, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord and his name one.”*

This paragraph, in *another* newspaper, the Doctor was called upon either to expunge or explain. He chose the latter, and, with unabating zeal for the cause he espoused, published a tract, entitled, ***Infant Baptism a Part and Pillar of POPERY; with a Postscript, containing an Answer to the Letters of Candidus***, the other writer mentioned before. This tract, very contrary to his intention, gave great offense to some worthy Paedobaptists, with many of whose ministers he lived in great intimacs; but a reply, so far as we have heard, was not given to it at the time, if there has been any since.

**1767** — His ***Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowels, Points, and Accents***; in an octavo, of 282 pages, with a Preface of 43 pages more, now appeared. This masterly effort of profound research, which would have shewn our author to be a PRODIGY of reading and literature, had he never published a syllable on any other subject, “*was written*” by him “*at his leisure hours, for his own amusement, not with any design, at first, to publish it to the world; but by way of essay to try how far back the antiquity of the things treated of in it could be carried.*” But the confidence which, about this time, some writers had expressed, “*as if victory was proclaimed on their side,*” prevailed on him to send it into the world. Some of the first scholars have expressed themselves astonished at the erudition everywhere so conspicuous in this volume.

When this elaborate work came before the public it was treated with candor and ingenuity by the *Critical Reviewers*; who, though they could not agree with every thing in it, particularly concerning the authority of the Points, yet allowed the work was executed with great industry, sagacity.

In the notice which the Monthly Reviewers took of this Dissertation, the Doctor perceived so clearly their ignorance of the subject, and such a vein of dullness, and ill nature, running through the whole of what they say, that he thought their remarks too low for his attention, and acted according to the spirit of his resolution in the Preface to the work —

*“Should any truly learned gentleman do me the honor to animadvert upon what I have written, I am sure of being treated with candor and decency; but should I be attacked by sciolists, I expect nothing but petulance, supercilious airs, and opprobrious language — such will be righteously treated with neglect and contempt.”*

The same year, Dr. Gill collated the various passages of the Old Testament, quoted in the *Misnah*, in the *Talmuds*, both *Jerusalem* and *Babylonian*, and in the *Rabboth*; and extracted the variations in them from the modern printed text; which he sent to Dr. Kennicott, at Oxford, who was then collating the several Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament which were to be met with in any of the libraries in Europe. Dr. Kennicott thus acknowledged his receipt of the extracts, in his state of that collation, published in the year 1767:

*“I have been highly obliged by the Reverend and Learned Dr. GILL, who has extracted and sent me the variations from the modern Bibles in the passages quoted in the Talmuds, both of Jerusalem and Babylon, and also in the Rabboth: which variations, in these ancient books of the Jews, affect the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, as the variations in the ancient Christian fathers affect the Greek text of the New.”*

Towards the close of his life, as it appears, when the Doctor had narrowly watched the Trinitarian controversy, and long stood in its defense, he seems to have put his finishing hand to a piece which must have cost him immense pains. It is published in the posthumous edition of his Sermons and Tracts, volume 2. p. 534, and is styled, *A Dissertation concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ*. His filiation he considered as essential to the defense of the Trinity; and hence seems resolved, to the very last, to give it the support which its importance demands. Now as both these doctrines, which he considered as inseparably united, make so conspicuous a figure in the Gospel system, and are so visible throughout the writings of our orthodox Divine, and in the works of others, of the greatest name; we will attempt to collect his ideas respecting them into as narrow limits as possible.

The doctrine of *A TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE*; or, of three distinct divine Persons in one God, he considered to be as truly the *fundamental* article of revealed religion, as the Unity of God is the foundation of what is called natural religion. In stating and defending it, he was decidedly against the many strange representations and comparisons which have been introduced into this subject, some of them to its great disadvantage. But he certainly had precise ideas of this sublime mystery; and as he advanced in his discussion of the doctrine of three Persons in the unity of the Divine Essence he defined his terms.

The *Essence* of God means *“that God is that he is, — I am that I am. And if God is, then he has an essence. An essence is that by which a person or thing, is what it is. And seeing God is, essence, or his being what he is, may be truly predicated of him.”*

By the *Unity* of the divine essence, he intends that there is but one God; or that the *essence* of God is one, and not divided. But then he observes, that the Unity of God is not to be understood in the *Arian* sense, that there is *one* supreme God, and two subordinate or inferior ones, which resembles the notion of the wiser Pagans, making more Gods than one. Nor is this to

be understood in the *Sabellian* sense, that God is but one *Person*, for though there is but one God, there are three persons in the Godhead. Nor is this to be admitted in a *Tritheistic* sense, as if there were three *essences*, or beings numerically distinct, said to be one because of the oneness of their *nature*. This is to assert three Gods, and not one. The Trinitarians maintain that there is but one divine essence, undivided, and common to Father, Son, and Spirit; and in this sense but one God, though there are different modes of subsisting in it, which are called Persons.

*“All, professing Christianity, are Unitarians in a sense, but not in the same sense. Some are Unitarians in opposition to a Trinity of Persons in one God. Others are Unitarians in perfect consistence with that doctrine. Those of the former sort stand ranked in very bad company; for a Deist, who rejects divine revelation in general, is an Unitarian. A Jew that rejects the writings of the New Testament, and Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, is an Unitarian. A Mahometan is an Unitarian who believes in one God, and in his prophet Mahomet. A Sabellian is an Unitarian, who denies a distinction of Persons in the Godhead. A Socinian is an Unitarian, who asserts that Christ did not exist before he was born of the virgin, and that he was God not by nature but by office. An Arian may be said, in a sense, to be an Unitarian, because he holds one supreme God, though rather he may be reckoned a Tritheist, since along with the one supreme God, he holds two subordinate ones. Those only are Unitarians, in a true and sound sense, who hold a Trinity of distinct Persons in one God who is but one in his essence.”*

But though God is one in his essence, he is three in his personality, that is, there are three Persons in the unity of Jehovah's essence. This is what he means by the *Trinity*. The Doctor distinguishes between personality, and person.

*“Personality is the bare mode of subsisting: a Person, besides that, designs and implies the nature or substance in, and with which he subsists.”*

A Person *“is an individual that subsists and lives of itself, endowed with will and understanding, who is neither sustained by nor is part of another Such is the Father, therefore a Person; such is the Son, therefore a Person; such is the Holy Ghost, therefore a Person.”*

*“The great and incommunicable name of JEHOVAH is always in the singular number, because it is expressive of his essence, which is but one; but the first name of God we meet with in Scripture, and that in the first verse of it, is plural. In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth; Genesis 1:1 and therefore must design more than one, and yet not precisely two, or two only; for then the word would have been in the dual number; but it is plural, and, as the Jews themselves say, cannot design fewer than three.” “The words may be cast into a distributive form, in perfect agreement with the idiom of the Hebrew language, and be thus read: In the beginning every one of the divine Persons created the heavens and the earth.”*

Another plural name of God is ADONIM.

*If I am (Adonim) Lords, where is my fear? Malachi 1:6.* It is here said of God by himself. And of Christ Adonai is used in Psalm 110:1. *THE LORD said unto my Lord.* And so of the Holy Spirit,

Isaiah 6:8, compared with Acts 28:25. And, omitting numerous other plural modes of expression, it is very observable they are employed even when the unity of God seems to be the leading idea of the passage.

Thus, in Deuteronomy 6:4, the one God is spoken of plurally, and it seems evident the Trinity is intended, and that these three are one. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. "Not that this is peculiar to the Father, for Christ the Son of God is Jehovah, and is often so called, and so is the Holy Ghost, and all three are manifestly included in Eloheanu, a word of the plural number, and may be rendered our Gods, as Dr. Watts renders it; or rather it may be read, our divine Persons, and then the text will stand thus, Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our divine Persons, is one Jehovah. This is not the sense of Christian writers only, but even of the ancient Jews." This is the doctrine of the Old Testament, of which there are innumerable proofs also in the New; namely, that the three divine Persons are one — one God. If it were said that these three Persons are one Person, this would be an absolute contradiction; but it is no contradiction to assert, that the three Persons subsisting in the essence of Jehovah, which is but one essence, are but one God. But such persons are fairly chargeable with self. contradiction, who, when Christ says, I and my Father are one, interpret it of one Person, "which is as absurd as it is to say, I and myself are one: or, that I who am one, and my father who is another, are but one person." This is a flat contradiction, or profound nonsense. How opposite to such an idea is John 14:16. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that *he may abide with you for ever.*"*

*"Here is God, the Father of Christ, who is prayed to, who is one Person; here is the Son praying to him, a second Person; and then there is another Comforter prayed for, even the Spirit of Truth, distinct from the Father and the Son, and he is a third Person. If the distinction between them is not personal, but merely nominal, the sense of the words must be this; I will pray myself, and I myself will give you myself that, HE who is not another, but is myself, may abide with you for ever."*

But those who maintain, in opposition to the Old Testament and the New,

*"that Father, Son, and Spirit, are but one Person under these different names," are of the opinion of Sabellius, who lived in the third century, "the foundation of whose heresy was laid by Simon Magus. He first invented the notion, afterwards imbibed by Sabellius, of only one Person in the Godhead. To which he added this blasphemy, that he was that person. Before he professed himself a Christian, he gave out that he was some great one. He afterwards said he was the one God himself under different names, the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Holy Spirit in the rest of the nations of the world."*

But other erroneous persons, in one form or another, are nearly allied to these ancient heresiarchs, who denied the divine personality; and indeed, Person, as it is applied to the Triune God, is the term which, as Calvin says, has generally made heretics *bark*.

Dr. Gill universally defended the doctrine of the Trinity, or of a threefold personality in God; but he apprehended that its very foundation is the *proper* Sonship, or filiation of Christ — the doctrine to which the last tract mentioned above entirely relates; and a doctrine, without the admission of which, he is confident a Trinity of *Persons* in God cannot be defended.

