

**A Brief Memoir  
Of The Life And Writings  
Of The Late John Gill, D.D.**

(Part 1)

By

John Rippon

*Stanford E. Murrell*

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*Stanford E. Murrell*

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 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.

~ End Part I ~

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# A Brief Memoir Of The Life And Writings Of The Late John Gill, D. D.

## Part I of III

### The Early Years

By

*John Rippon*

*Edited by*

*Dr. Stanford E. Murrell*

# *A Brief Timeline Of*

*Dr. John Gill*

By

*Dr. Stanford E. Murrell*

- **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.*

*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,

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 who hear 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

- 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

“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

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.

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 Olive'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

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The Late 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*

~\*~

*Psalms 60:4*

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 whirl 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.'

'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.

## A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE LATE

**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.

*4, Three Tim Passage, Newgate Street,  
March 1838.*

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 I 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:

resolution, at the time to which the following anecdote relates, here stated as it was told by [pastor] John Ryland, senior, to [Pastor] 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

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

*John Gill, D.D.*

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 unreweared 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.'*

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 lowdest 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

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

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 impromptuous 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

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

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'* —

1. In the eternal decree of God —
2. 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 —
3. 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

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 I 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,

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

‘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

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.

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.

respecting the Messiah, occasioned by a book published in 1724, called **A Discourse of the Grounds of the Christian Religion, &c.** 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, &c.** 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

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 introductorily to

*"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*

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

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: —

- I. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
- II. 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.
- III. We believe that, before the world began, God did elect a certain number of men unto ever-lasting 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.

**IV.** *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.*

**V.** *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,*

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 Tilburyfort, 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

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.

**VI.** 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.

**VII.** 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.

**VIII.** 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.

**IX.** 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.

**X.** 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.

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

**XI.** 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.

**XII.** 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 substance 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