

# The Divine Word in the Theology of John Gill (1697–1771)

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John Gill's theology of the divine Word had ramifications for his understanding of the immanent and economic Trinity. Basing the origin of this divine name on the apostle John's interpretation of the Old Testament (OT), Gill applied the significance of the Son's identification as the divine Word to his understanding of the Son's divine nature and works. Gill's understanding of the Son as the divine Word incorporated the analogy of the mind, inherited from church tradition and bolstered by Greek Philosophy. This analogy was further understood by Gill's incorporation of other Scriptural images, and was further apprehended by the Son's identification as Wisdom. These analogies, names, and images were mutually defining for understanding the nature of the divine Word, the Son of God. The central theological implications of this divine name, which include the Word's deity, eternity, and distinct personality, were all based on Gill's reading of Scripture, most notably in the Gospel of John. The economic implications of this name include the Son's role in the eternal council and covenant of grace and his co-efficient work in speaking creation into existence. As the Word, the Son was not only spoken of in the OT, but as the interpreter of the Father's mind, he knows God's mind and has revealed it throughout all ages, most definitively in the

incarnation. As the divine Word, the Son is the Mediator who intercedes on behalf of the elect. Thus, understanding the identity of the divine Word provided Gill with a way of understanding central elements of his Trinitarianism and soteriology.

### THE IDENTITY OF THE WORD

Seventeenth and eighteenth-century England saw a rise in antitrinitarian theology that required constant attention. John Gill, a Baptist pastor in London, first published on the Trinity in his 1731 *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated*.<sup>1</sup> The spread of Sabellianism among Baptists formed the immediate context for its composition and publication.<sup>2</sup> This work, however, provided a robust biblical and theological defense of the Trinity against both Sabellianism and Socinianism, which were common in the eighteenth century. In doing so, Gill concentrated much of his efforts on the doctrine of the Son.<sup>3</sup> Out of nine chapters in this work, he devoted four to the second Person. In his first of these four chapters Gill introduced the identification of the second Person as the Word, referring to this designation as a “name, appellation, or character.” Gill generally treated this identifier as a name that revealed particular characteristics of the second person (to be described below). He believed the identification of the divine Person to whom this name belongs was easily determined in Scripture. In the writings of the apostle John, Gill noted that this is a frequent name given to the Son, which speaks to his deity, eternity, co-existence with the Father, and distinct personhood. Gill believed that the “Word” in John 1:14 was a clear reference to the Son. He highlighted the use of this name in John’s other writings, including his first epistle (1 John 1:1; 5:7) and Revelation (1:2; 14:13). It is the second Person, the Son of God, who is also the Word of God.<sup>4</sup>

It was crucial to establish the meaning of this divine name since at least one highly influential author, Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), had incorporated it into his subordinationist view of the Son.<sup>5</sup> Gill, in his chapter on the Word or *Logos*, as well as in the relevant areas of his other writings, consistently incorporated the meaning of this divine name into his Trinitarianism. In doing so he articulated and defended the doctrine of the Trinity against both Sabellianism and Socinianism.<sup>6</sup>

## THE DIVINE WORD

Gill's theology of the divine Word, or *Logos*, constituted an important aspect of his understanding of God the Son. According to Gill, this divine name spoke to the Son's distinct mode of subsistence and further defined his work in the economy of salvation. The rest of this essay will be devoted to articulating Gill's understanding of the Son's divine name as Word with respect to its immanent and economic implications.

### *The Analogy of the Mind*

Gill understood that the name, Word, indicated something of the eternal nature of the Son. And like other theologians before him, he found the analogy of the mind helpful for achieving further understanding of the Son. For Gill, the Son is the *Logos* as the mental word, or thought of the mind. Like a thought is generated in the mind, so is Christ begotten of the Father. This analogy demonstrates not only that he was eternally with the Father, but that he is distinct from him. Deity, eternity, as well as distinct personality are all included in this name. In what may be his fullest expression of the analogy, Gill wrote,

He may be so called, because As the mental word, or the conception of the mind, which is *Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος*, is the birth of the mind, begotten of it intellectually, and immaterially, without passion or motion; and is the very image and representation of the mind, and of the same nature with it, yet something distinct from it: So Christ is the begotten of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person; of the same nature with him, though a Person distinct from him.<sup>7</sup>