Thus he writes:

*“It is easy to observe, that the distinction of Persons in the Deity depends on the generation of the Son. Take away that which would destroy the relation between the first and second Persons, and the distinction drops. And that this distinction is natural, or by necessity of nature, is evident, because had it been only arbitrary, or of choice and will, it might not have been at all, or have been otherwise than it is — and then he that is called the Father might have been called the Son, and he that is called the Son might have been called the Father. This has so pressed those who are of a contrary mind as to oblige them to own it might have so happened, had it been agreeable to the will of God.”*

That is, if we understand them, that the divine Being, who is necessarily what he is, *might* never have existed as he does: and that if he had not, God would never have been known as Father, Son, and Spirit, only as God. This seems to be a legitimate conclusion from their sentiments, whether they perceive, and admit, it or not.

So when he proceeds to the question, Whether Christ was the *Son* of God *before time*, or his eternal Son; he has *determinate* ideas, as on every other part of the sublime mystery connected with it. He conceives that the Father and the Son are of the same nature, and that Christ is the Son of God by nature, not the Son of God by mediation. He who is the Mediator is God, and is the Son of God, but though his mediation shows him to be *the friend* of God, there was nothing in it which could make him his Son. He was the Son of God antecedent to his incarnation, and before all worlds; as he is *frequently* represented in the Scriptures. And thus, if God the Father were the *eternal* Father, as he truly was, then the Son was the eternal Son. The one not antecedent to the other, but both co-eternally existing together, and with the Holy Spirit. In speaking of Christ, as the *only-begotten* Son of God, or generated Son of God, which means the same, he says, *“the divine nature of the Son is not begotten: the divine essence neither begets nor is begotten: it is a divine Person in that essence that is begotten; and though there are more Persons than one, yet there is no more than one essence.”*

Thus also in another section;

*“I cannot see any reason to object to the use of the phrase eternal generation, as applied to the Sonship of Christ, since one divine Person is said to beget, Psalm 2:7, and therefore must be a Father; and another divine Person is said to be begotten, John 1:14,18, and elsewhere, and therefore must be a Son; and if a begotten Son, as he is often said to be, then he must be a Son by generation. For he is an illiterate man indeed who does not know that to beget and generate are the same; and therefore generation, if used of the Father in the divine nature, then of the Son in the divine nature; and there being nothing in the divine nature but what is eternal, then this generation must be eternal generation — a phrase which is no more a contradiction than a Trinity in Unity, or a Trinity of Persons in one God.” —*

The opposition to this doctrine is nothing new. It is only a revival of the “*stale objection of the Arians of old. Arius,*” in the fourth century, “*was the first who pretended to acknowledge the Trinity, that actually, and in express words, set himself to oppose the eternal Sonship of Christ, by generation.*” And, being a man or parts, he must have discerned, that if Christ were truly and properly the *Son* of the Father, he must be of the same nature; and, if of the same nature, then equal in power and glory, as it is expressed by the Assembly of Divines.

But the said pamphlet, concerning *The Eternal Sonship of Christ*, shews yet further who have been the opposers of this doctrine, indeed from first to last; and on the other hand, by whom, from the earliest times to the present, it has been defended. But, towards the close of the piece, the Doctor states, what perhaps is not generally known, and may be mentioned with honest ambition, by the wisest Trinitarians, and what deserves much consideration from one class of their opponents — that “*this article concerning the Sonship of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity, has been maintained by all sound Divines and evangelical churches, from the Reformation to the present time, as appears by their writings and harmony of confessions. So that upon the whole it is clear the church of God has been in the possession of this doctrine of the eternal generation and Sonship of Christ, from the beginning of Christianity to the present age, almost eighteen hundred years.*” —

Now observe, “*Nor has there been any one man. who [sincerely] professed to hold the doctrine of the Trinity, or of three distinct divine Persons in the unity of the divine essence, that ever opposed it, till the latter end of the SEVENTEETH century. If any such person, in this course of time, can be named, let him be named.*”

The eternal Sonship of Christ, or the *eternal generation* of the Son of God, appears then to have been a part of the faith of all Trinitarians for about *seventeen hundred* years from the birth of our Lord. In what a light does this exhibit the contrary scheme!

- **In 1769**, he published *A Body of DOCTRINAL DIVINITY*, in two volumes, quarto. This work contains the substance of what he delivered from the pulpit to the people under his care, through the space of more than five years. There are but few, if any, theological publications, in the English language, of more deserved repute than these 1091 pages.

Here is the Doctor’s whole creed. Here his very heart appears, while he states, maintains, and defends, the Truth as it is Jesus. His meaning cannot be mistaken. Like the sun, he transmits his own rays with him wherever he goes, and is himself seen in the light which he dispenses. He has his *SYSTEM*; and, without a system, he would have considered himself little other than a skeptic; and this *FORM* of sound words, according to divine direction, he held fast in the exercise of *faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*. He was sensible that *systematical* divinity had become very unpopular, and says,

“*Formulas and articles of faith, creeds, confessions, catechisms, and summaries of divine truths, are greatly decried in our age; and yet, what art or science soever but has been reduced to a system? physic, metaphysic, logic, rhetoric, etc. Philosophy in general has had its several systems: not to take notice of the various sects and systems of philosophy in ancient times; in the last age, tee Cartesian system of philosophy greatly obtained, as the Newtonian system now*

*does. Astronomy in particular has been considered as a system; sometimes called the system of the universe, and sometimes the solar, or planetary system. In short, medicine, jurisprudence or law, and every art and science, are reduced to a system or body; which is no other than an assemblage or composition of the several doctrines or parts of a science. And why should Divinity, the most noble science, be without a system? Accordingly we find that Christian writers, in ancient times, attempted something of this nature; as the several formulas of faith, symbols or creeds, made in the first three or four centuries of Christianity; the Stromata of Clemens of Alexandria; the four books of Principles, by Origen; with many others that followed. And even those who now cry out against systems, confessions, and creeds, their predecessors had those of their own. Arius had his creed; and the Socinians have their catechism, the Racovian catechism; and the Remonstrants have published their confession of faith; not to mention the several bodies of divinity, published by Episcopius, Limborch, Curcellaeus, and others.”*

That Dr. Gill had his system also, and maintained it, is evident to all who are conversant with his character and writings; but it is a memorial to his praise, that it was *such* a system as *deserved* the most cordial embrace. Nothing is more conspicuous in it, than the harmony of all the ineffable perfections of Jehovah, and the Union of each of the *three* divine and equally glorious Persons of the sacred Trinity, in all the parts of the salvation of God’s elect; and that this sovereign and gracious scheme, from its decree to its final consummation, primarily embraces the glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as its *ultimate* end, securing to its distinguished objects, not merely individual safety now, and felicity hereafter, but the *personal* HOLINESS of every one of them, in this life, by which they resemble Christ; and perfect PURITY beyond the grave, in the everlasting beatific vision of him.

This is the evident *tendency* of the evangelical system he espoused, — a tendency which might rationally create a prejudice in its favor, among the genuine friends of holiness, who are brought into its native light. But no one clearly understands the subject, if he does not perceive that personal election, election to holiness — *particular redemption*, or redemption from *all iniquity* — *efficacious grace* in regeneration and conversion; or, the implantation of a principle of *holy fear* in our hearts, *that we may not depart from God*, — and perseverance in grace, in *holy duties*’ and delights, to the kingdom of glory:

No one is properly acquainted with these important and essential parts of the Christian system, if he does not clearly see, not only their tendency towards the promotion of internal holiness first, and then of boundless felicity; but that this devoutly wished for consummation is as necessarily and *infallibly* following in their train without a single exception, as the diffusion of light and heat must be the never-failing attendant of the sun, when, according to the beautiful imagery of Scripture, *he goeth forth in his might*, spreading his resplendent wings in the eastern skies.

**1770** — This distinguished patron of the doctrines of grace, and of practical experimental godliness, having favored his connexions with his two volumes of Doctrinal Divinity, now gratified them with a third volume, which he properly called a ***Body of Practical Divinity***. This he thought would be the last work he should ever publish. It consists of no less than 514 pages, 4 to. This volume also contains the substance of what he delivered to the church and congregation,

in Carter-lane, in his usual Lord's Day services. The sermons were heard with great attention by the members and the auditory in general; many of whom, to the end of their days, mentioned, with great satisfaction, the interest they felt in them. It is undeniable that the Doctor, when his theme was practical, went *the full length* of his subject, as much as when it was doctrinal; but he well distinguished between the moral law as a **RULE** of conduct, and the same law as a **COVENANT** of *works*. Under the latter consideration, he every where maintains, with our best Divines, that believers are delivered from it, totally delivered, having no just reason either to expect life from its promises, or to fear death from its threatenings. But that, as a **RULE** of *obedience*, it is of universal obligation, equally binding on saints and sinners, and must remain so forever, while God is God and man is man. An extract from one or two of his paragraphs, on this head, may here suffice, instead of a multitude.

*“Though the moral law is made void as a covenant of works, it still continues as a rule of action and conversation. It is done away as to the form of the administration of it by Moses; but the matter, the sum and substance of it, remain firm, unalterable, and unchangeable in the hands of Christ. Believers are delivered from the curse and condemnation of it, yet they are not exempted from obedience to it. And though they are not to seek for justification by it, they are under the greatest obligations, by the strongest ties of love, to have a regard to all its commands. Obedience to the law is enforced upon them by the best of motives, Gospel motives and principles; and they yield obedience to it, under the best of influences. Believers in Christ ought not only to be careful to maintain, but even to excel, to go before others, in good works, giving evidence that they have a proper regard to the unchangeable law, as to the everlasting Gospel of Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, by divine assistance shew, in our lives and conversations, the truth of this doctrine, ‘that the law is not made void, but established by the Gospel;’ and thus, as it is the will of God we should, with well doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and shame them who FALSELY accuse our good conversation in Christ.”*

In this way, our practical theologian maintains the authority and perpetuity of the moral law. This he does not only in his Sermon, entitled, *The Law in the Hands of Christ*, and in another, *The Law established by the Gospel*, and in his chapter on the Law of God, in his Body of Divinity, but, probably, in more than an hundred sections besides, interspersed all through his writings. Of this his exposition of the New Testament particularly will be a standing witness, But those sections of it, in which he made the true and just distinction between the law as a covenant, and the law as a *rule*, were the very passages which *provoked* some persons of Antinomian principles, who were excluded only a few years since from the church of which the Doctor had formerly been pastor, when they were referred to his opinion on the law, as he had given it in his Exposition, to say in a spirit which was as malicious, as the declaration itself was false, that the Doctor asserts we are under the law, and that we are not under the law, so going forward and backward, maintaining and denying; and that they find him palpably contradicting *himself*, in certain places, five or six times in a chapter.

Yea, some of them insisted on it that believers had nothing at all to do with the moral law. But, in his time, the Doctor spared no individuals who were of these infernal sentiments; and his preaching was as pointed on the agenda as on the *credenda* of the Christian system. Of this, the following is no unfair specimen. While he was pursuing the course of subjects since



published as his body of *Practical Divinity*, one of his most sincere and generous friends, from whom the writer of this page had the anecdote, took a gentleman from the country to hear him.

The Doctor warmed with his subject, and the congregation was animated. He put the crown on the Savior's head, by exhibiting him in the glory of his kingly office; and, in several sentences, particularly leveled his shafts against every species of Antinomianism, yet not mentioning the term. Service over, the good friend of Dr. Gill, who had himself enjoyed the opportunity, said to the gentleman, Well, Sir, what do you think of our Doctor to-day? Why, said he, you must not be offended with me, but I assure you, if I had not been told it was the great

Dr. Gill who preached, I should have said that I had heard an Arminian. Probably this incompetent judge formed his opinion, as many other mistaken persons still do; who, when they hear any thing practical recommended, or even the term duty mentioned, violently exclaim in some opprobrious terms or other; yet, in the superabundance of their wisdom, *not knowing what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

However, the plenitude of their folly is no more conspicuous, than the mistake or malevolence of others, who, running to the contrary extreme, whenever they hear the doctrines of *sovereign* and distinguishing grace, eternal election even to *holiness*, and the perseverance of the saints, though it be *in grace* to glory, fully and scripturally preached, immediately cry, *Antinomianism!* — *horrid Antinomianism!* — Thus exhibiting the very spirit of those ancient heretics, who *slanderosly* affirmed, concerning the apostolic preachers themselves, that they *said Let us do evil that good may come.*

But Paul repelled the charge, demolished the accusation, and magnified his office; declaring, of all such perjured plaintiffs, that their guilt is on their own foreheads, and of such uncommon atrocity, that *their damnation is just.* The Doctor had, doubtless, consistency enough not fairly to incur the charge of espousing contrary and totally opposite schemes. He *could* not be an Arminian, for he *maintained* the five distinguishing and Scriptural points which they *deny.* Nor could he be an Antinomian, as he for ever *denied* what they *affirm*, viz. the destructive and damning text, which is the very soul of their system, that believers are not under the moral law, as the rule of their conduct.

Yet he was charged with these glaring inconsistencies. But the Savior himself was crucified between two thieves; and, unwilling as his servants are to be conformed to him in his sufferings, they must not think it strange, if they also are hung up between the robbers, — Arminianism, which robs God of his grace; and Antinomianism, which robs him of his glory.

It will be well for them, if, on the one hand, with Christian humility and patience, they possess equanimity, which will enable them to say, *It is enough that the disciple be as his Master;* and if, on the other, they, at present, pity those who would thus make them spectacles unto the world, and to angels, and to men; and, at last, with their dying breath, can pray for them, saying *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

At the close of the Body of Divinity is given the Doctor's *Dissertation* concerning the *Baptism of Jewish Proselytes*. He frequently observed, in his polemical career, that

*“several learned men had asserted, that it was a custom or rite among the Jews, before the times of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, to receive proselytes into their church by baptism or dipping, as well as by circumcision; and these both adult and infants; and that John and Christ took up the rite of baptizing from thence, and practiced, and directed to the practice of it, as they found it; and which, they think, accounts for the silence about infant baptism in the New Testament, it being no new practice.”*

This, he saw, was the principal refuge, the dernier resort of some of the Paedobaptists, who are of opinion, with Dr. Hammond, that this is the BASIS of *Infant Baptism*; and with Sir Richard Ellys, *who*, in his *Fortuita Sacra*, says, that he knows not of any stronger argument in favor of infant baptism than this.

Now, as the *later* writings of the Jews had been referred to, in support of this hypothesis, and no *early* authorities were produced, there being none in existence; and as the Doctor found, upon examination, that several respectable writers had derived their intelligence not from the fountain head, but had copied from one another, and that the great Mr. Wall himself, according to his own acknowledgment, not being sufficiently versed in the Jewish writings, had done the same; he felt a desire that some one man or other might be found, since the birth of Christ, who should *fully* investigate the point.

And as our laborious friend did not suppose it very probable, that any of the Baptist denomination might soon rise up and take the pains in studying Rabbinical literature he had done, which yet was necessary in order to master this subject; he thought the business properly devolved on himself. Hence he resolved to draw up the whole compass of the argument, as he has done, in his *Dissertation*, that it might survive him, and be used as occasion should require. This subject had been upon his mind many years, and, no doubt, he made references to it in his *Adversaria* from time to time, as he was accustomed to do, in other instances.

Having, at last, taken the circumference of the subject, he favors us with the result of his inquiries, as they appear in the first part of his piece; the heads of which shall be given mostly in his own words:

- *“Now upon search”* after the proof of the baptism of Jewish proselytes, says he, “it will be found
- that nothing of this kind appears in the writings of the Old Testament, which chiefly concern the Jewish nation
- that in the books of the *Apocrypha*, generally thought to be written by Jews, though there is sometimes mention made in them of proselytes to the Jewish religion, yet not a syllable of any such rite or custom, as of baptism or dipping at the admission of them
- that in the New Testament, where mention indeed is made of proselytes, *nothing* is said concerning their admission and the manner of it

- that as there were no traces of this custom in the writings before, or about the times of John, Christ, and his apostles, so neither are there any in those which were written in a short time after; not in Philo the Jew; nor is there the *least* trace or *hint* of this custom in *any* Rabbinical books, said by the Jews to be written a little before or after
- that *Josephus*, the *Jewish historian*, in treating of whole nations, and of individuals who became Jews, and were made so by circumcision, says not a word of their baptism and dipping, which, had it been practiced, could not well have been omitted by the historian
- that in the most ancient *Targums* or *Chaldee Paraphrases*, at the beginning, and '*toward the end of the first century; nor even in the Jews' Mishnah or Book of Traditions, written in the middle of the second century, or beginning of the third, where, if any where, one might expect to meet with this rite or custom, no mention is made of it; though Dr. Gale seemed to allow it, upon what Dr. Wall had translated from Selden, without examination*
- *and that it is not spoken of by any of the Christian fathers of the first three or four centuries.*"

Having illustrated all these particulars, which shew, that "the rite of receiving proselytes by baptism, or dipping, among the Jews, is no where mentioned in any writings before the times of John and Christ, nor in any after, nearer than the *third and fourth* centuries; Dr. Gill proceeds to shew, that the first mention of it, for aught as yet appears, is in *the Jewish Talmuds*, the one called Jerusalem, being written for the Jews at Jerusalem, in 189, and the other the Babylonian, written for the Jews in Babylon. and in those parts, and finished, as is usually said, about AD 500. And when he had given "*the whole compass of the evidence from these writings, not omitting any thing relating to it in them, that had fallen under his observation,*" he adds, "*Since then this rite, or custom, has no foundation, but in the Talmuds,*" which were written, especially the *Babylonian*, so distant from the apostolic age, "*surely it can never be thought that Christian baptism was borrowed from thence;*" the "*folly and falsehood of which,*" he says, "*would be evinced in his following chapter.*" This chapter consists of eleven or twelve very interesting considerations, to which the Doctor subjoins this, as an argument *ad hominem* — "*If this custom*" of Jewish proselyte baptism, or dipping, "*is to be considered as a rule of Christian baptism, then sprinkling ought not to be used in it.*"

Finally, it may be proper to observe, that Dr. Gill was not alone in his views of proselyte baptism among the Jews, but is justified in his principal statement by certain learned Paedobaptists themselves. For as the testimonies produced, by the several writers, in favor of the point, were not early enough to answer the purpose for which they were brought; the late *Dr. Jennings*, author of the *Jewish Antiquities*, has given up the argument from them in favor of infant baptism. "*There wants,*" respecting Jewish proselyte baptism, says he, "*more evidence of its being as ancient as our Savior's time, than I apprehend can be produced, to ground any argument upon it, in relation to Christian baptism.*"

And again,

*“After all, it remains to be proved, not only that Christian baptism was instituted in the room of proselyte baptism, but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Savior’s time. The earliest accounts we have of it are in the **Misnah** and **Gemara**; the former compiled, as the Jews assert, in the second century, the latter not till the seventh century.”*

Dr. Gill, making this quotation from Dr. Jennings, says, as to accounts of it in the **Misnah** we have none at all. Dr. Jennings, though an acknowledged Hebrean, perhaps, had not read the Misnah through; but Dr. Gill had, and therefore says, in another place,

*“It is mentioned in the Gemara, a work of later times.”*

But he boldly adds, *“I am content to risk that little reputation I have for Jewish learning, if any passage can be produced in the **Misnah**, mentioning such a tradition of the Jews, admitting proselytes by baptism, or dipping, whether adult, or children.”*

To this testimony our author subjoins Dr. John Owen’s. That learned man, in his **Theologoumena**, says,

*“The institution of the rite of baptism is no where mentioned in the Old Testament, no example is extant; nor, during the Jewish church, was it ever used in the admission of proselytes; no mention of it is to be met with in Philo, Josephus, nor in Jesus the son of Syrach; nor in the Evangelic History.”*

Dr. Gill having thus investigated his subject in all its ample round, and supported it by argument and authorities, concludes his Dissertation in those very remarkable words of the same great Dr. Owen, who affirms, that *“the opinion of some learned men concerning the transfer of the rite of Jewish baptism by the Lord Jesus, which indeed did not then exist, for the use of his disciples, IS DESTITUTE OF ALL PROBABILITY.”* But sufficient justice cannot be done to this Dissertation by any mere sketch. It merits the close attention, and will liberally reward the critical acumen, which may be employed about it, whatever side of the question is espoused. And a proper acquaintance with this elaborate piece will create astonishment, at the Herculean labor, the deep research, the ceaseless patience, the profound literature, and the fair argument, which are signally displayed by our author in it, to the everlasting credit of his head and of his heart.

And, had the church and the world been indebted to his labors, for no other effort than is made in this **Dissertation** on Jewish Proselyte Baptism; and in his **Dissertation** concerning the **Antiquity of the Hebrew Language**, etc. he must have ranked high in the literary world as a distinguished prodigy. Both these publications certainly have placed him on lofty ground; and, being in the full light, however insensibly to himself, he must not only have left his predecessors and cotemporaries far behind in the literary career; but have thrown into shades his survivors, some of whom are at so vast a distance from him, by an acknowledged inferiority, that even the extreme skirts of his shadow cannot reach us.

This is the man who had been represented as one of two or three, who had scarcely any learning; this is the man who had been called, by a person who was certainly his inferior, only a botcher in divinity. But how few, in his days, or since, have been able to say, as he, *“in self-*

defense,” supposed it necessary to say of himself, that he “*had read the Classics,*” and indeed “*Virgil, at nine years of age?*”

That he had “*read Logic, Rhetoric, Ethics, Physics, and Metaphysics? The Ethnic Philosophers. Platonists, and Stoics? The Greek and Roman historians, Herodotus, Pausanias, Livy, Sallust, etc.? The Greek and Latin Fathers of the Christian Church, and Church History? And that he had also read the Jewish Targums, the Misnah, the two Talmuds, Babylonian and Jerusalem; the Rabbot, Midrashim, Zohar, with other writings of the Jews, ancient and modern?*”

This statement was “*forced from him,*” in 1739, the 42d year of his age, when he adds, “*I am not too old to learn, and, through divine goodness, do not want industry, diligence, and application.*”

And proof sufficient he gave of the truth of this assertion. For, after the year 1739, when he penned the above distinguished section, and while his acquisitions were augmenting with his years, he published his Exposition of the whole Old and New Testament; his Body of Divinity; and other writings. Now if these, with his earlier publications, had been all *uniformly* printed in the size of his Old and New Testament, they would, it seems, have made the astonishing sum-total of above TEN THOUSAND folio pages of Divinity. All this was his own composition; the result of his own most laborious studies; and written with his own hand, without any amanuensis; and published by his own care, no one reading the sheets as they came from the press but himself. This report of almost unexampled application and labor, if spread on a distant shore, where the facts were not easily ascertainable, might have been consigned to the chapter of incredibles; but the results, the astonishing results, of his learning and piety are before us; our eyes have seen and our hands handled the invaluable productions. And we anticipate the felicity and gratitude both of the rising generation, and of future ages, when the Jews, whom the Doctor had so particularly in his eye through all his writings, as well as the *Gentiles*, shall be brought into an evangelical acquaintance with the whole sacred volume.

Hence, contemplating the Doctor in his Theological, Polemical, and Literary career, we conclude, that, when Genius and Candor have projected his medallion, and Science with Justice shall have executed it to his praise, the well-earned memorial will exhibit, what, at present, is conjecturable. On the *FACE* of it will be seen our Author, the principal figure; whose features the golden embossment gives, with perfect discrimination.

In his hand is a page of letter-press, with the date of 1770 on it, intending the final one he ever revised for publication; at the foot of which is written, the *LAST of more than TEN THOUSAND*, and which he stretches out for their acceptance towards a number of persons, representing *Gentiles*, some of whom are leveling a path for the accomodation of others, who are in the habit of Jews, towards whom the figure is looking, as with the ardor of desire, and the joy of expectation. On the *REVERSE*, a celestial Beauty appears; behind whom is seen a motley group of figures, fierce of *countenance*, and of various features, supposed to represent Simon Magus, the precursor of Sabellius, with all the succeeding Heresiarchs, and their followers of every age; some of whom, in a later dress, appear as if appalled at an enemy, but, in their flight,

meet this terrifying legend — CASTIGATOR HERETICORUM, intimating that our immortal Divine was the scourge and dread of heretics.

The foremost figure, who turns her back upon all apostates, and appears with celestial charms, is Religion the friend of literature. Her eyes are somewhat elevated towards the heaven; from whence the rays of an eastern sun, stretching over a range of intervening hills, one of which seems to be Mount Calvary, mildly irradiate her countenance, which principally bespeaks gratitude and joy. With her left hand, gently inclining, she directs us to an inscription, which, skirting the medallion, says, in legible characters, of her favorite — FLOS SCHOLASTICORUM — meaning, by a liberal translation, that he was the pride of literature, at the summit of general learning, and, in his day, of unparalleled erudition in the department of Oriental literature.

But, as if all this were of comparative insignificance, as indeed universal science itself must be, if not consecrated to the honor of God, and the best interests of men; the celestial Beauty, with her right hand, points us to the illuminated mount on which the Savior expired; while the design of the medallion, and the whole reason of the joy in her countenance, is told out, by a label issuing from her lips, which says, concerning the various literature, the preeminent labors, and gracious attainments, of her favorite — He devoted them ALL to his REDEEMER'S praise.

Here, if we pause, let it be to recollect, as Dr. Gill has expressed it,

*“that had it not been for learning, or learned men, we never should have enjoyed an English Bible.”*

And thousands have blessed God for his talents and literature. But when the fruits of his labors are surveyed, it will seem a rational inquiry for ourselves, and which posterity will certainly be induced to make; How could any one man perform all this labor? It is fair to answer — it must have been naturally impossible for any person to have done it, without *method, unremitting exertion, and cheerful perseverance.*

These were perennially the companions of his labors; and *delight* must occasionally have mingled in their society. Indeed it may be literally said that he was never tired of reading and study. General good health also administered to the execution of his design, and a very retentive memory. These things considered in their general effect, the remaining arcana will be easily developed, by knowing his manner of composing the chief parts of his Exposition of the Old and New Testament. Had the indefatigable man studied and preached two or three sermons weekly, as he did, and made these no part of his Commentary, he never could have prepared half the work for the public eye; but the substance, or at least the heads, of almost every sermon he preached being inserted in their proper place, the very week they were delivered, the mighty mass increased with his months. There was seldom a weekday without a line. And, as each evening he left the weight of his mind on paper, he was quite prepared with a new morning, to enter on new sections. In going through any single book of the Scripture, he would sometimes take only a single verse for his sermon; more frequently six or eight — and seldom above ten or twelve.

These he generally expounded one by one. But at other times he speedily paraphrased most of the paragraph under consideration, taking a principal verse in it, which he divided, subdivided, and enlarged upon in the form of a short sermon. When he did so, the people frequently made this remark, — As soon as the Doctor came to the sweetest part, he left off. He did not, however, begin a book of the sacred volume, and pursue it, in every succeeding sermon, from the first verse of it to the last; but he threw a pleasing variety into his discourses, by considering part of one book in the morning, of another book in the afternoon; and then of some other on the Lord's Supper days. For example — the writer of these pages has in his possession the substance of some scores of sermons which the Doctor preached in the year 1737, etc.

By these it appears, that on Lord's Day mornings he was then constantly on the epistle to the Hebrews; in the afternoons on the book of the Proverbs; but on Lord's Supper days, which were monthly, he was regularly on the Gospel of John in the afternoons. This method was very acceptable to his people, and facilitated his daily employment to himself; and to this method, principally, we are indebted, under God, for the numerous volumes he published. But it may also be inquired, how he distributed his time, and whether he indulged himself in any relaxations.

When the Doctor was once asked by the late Mr. Ryland, whose name is mentioned before in this Memoir, how it was he had waded through such vast labors; he answered, it was not done by very early rising, nor sitting up late — the latter he was confident, must be injurious to any student, and not helpful. The truth is *“he rose as soon as it was light in the winter, and usually before six in the summer.”*

In the last part of his life, not quite so early. He breakfasted constantly in his study, and always on chocolate; but came down with his family at dinner, and, even to the last affliction, carved for them. Through the latter years of his life, he seldom went into his study after tea, unless about an hour in summer, but sat below, reading some book, or correcting his sheets as they were issuing from the press: and with some of these he had care enough, partly occasioned by his own indistinct autobiography, for, at last, he wrote very small, and considerably illegible; and partly by the inattention or incompetency of the compositors, from whom, we are certain, he has been under the necessity of getting six or seven revises of a sheet, especially of such sheets as contained learned quotations.

These corrections, which perhaps should not be mentioned among his amusements, served, in some degree, to afford relaxation from his more intense labor, as they gave a diversified employment to his mind. Never was he to be seen indolent. He neither wanted, nor wished for, relaxation from study; for this was his element. But if avocations from laborious application are of the nature of relaxations, such he occasionally had. They consisted of a few visits to his people. He never was distinguished for the length and frequency of them. In the midst of his days also, it was his practice, once a week, to meet his ministering brethren, at their accustomed coffee-house; or else to spend a friendly hour with them under the hospitable roof of Thomas Watson, Esq., an honored member of the Baptist church, then meeting near Cripplegate.

That gentleman kept an open table on Tuesdays for the dissenting ministers of the three denominations. The Doctor generally met with them, took his part, cheerfully, in conversation, with the brethren present; and maintained it, on their return home, whether they came back on foot, or by the boat, as they now and then did. Coming back one day by water, an excellent minister of the Independent denomination, of whom Dr. Gill was particularly fond, said to him, when there was a great swell of the tide, and some of the gentlemen were uneasy, *Ah! Doctor, you don't fear, you love much water: Yes, he replied, I do love much water in its proper place, and I love you too; but Brother Bentley, a little water, in a barber's basin, is enough for some people. You know what I mean, Brother. Yes, said Bentley, in a good humor, I do.* All smiled. The repartee was quite in the spirit of genuine friendship; and it was natural for one of them, when they were got on shore, and parting, quite in the fraternal way, to say, Well, Doctor, much water, however, has done no one of us any harm. True, said he, and we are all sure, that sprinkling alone would never have brought us safe to land.

It seems also that, while his mother was alive, he had the annual pleasure of visiting her at Kettering, and of seeing the fruits of his early ministry in that neighborhood. But the moment he received the news of her death, he laid down his pipe, and, from that time, never smoked again. Though, previous to this, he never disgraced himself as a great smoker.

Besides this he had the pleasure, once in the close of every year, to meet the principal people of his congregation, at some public dinner, with a view the better to procure pecuniary aid for them in the inclement season. At this meeting he would generally unbend. And, though excessive loquacity was no trait in his character, he was as ready to converse, and to answer questions, which all were at liberty to propose, as any judicious person could have desired. Some of his most active friends enlivened these meetings, by discreetly introducing such persons, members of the church or not, to whom they knew the Doctor was partial.

On such occasions, the great John Ryland, sen., often graced and invigorated the company. The Doctor was fond of him as a genuine Calvinist, a good Hebrew scholar, and as having read as much English divinity as any man in his day. Their conversation, being on cheerful and interesting subjects, chained the attention of the company, and generally produced a reluctance at parting. If any thing could detain him from the study, it was the conversation of such a friend as this — or of the eminent Mr. Toplady.

There was a mutual and an endearing friendship between these two. They agreed in almost every point of theology. Dr. Gill had read the Fathers, Toplady was acquainted with several of them. Persons of his talents always afforded him relaxation. Some of his own people also well knew how to render his visits interesting to themselves and pleasing to him. He would seldom converse on trifles; but, touch the string of prophecy — the calling of the Jews — the latter-day glory — or, introduce any interesting question on Christian experience, he was engaged at once, and out of the abundance of the knowledge and grace, treasured in his heart, his mouth freely spake.

Indeed he felt himself sometimes interrupted, by people who, knowing not the worth of time as he esteemed it, called upon him, from the country, principally that they might have the



pleasure of saying they had seen and conversed with him. It was a toil to him to be detained when no information could be either gained or given.

But with people of the right description he was very free. The worthy Mr. Geard, pastor of the Baptist church at Hitchin, is a proof of this. Among his many cheerful recollections, it will always be one, how Dr. Gill received him, as soon as he found that he had come from Bristol to London, with the only design of seeing this great man. They talked and dined together, and the Doctor was happy in obtaining every information concerning the Academy at Bristol, to which Mr. Geard belonged, the condition of the churches, and the general state of religion in the western parts of England.

The Doctor now resided at Camberwell, a village about two miles from London-Bridge. Here his garden also afforded him amusement. He would walk in it, weed the plots, yea, and sometimes work in it, with pleasure, almost to the close of life. But when he was here alone, yea, and even at his meals, he was not quite unemployed about his sacred work; for his family have noticed, how commonly "*the activity of his mind might be judged of by the motion of his lips.*" Thus, in a sort, he was always in his studies.

But labor and literature, abstractedly considered, are not intended to constitute the highest style of man; and as they form not his only excellence, our attention is recalled to the other walks of life, which Providence had assigned him, in each of which he appears to advantage.

He was a genuine DISSENTER from the Established Religion, as appears by his whole life, and by his little piece, entitled, *The Dissenters' Reasons for separating from the Church of England*. But as a Dissenter, he considered himself under signal obligations always to discover his love to the Hanoverian succession — no one was a heartier friend to the PRESENT FAMILY on the throne than John Gill. The *Amor Patriae* roused his best feelings; and in his prayers you might feel the love of his country. It swelled his bosom in his earlier career, and continued with him to the very last of life. Had pride been made for man, with towering ambition we should have introduced part of one of his sections under this article, which he wrote in the time of the great Rebellion; and the page bears his own date at the foot of it, December 2, 1745. Writing on Psalm 25:3.

*Let them be ashamed, which transgress without cause; or, as he reads it, act treacherously without cause, as King David's subjects did; he adds, "Such are those who are now risen up against our rightful Sovereign King George; a parcel of perfidious, treacherous wretches; some of them who were in the last rebellion, and obtained his father's PARDON; others that partook yearly of his royal bounty, for the instruction of their children, and all have enjoyed the blessings of his mild and gentle Government; and therefore are without cause his enemies."* This is the heart of a genuine Dissenter — here is the true patriotism — and manifested at a time when tribes of the national hierarchy had been tacking from one side to another, entirely as it suited their *interest*. This was the Dissenting minister and pastor of Carter-lane; and as was the shepherd so were his flock.

As a MINISTER, in his early days few persons were more animated than himself; and he *gave himself wholly* to divine things. His constant studies prepared him for his public work, rendering it easy to himself, and beneficial to his people. He came into the pulpit, at times, with an heavenly luster on his countenance, *in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ*; enriched, and generally enriching.

In preaching funeral sermons, and on other extraordinary occasions, when he was a young man, and surrounded with large congregations, his exertions have been such that the people have conveyed to him, as well as they were able, three or four handkerchiefs to wipe his face, in one discourse. The sermons, which were not inserted in the body of his Exposition, he generally wrote an outline of, making what might be read in less than ten minutes. Such we have yet preserved in his own hand-writing. The ideas contained in these manuscripts it is certain were familiar to him when he entered the pulpit. But he delivered not his sermons *memoriter*, as it is phrased; treasuring up words, as a schoolboy does his lesson. Of him it cannot be said

*“He toil’d, and stow’d his lumber in his brain, He toil’d, and then he dragg’d it out again.”*

He had so mastered his subject before he appeared among his people, that it was totally unnecessary for him to adopt the servile method execrated in this couplet. And when, after a course of years, the fervor of his youth had much abated, his public labors commanded attention. But this was not secured by a flood of eloquence, by rhetorical action, by meretricious ornaments, or by any of the eccentricities which gain upon weak persons. But the effect was produced by his solemn deportment, his expressive language, his perspicuous method, his nervous reasoning, his interesting address; and, by his substantial matter delivered with accuracy. And, all being ornamented with his own personal religion, and crowned with the superabundant influences of the Spirit of God, he sometimes preached as with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and poured out his PRAYERS, with divine freedom and fervency, into the very bosom of God.

As a PASTOR he presided over the flock with dignity and affection. Mingled were his cares and comforts — such as other faithful shepherds have experienced in their different situations. In the course of his ministry he had some weak, some unworthy, and some very wicked persons to deal with. As to the feeble of the flock, it may be truly declared he was an affectionate friend and father to them. He really “bore with their weaknesses, failings, and infirmities,” and particularly when he saw they were sincerely on the Lord’s side. A godly woman visited him one day, in great trouble about the singing; for the clerk, in about three years had introduced two new tunes. Not that he was a famous singer, or able to conduct a variety of song.

The young people were pleased; but the good woman could hardly bear it. The Doctor, after patiently listening, asked her whether she understood singing? *No*, she said. *What!* can’t you sing? *No*; she was no singer, nor her aged father before her. And, though they had had about an hundred years between them to learn the old hundred tune, they could not sing it, nor *any other tune*. The Doctor did not hurt her feelings, by telling her that people who did not understand singing were the last who should complain; but he meekly said, *Sister, what tunes should you like us to sing? Why, Sir, she replied, I should very much like David’s tunes. Well,*

said he, *if you will get David's tunes for us, we can then try to sing them.* Such weak good people may be found among most denominations of Christians.

But he sometimes was accosted by rude people, and in his own congregation. A cynical old man, who had taken an antipathy against some of his minister's tenets, oftener than once had grinned contempt at him from the gallery; and then would meet him at the foot of the pulpit-stairs, and ask, *Is this preaching?* repeating his question. The insolence at first met no answer from the preacher. But, it seems, he determined not to be often treated in this manner. Not long after, the said churl, planting himself again in the same position, expressed his contempt somewhat louder; *Is this the great Doctor Gill?* The Doctor, immediately, with the full strength of his voice, looking him in the face, and pointing him to the pulpit, said, *Go up, and do better — Go up, and do better.* This was answering a fool according to his folly. And the answer afforded gratification to all who heard it.

But the holy man felt himself exceedingly distressed when any of his communion disgraced their profession, by errors either in doctrine, or in practice. From both sources he had his share of sorrows, as the records of his faithful church-discipline evince. A single extract shall here be given respecting some, who seemed pleased enough, in their own way, with the work of Christ, but who were totally inimical to the work of the Spirit. Understanding, that several of the members positively denied the doctrine of an internal principle of sanctifying grace; or, in other words, of a new nature infused into the heart by the Holy Spirit, in regeneration; the Doctor seriously brought the business before the church, and, as he, by virtue of his pastoral office, kept the church-book, he has made this entry in it of the result of the transaction, with his own pen:

- *“Agreed, that to deny the internal sanctification of the Spirit, as a principle of grace and holiness wrought in the heart; or as consisting of grace communicated to and implanted in the soul, which, though but a begun work, and as yet incomplete, is an abiding work of grace, and will abide, notwithstanding all corruptions, temptations, and snares, and be performed by the author of it until the day of Christ, when it will be the saints' meetness for eternal glory; is a grievous error, which highly reflects dishonor on the blessed Spirit and his operations of grace on the heart, is subversive of true religion and powerful godliness, and renders persons unfit for church-communion.*
- *Wherefore, it is further agreed, that such persons who appear to have embraced this error be not admitted to the communion of this church; and should any such who are members of it appear to have received it and continue in it, that they be forthwith excluded from it.”*

Two members then present declaring themselves to be of the opinion condemned in the above resolution, and also a third person who was absent, but who was well known to have been under this awful delusion, were consequently excluded that evening.

But, notwithstanding this report, it would be unpardonable were this article not also to maintain, that few have been the pastors, in any situation, to whom greater respect has generally been shown than to himself; a respect, which, towards the last, might have been termed a reverence of the reverend man. Yea, it seems almost impossible for any people to have retained a more profound respect for their pastor, after his death, than the people who had been his care. They always spoke of him in the highest terms. They gladly made him the subject of their conversation. They were happy to hear any one speak of him with his merited respect. All of them, without exception, endeared themselves to his successor, by the affectionate remembrance they preserved of his departed worth. It deserves to be repeated, that this is a fair description of each of the members who survived him, as thirty or forty did for many years. All of them are at this time gone down to the dust, except one afflicted brother of the church, who is now in years, and has been supposed, for several months past, to be tottering on the verge of life.

The Doctor not only watched over his *people*, “*with great affection, fidelity, and love;*” but he watched his *pulpit* also. He would not, if he knew it, admit any one to preach for him, who was either cold-hearted to the doctrine of the Trinity; or who *denied* the divine filiation of the Son of God; or who objected to conclude his prayers with the usual doxology to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as three equal Persons in the one Jehovah. Sabellians, Arians, and Socinians, he considered as in perfect opposition to the Gospel, and as real enemies of the cross of Christ. They dared not ask him to preach, nor could he, in conscience, permit them to officiate for him. He conceived that, by this uniformity of conduct, he adorned the pastoral office.

At *Church-meetings* he was admired; one while for his gentleness and fidelity; and another while for his self-possession and wisdom. And when it was necessary for him to *magnify his office* (and no one knew better how to do it), he discovered himself to be both the servant of Christ, and the servant of the church for his sake.

But if in any part of his pastoral work he excelled himself, it was at the Lord’s Supper. Here he was solemn, sententious, and tender; as his people often have remarked: —

*He set before their eyes their dying Lord;  
How soft, how sweet, how solemn every word  
!How were their hearts affected, and his own!  
And how his sparkling eyes with glory shone!*

In *Conversation* with his people he was very deliberate. He weighed their cases of conscience; he considered their trouble. And, not being unpracticed in the solution of doubts, he sometimes resolved them by a single sentence, or by a few apposite words. It was one of his talents so to do.

His ministerial and pastoral labors, “*by the blessing of God, were much owned for the awakening, conversion, comfort, edification, and establishment of many.*” Several persons, who had been converted under his ministry, were afterwards called to the important work themselves. The Reverend Messrs. John Brine, William Anderson, and James Fall. These three he thought of with pleasure and gratitude. Mr. Brine is a well-known writer of the superior cast, belonging to the old school. And Mr. Anderson, as well as Mr. Fall, maintained respectable characters, died

before the Doctor, and for each of them he printed a funeral sermon; from which they appear in an honorable light.

Notwithstanding his exalted attainments and usefulness, he *was meek, humble*, and of a sympathizing spirit. His strong affections discovered themselves on various occasions; especially on the hearing of any remarkable success attending the Gospel, either in private families, in particular churches, in the colonies of America, or elsewhere. And how must he have been delighted when he received information, from abroad, of the acceptableness and utility of his own works? Such information was not unfrequent. The opinion of many may be conveyed in the language of one from America; probably, the late excellent and invaluable Dr. Samuel Stillman, of Boston:

*“I have daily reason to bless God for your valuable Exposition of the Old and New Testament, and for which thousands will bless God after you have ceased from your labors — a work from which, I doubt not, the church will derive the greatest advantage to the end of time. You, Sir, have labored, and we enter into your labors; and by them, many of Christ’s ministers are far better qualified to unfold the mysteries of the Gospel to their hearers.”*

Applications were made to him for advice, from different ministers and churches beyond the Atlantic; as well as from ministers and congregations of his own denomination at home. And all found him ready to assist, to sympathize, and to administer counsel. This, by great numbers, has been gratefully acknowledged.

During the two last years of his life, he was seldom capable of preaching more than once on a Lord’s Day. This affected the attendance of the congregation. The juvenile part of the audience first attended in other assemblies, and afterwards joined them. Hence it became matter of conversation, whether, on the whole, it might not be desirable to procure constant assistance for the Doctor in his ministerial work. The subject having been duly considered, the invaluable pastor made up his mind for himself, and thus wrote to the people:

*“That Christ gives pastors to churches is certain, but that he gives co-pastors is not so certain. A co-pastor is an officer the Scripture is entirely silent about — and which is much the same thing as if a woman should marry another man, whilst she is under the law, dominion, and power of her former husband. The instance of Timothy serving with the Apostle Paul, as a son with a father, is not the case; for they were neither of them pastors of any particular churches, much less co-pastors. The one was an apostle, the other an evangelist, and both extraordinary ministers. The one accompanied the other in his travels into different countries, and was sent by him into different parts, but stayed not long in any place.”*

And to his family and the friends to whom he most freely unbosomed himself, he said,

*“I should not like a co-pastor to hang about my neck, nor an assistant to be dangling at my heels.”*

The Doctor's hand-writing, when he came to reside in town, was sufficiently legible and bold; but it was gradually smaller to the close of life, when but few could easily make it out. He was what is generally termed short-sighted, but his sight was strong; and it pleased God wonderfully to preserve it to him, much as he must have used his eyes. So that he corrected the last work he published without the help of glasses, which he never used. Nay, he could read, even by candlelight, the smallest print, till within a few weeks of his death.

When young his voice was pretty loud, but as he advanced in years it was much lower. In the last part of his ministry it became very feeble, but he was generally heard by his audience, and his own people perfectly understood him. And what had abated in the energy of his manner was compensated by the solidity of his matter, and the devotional spirit with which he delivered it.

The Doctor's person was of the middle stature, neither tall nor short, well proportioned, a little inclined to corpulency; his countenance was fresh and healthful, expressive of vigor of mind, and of a serene cheerfulness, which continued with him almost to the last.

He now gave his Body of Divinity to the world, which was the last thing he ever expected to publish.

His last labors among his dear people were the sermons he preached from the Song of Zacharias, Luke 1:78. *By the remission of their sins — through the tender mercy of our God*, was the *last* text he preached from. His health had been on the decline some time; and he thought his work was done. The decay of nature, however, was very gradual, frequently attended with a violent pain in his stomach, and a loss of appetite; "*so that in the last six months he did not partake of six ounces of animal food.*" But he bore the visitation of his heavenly Father with patient composure, and sweet resignation to the divine will; never uttering a single complaint.

He sometimes appeared to wish he could have finished the Song of Zacharias; and also the Song of good old *Simeon*, in which he thought there was something resembling his own case. And especially he longed to be at his nunc dimittis; *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*, with what follows. And he thought, should he live to go through it, God might then grant him his dismissal, and let him also depart in peace. But his decline increasing daily, he could not appear in the pulpit, and proceed in his delightful work. Notwithstanding, he continued to be employed in his study, till within two or three weeks of his decease, and always appeared calm, serene, and cheerful. He received the warning of his dissolution, being seized for death in his study. **BUT HIS FAITH WAS UNSHAKEN, AND HIS HOPE FIRM TO THE LAST.**

To his dear relative, the Reverend Mr. John Gill of St. Albans, he thus expressed himself: "*I depend wholly and alone upon the free, sovereign, eternal, unchangeable, love of God, the firm and everlasting covenant of grace, and my interest in the Persons of the Trinity, for my whole salvation; and not upon any righteousness of my own; nor on any thing in me, or done by me under the influences of the Holy Spirit ;*" and then, as confirming what he had said, "*not upon any services of mine, which I have been assisted to perform for the good of the church,*" do I depend, "*but upon my interest in the Persons of the Trinity; the free grace of God, and the blessings of grace streaming to me through the blood and righteousness of Christ, as the ground*

*of my hope. These are no new things to me, but what I have been long acquainted with; what I can live and die by. I apprehend I shall not be long here, but this you may tell to any of my friends."*

Nearly in the same words he expressed himself to other friends. To one, he said, "*I have nothing to make me uneasy.*" And then repeated the following lines from Dr. Watts, in honor of the adored Redeemer.

**He rais'd me from the depths of sin,  
*The gates of gaping hell;  
And fix'd my standing more secure  
Than 'twas before I fell.***

This tranquillity of soul, this internal joy and peace of mind, never left him. The last words he was heard to speak were "*O my Father, my Father!*"

If from good works could rise our last relief, Who more could boast than this renowned chief? But these afforded not the least delight,

***They vanish'd, like a vapor, out of sight.  
Not on his character, which stood renown'd,  
Not on his labors, which Jehovah crown'd,***

He placed the least dependence; from his soul he did most readily renounce the whole:

***And, from salvation, fix'd on the rich blood  
And righteousness of his incarnate God.  
There were his hopes, his rest, his joy, his crown,  
And at his feet he laid his labors down.  
Clear was his prospect of the promis'd land,  
Where, in full view, he saw his Savior stand:  
He on his everlasting love rely'd  
Sunk in his arms, and in FULL GLORY died.***

Thus he gloriously terminated his mortal career, without a sigh or a groan, on the 14th day of October 1771, at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, at his house in Camberwell, Surrey, aged seventy-three years, ten months, and ten days.

His removal was deeply felt. It spread a solemn gloom over the church in which he had honorably presided more than FIFTY-ONE years. They immediately assembled to consult on the best method of showing the last token of respect to their departed, venerable, pastor. The church unanimously desired that they might have the honor, if not of making the arrangements for the funeral, yet of defraying the expenses of it. But the affluent circumstances and tender affection of the bereaved family induced them to decline the proposal which had been respectfully delivered to them by the deacons. But, on the day of interment, the members and hearers of the society, in a vast train of mourning-coaches, affectionately followed his remains to the Dissenting burying-

ground near Moorfields, where he was deposited in the family tomb, which is situated, according to the intersections by which the ground is divided, in the distance of 19 east and west; 65 and 66 north and south.

His respected friend and admirer, the Reverend Mr. Toplady, then in the bloom of life, most earnestly desired he might officiate at the grave. This affectionate respect was suitably acknowledged, but Dr. Gill was conscientiously a Dissenter, though he might in his youth have been sent to one of the universities, had he and his parents approved of it. And as he finished his course, most intimately united to his own denomination, without even the semblance of a dereliction either of principle or practice, the church were happy in the appointment of the Reverend Benjamin Wallin, M. A. to deliver the address at his grave, and Dr. Samuel Stennett to preach the funeral discourse; though Dr. Gill “had left directions behind him, not to have any funeral sermon preached on his account, as he never was fond of these services.” The address and sermon were printed; the numbers besides, which were preached all through Great Britain, and in various parts of America, when the providence was known, exceeded, probably, all that had ever been known before or since, respecting an individual, — proclaiming, as with the voice of unusual lamentation, *A GREAT MAN IS FALLEN in ISRAEL*.

After his decease, most of his printed Sermons and Tracts were collected together and published in three volumes quarto.

We terminate this imperfect Memoir with the subsequent brilliant paragraphs; furnishing what we flatter ourselves will be considered one of the first pieces of Biography that has ever appeared in the English language. We are indebted for it to the pen of that elegant and forcible writer, the Reverend AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY, A. B. written July 29, 1772.

Such were the indefatigable labors, such the exemplary life, and such the comfortable death of this great and eminent person. If any one man can be supposed to have trod the whole circle of human learning, it was Dr. GILL. His attainments, both in abstruse and polite literature, were (what is very uncommon) equally extensive and profound. Providence had, to this end, endued him with a firmness of constitution, and an unremitting vigor of mind, which rarely fall to the lot of the sedentary and learned. It would, perhaps, try the constitutions of half the literati in England, only to read, with care and attention, the whole of what he wrote.

The Doctor considered not any subject superficially, or by halves. As deeply as human sagacity, enlightened by grace, could penetrate, he went to the bottom of every thing he engaged in. With a solidity of judgment, and with an acuteness of discernment, peculiar to few, he exhausted, as it were, the very soul and substance of most arguments he undertook. His style, too, resembles himself; it is manly, nervous, plain: conscious, if I may so speak, of the unutterable dignity, value, and importance of the freight it conveys; it drives, directly and perspicuously to the point in view, regardless of affected cadence, and superior to the little niceties of professed refinement.

Perhaps, no man, since the days of St. Austin, has written so largely, in defense of the system of Grace; and, certainly, no man has treated that momentous subject, in all its branches, more closely; judiciously, and successfully. What was said of Edward the Black Prince, “*that he*



*never fought a battle, which he did not win;*” what has been remarked of the great Duke of Marlborough, *“that he never undertook a siege, which he did not carry;”* may be justly accommodated to our great Philosopher and Divine: who, so far as the distinguishing Doctrines of the Gospel are concerned, never besieged an error, which he did not force from its strong holds; nor ever encountered an adversary, whom he did not baffle and subdue.

His learning and labors, if exceedable, were exceeded only by the invariable sanctity of his life and conversation. From his childhood, to his entrance on the ministry; and, from his entrance on the ministry to the moment of his dissolution; not one of his most inveterate opposers was ever able to charge him with the least shadow of immorality. Himself, no less than his writings, demonstrated, that the *Doctrine of Grace does not lead to Licentiousness.*

Those who had the honor and happiness of being admitted into the number of his friends can go still further in their testimony. They know, that his moral demeanor was more than blameless: it was, from first to last, consistently exemplary. And, indeed, an undeviating consistency, both in his views of evangelical truths, and in his obedience, as a servant of God, was one of those qualities, by which his cast of character was eminently marked. He was, in every respect, a burning and a shining light — Burning with love to God, to Truth, and to Souls — Shining, as *“an ensample to believers, in word, in faith, in purity;”* a pattern of good works, and a model of all holy conversation and godliness.

The Doctor has been accused of Bigotry, by some, who were unacquainted with his real temper and character. Bigotry may be defined such a *blind and furious* attachment to any particular principle, or set of principles, as disposes us to wish ill to those persons who differ from us in judgment. Simple Bigotry, therefore, is, the spirit of persecution, without the power: and persecution is no other than bigotry, armed with force, and carrying its malevolence into act. Hence it appears, that to be clearly convinced of certain propositions as true: and to be steadfast in adhering to them, upon that conviction: nay, to assert and defend those propositions to the utmost extent of argument; can no more be called Bigotry, than the shining of the Sun can be called Ostentation.

If, in any parts of his controversial writings, the Doctor has been warmed into some little neglects of ceremony toward his assailants; it is to be ascribed, not to bigotry (for he possessed a very large share of benevolence and candor), but to that complexional sensibility, inseparable, perhaps, from human nature in its present state; and from which, it is certain, the Apostles themselves were not exempt.

His Doctrinal and Practical Writings will live, and be admired, and be a standing blessing to posterity, when their opposers are forgotten, or only remembered by the reparations he has given them. While true Religion, and sound Learning have a single friend remaining in the British Empire, the works and name of Gill will be precious and revered.

May the readers of this inadequate sketch, together with him, who (though of a very different denomination from the Doctor) pays this last and unexaggerated tribute of justice to the honored memory of so excellent a person, participate, on earth, and everlastingly celebrate in heaven, that

sovereign Grace, which its departed Champion so largely experienced — to which he was so distinguished an ornament — and of which he was so able a defender.

His Works are, his *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, nine volumes, folio — *Exposition of the Canticles* — *The Cause of God and Truth*, each in one volume, quarto — *Body of Divinity*, three volumes, quarto — And *Sermons and Tracts*, published after his death, in three volumes, quarto.

AN ELEGY  
ON

The Death  
OF THE  
REV. JOHN GILL, D. D.  
ELEGY,  
etc. etc.  
BY BENJAMIN FRANCIS

*To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

~\*~

Philippians 1:21.

*WHEN the brave hero in the Christian cause,  
Fir'd with the love of his redeeming Lord,  
Clad with salvation, arm'd with truth divine,  
And just embarking on some grand intent,  
Midst yawning billows and surrounding death,  
Bade lasting farewell to his much belov'd  
Ephesian brethren, on th' Ionian shore;  
Mean while declaring, with prophetic lips,  
They should no more his face on earth behold:  
The holy elders, overwhelm'd with grief  
At final parting with the man of God,  
Embrac'd him ardent in their throbbing breast,  
And bath'd with tears his venerable face.*

*Thus the bright flame of sacred Christian love,  
Glow'd in their bosoms; thus their hearts dissolv'd  
In flowing grief for the departing saint,  
Stretching his pinions for his native skies.*

*And thus the grief of weeping Zion flows,  
For her belov'd, divinely valiant Son,  
Who long had watch'd upon her tow'ring walls,  
Timely alarm'd her of approaching foes,  
And fought her battles with heroic zeal;  
Whose dreaded fall fair Salem feels around,  
And Judah mourns through his extensive land.*

*O kindly aid me, thou celestial muse!  
Whose inspiration taught the royal breast  
Of Jesse's son his elevated strains;  
Aid me, O muse, in solemn notes to sing,  
A prophet's death, that claims our pious grief.  
As from the summit of some trackless hill,  
Bewilder'd pilgrims, dreading the black shades,  
And sad inclemence of approaching night,*

*With eager look gaze on the setting sun,  
And court his guidance to some peaceful cot;  
So heav'n-born pilgrims, taught by thee, great GILL,  
The sacred path to Paradise on high,  
With throbbing bosoms, and with weeping eyes,  
Saw thee descending, the' with easy steps,  
The steep of life, (eternal grace thy stay,)  
Down to the gloomy vale, where grisly Death  
Spreads ten-fold horror, roaring for his prey.*

*Not that we dread ought respecting thy  
Victorious combat with the king of dread:  
The mighty captain of salvation fought,  
And, for thee, vanquish'd the alarming foe.  
Nor was thy calm and steady soul disturb'd  
By his loud terrors, as she safely pass'd  
Through his dark borders, to the realms of light.*

*On truth eternal, and unchanging love,  
Firm stood thy feet, 'midst the cold stream of death,  
Smit with the mantle thy Redeemer wrought.  
To part with thee, — our ever watchful guide, —  
To part with thee prompts our succeeding tears.  
Excites our sorrow, and our fear alarms.*

*No more we see thy venerable face  
In sacred Zion, at her solemn feasts,  
Exciting pleasure, reverence and love.  
No more we hear thy heart-reviving tongue,*

*Touch'd with a coal of bright celestial fire,  
Unfold the wonders of redeeming grace!  
No more new streams of truth divine we taste,  
From thy unwearied and exhaustless quill!  
Thy learned pen, incessantly' employ'd,  
For half an age, in thy great Master's cause,  
Thy hand has chang'd for never-fading palms;  
And thy vast labors in the gospel field,  
For fifty-five revolving suns, receive  
The bright reward of an immortal crown.*

*The radiant orb that brings the welcome day,  
With cheering light, and genial warmth replete,  
In the fair east, begins, with early dawn,  
His rapid journey to the distant west;  
Spreads gladness round the gloomy beds of pain,*

*Bids sorrow smile, and melancholy sing; —  
Invites the lab' rer to his various toil,  
And guides the trav' ller in the dubious road; —  
Succors each tribe of every growth and kind,  
To life produc' d by his prolific beams;  
The russet plains with cheerful green adorns,  
And barren hills clothes with abounding corn; —  
Warms the cold regions near the northern pole,  
Thaws isles of ice, the frozen sea unbinds;  
Soars far above each interposing cloud,  
And walks serene beyond the raging storm;—  
When gently down the distant hill he slides,  
And seems extinguish' d in the western sea,  
He rides aloft still in the blaze of day,  
Pursues unwearied his diurnal course,  
And rises glorious in the crimson east,  
So, heav' n-taught GILL! shone thy transparent breast,  
With light divine, imbib' d from the sole fount  
Of evangelic and celestial truth:  
So glow' d thy bosom with the sacred fire  
Of love supreme to thy redeeming God,*

*Divinely kindl' d in thy tender mind,  
Nor ought abated with advancing age:  
Hence thy loud praises for abounding grace,  
Thy deep concern for never-dying souls,  
And tender feelings for each brother's woe:*

*Hence, for thy Savior, thy unwearied zeal,  
Thy various labors, and incessant toil:  
And hence, thy relish and supreme esteem  
For ev' ry stream of sacred truth, that flows  
From revelation's hallow' d spring, unmix' d  
With muddy error, and insipid forms.  
Soon in the morning of thy days, began  
Thy willing feet, with pleasing haste, to tread  
The sacred paths of wisdom, peace, and joy:  
Soon did thy tongue, in evangelic strains,  
Begin to sound the great Redeemer's name,  
That brought salvation to a dying world:  
And soon thy quill, dipt in atoning blood,  
Began to paint the beauties of thy Lord,  
His glorious features, and surprising love.*

*As the nice labors of the pencil grow  
More fare and precious, with improving time;*

*So the productions of thy able pen,  
Where attributes and truths divine are seen  
In beauteous order, and engaging light,  
Shall unborn ages lastingly admire.  
Thy various volumes shall instruction yield,  
To sons of learning, and to sons of grace;  
Shall teach the pastor how the flock to feed,  
And guide the footsteps of his willing charge.*

*When the late day of glorious grace shall dawn,  
The impious Gentile and blaspheming Jew  
Shall read, believing, thy prophetic page,  
With deep repentance, and exalted joy.*

*Celestial truth display'd her beauteous charms  
And radiant crown, to thy admiring eyes,  
Engag'd thee early in her sacred cause,  
And flr'd thy soul with ardor from above.*

*Pleas'd and resolv'd the heavenly fair to serve,  
And combat error with undaunted zeal,  
Thy stripling hand began to wield the sword  
Divinely temper'd, with amazing skill.*

*Sword of the Spirit! piercing through the soul!  
With this brave weapon thy heroic arm  
Nobly defended evangelic truth,  
And pierc'd the heart of heresy and sin:*

*On either side gigantic errors fell,  
And Satan trembled for his dark domain.  
Through the wide field of science intricate,  
Where oft proud error his tall standard rears,  
The vet'ran foe thou closely didst pursue,  
And drive him headlong from his boasted ground.*

*With ceaseless ardor and progressive steps,  
'Thy nimble feet trod the extensive field  
Of human knowledge, and her paths explor'd:  
There thrives improvement; there religion reaps  
Abundant fruit, though of terrestrial growth,  
Sweet to the taste, and wholesome to the mind;  
And there thou gather'dst a surprsing fund  
Of solid learning, sown, from age to age,  
In foreign lands, Chaldea, Palestine,  
Arabia, Egypt, Italy, and Greece.*

*Thy application, how intensely great!  
Early and constant as the morning star:  
Strong smells the lamp in all thy learned page.  
How warm thy zeal for every truth divine!  
How vast the toil of thy laborious pen!  
Kind Heav'n be praised for such extensive grace,  
And splendid gifts, bestow'd on mortal man.  
Thus fraught thy mind, and thus enflam'd thy breast,  
With heavenly wisdom, and seraphic love;  
Bright didst thou shine in thy extensive sphere,  
And light celestial round the nation spread;  
Fair light divine, that penetrates the deep  
Benighted caverns of the human mind;  
The ransom'd tribes in paths of pleasure guides,*

*Through vales of sorrow to the realms of joy;  
Gilds the black horror of indignant death;  
Sheds a bright luster on the gloomy grave;  
And paints upon the ravish'd eye of faith,  
The glorious image of eternal things.*

*Nor light alone springs from thy splendent page  
A genial warmth glows in each sacred line,  
And thaws the center of the frozen soul,  
From living faith's deep penetrating root,  
Extracts obedience, purity, and joy;  
Cheers the fair shoots of growing hope; and dyes*

*The golden produce of unfading love.  
Sad and alarming, that pernicious weeds  
Of vice and error should, in Zion, thrive  
Beneath the rays of evangelic truth;  
While not the rays of evangelic truth  
Contain the poison, but the noxious weeds.*

*So, wanton minds, in former ages, turn'd  
Heav'n's purest mercy into foulest crimes.  
Deep didst thou dig in revelation's mine,  
For soul-adorning truths, which far excel  
The glowing rubies of the Persian court,  
And shine transparent through thy golden page.  
Close was thy converse, intimate and sweet,  
For half a cent'ry, with the men of God,  
Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, priests, and kings,  
Who, from the mouth of inspiration, wrote*

*The sacred volume, thy industrious pen,  
With arduous toil, and skill profound, explain'd.  
The peerless glories of thy bleeding Lord,  
Seen through creation, Providence and grace;  
The bright displays of everlasting love,  
To all the heirs of never-fading bliss;  
The awful wonders of the mystic cross;  
And the vast joys of the celestial world, —  
Were thy exalted and thy darling theme.*

*Thy nervous pen describ'd th' eternal hills,  
Where the clear stream of full salvation springs,  
The spreading tree of life immortal grows,  
And golden mines of saving grace are found;  
And how that stream of full salvation flows,  
In vast meanders, down to earth and time,  
At Calvary the guilt of Salem drowns,  
Removes her stains, her fainting mind revives,  
And fills her sons with never-ending joy.  
Nor error's cloud, nor envy's baleful mist,  
Can veil the splendor of thy radiant page.  
Thy radiant page harmonious truth displays,  
Deep penetration, and seraphic love.*

*Nor will it cease to shine from age to age,  
Till the bright dawn of everlasting day.*

*Naught dead of thee, but thy dissolving clay,  
Thy mental sorrows, and corporeal pains:  
Here live thy labors to the end of time,  
The monument of thy renowned name,  
While thy bless'd soul in realms celestial dwells.  
Sweet realms celestial! far beyond the reach  
Of Satan, sin, temptation, grief, and death:  
Where fair perfection round each angel shines;  
Where glory blazes on seraphic eyes;  
Where crystal joy in streams eternal glides;  
And endless life smiles in unfading bloom.  
Oft to those realms, while yet to earth confin'd,  
On faith's swift pinions, soar'd thy heav'n-born-soul:  
With transport viewed the everlasting hills,  
Bright with the sunshine of Jehovah's love;  
And wished to tread the goodly mount of God.*

*But now, thy spirit, O immortal GILL,  
Is thither wafted on angelic wings.*



*And placed among thy kindred saints on high,  
Now thou beholdest with extatic joy,  
And tearless eyes, that glorious face divine  
We love unseen, whose beatific smiles  
Shed endless bliss on heaven's triumphant host.*

*Now thou unitest with the countless throng,  
In ceaseless praises to the Lamb that died  
His foes to conquer, and his friends to save.  
Now thou communest, on exalted themes,  
With saints and angels of superior size;  
With Gabriel, Enoch, Abr'am, Moses, Paul.  
Brine, Stennett, Wilson and each bosom friend.*

*Now thou perusest with supreme delight,  
The numerous volumes of surprising range,  
Wherein are found the everlasting plan  
Of new creation, infinitely fair, —  
The matchless wonders of redeeming love,  
The fresh achievements of victorious truth, —  
And growing list of spirits glorified;  
Expecting, joyful, when thy slumbering dust,  
Shall hear the trump of the arch-angel sound,  
In thy redeemer's glorious image rise  
To life immortal, and thy soul rejoin.*

*Thus, while our tears bedew thy sleeping clay,  
And trembling Zion thy departure mourns,  
Thy deathless mind incessant joys imbibes,  
In the bless'd presence of the God of love;  
While flaming seraphs and triumphant saints,  
Joy to behold thee in the realms of bliss.*

*Nor long our feet this howling desert tread,  
Amidst the footsteps of voracious Death,  
Ere we ascend the everlasting mount,  
Where all the ransomed of the Lamb shall meet,  
Behold his glory with immortal eyes,  
And sing his love in high seraphic strains.*

*There would we join thee in harmonious praise,  
To HIM that reigns on heav'n's eternal throne,  
Dispensing bliss. And while we wishful gaze  
On the bright hills beyond the vale of woe,  
And view thee sitting, with perfection clad,  
On shining Tabor at thy Savior's side*

*We cease to weep around thy peaceful tomb,  
And bless thy exit to the world of joy.*

*O kind Redeemer, fain would we exchange  
These parched deserts, these annoying thorns,  
For the sweet streams and never-fading flow'rs,  
That glide and blossom in Emmanuel's land!  
Fain would we see thy long expected reign  
On the new earth, and for a thousand years:  
When the blessed subjects of thy peerless crown,  
Shall round thee sit on their resplendent thrones;  
When death shall die; when grief shall ever cease,  
And bliss and glory in perfection bloom.*