There are four elements that come out of Gill's reflection of the Son as *Logos*: generation, image and representation, consubstantiality, and distinct personhood. From these elements, one can see how the analogy of the mind may prove fruitful in understanding eternal generation. The analogy of the mind and thought provided another angle at which to behold this divine mystery. With respect to generation, the picture points away from physical, to spiritual generation, an understanding of generation which is more fitting to the nature of God as a divine Being.<sup>8</sup> The Son is described in other Scriptures

as the “image” or “brightness” of the Father, providing additional ways of apprehending the Son’s eternal nature (Col 1:15, Heb 1:3).<sup>9</sup>

### *Historical Use of the Analogy*

Gill’s use of the intellectual analogy for understanding this divine name was not unique to him, or to other reformed theologians. According to Herman Bavinck, the analogy was used by Justin Martyr, Tatian, Tertullian, Lacantius, and others. Bavinck wrote, “Athanasius and the Cappadocians regularly pictured generation as God’s recognition of himself in his image, as the eternal utterance of a Word. The Father and the Son are related, they said, as mind (*νοῦς*) is to word (*λογος*).” Bavinck continued to explain Augustine’s attempt to find “clear imprints on the Trinity in human consciousness and reason.”<sup>10</sup> Richard Muller characterizes William Perkins’ use of the analogy for eternal generation as being a “medieval and specifically Thomist interpretation of the Son’s procession as intellectual.”<sup>11</sup> The importance of both Augustine and Aquinas with respect to the development of this doctrine is acknowledged by Gilles Emery: “Amongst the Fathers, it was St Augustine who particularly worked on pinpointing the nature of the ‘word’ within a theory of relation. Thomas’ project can be seen as a personal development of this legacy. He puts forward his own viewpoint ‘as following on from what Augustine has shown.’”<sup>12</sup> Aquinas’ theology is of particular interest for understanding Gill, as Gill follows Aquinas’ trajectory by using the analogy as a way of apprehending the eternal generation of the Son.<sup>13</sup>

Protestants in the Reformation and Post-Reformation period were also not opposed to this analogy. Calvin, while seeming to give preference to the idea that name *Logos* refers to the Son as the Wisdom of God, he nevertheless employed the analogy to explain this divine name in his commentary of John 1:1.<sup>14</sup> In addition to Calvin, Gill cited Antonius Walaeus (1573-1639), and Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638) in support of this position.<sup>15</sup> Among English-speaking theologians whom Gill referenced in his writings, Edward Leigh (1602-1671) and Daniel Waterland (1683-1740) made use of the analogy. Describing eternal generation, Leigh wrote,

In respect of this generation, the Sonne is called *The Word of the Father*, John 1.1. not a vanishing, but an essential word, because he is begotten of the Father, as the word from the mind. He is called *The Word of God*, both internal and conceived

(that is, the Divine Understanding reflected upon it self from eternity, or God's knowledge of himself) so also he is the inward wisdom of God, *Prov.* 8. Because God knows himself as the first and most worthy object of contemplation, and external or uttered, which hath revealed the counsels of God to men, especially the elect; that we may know the Father by the Sonne as it were by an Image, *John* 1.18. so also he is the externall wisdom instructing us concerning the Will and Wisdome of the Father to Salvation.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Waterland stated the following in a sermon on John 1:1: "But I must observe, that the Greek *Λόγος*, which we render WORD, may signify either *inward* Thought, or *outward* Speech. And it has with good reason been supposed by the *Catholick* Writers, that the design of this Name was to intimate that the Relation of Father and Son, bears some Resemblance and Analogy to that of *Thought*, or of *Speech* to the Mind."<sup>17</sup> Thus, when Gill conceived of the Son as the Word in this manner, he did so following the precedent of the reformed and broader Christian tradition.

### *The Begotten Word*

Gill explicitly connected the *Logos* with eternal generation in his explanation of the intellectual analogy provided in his *Doctrine of the Trinity*.<sup>18</sup> The Son is the "mental word, or the conception of the mind," which is "the birth of the mind."<sup>19</sup> This birth, or generation is to be thought of in a particular way in keeping with the nature of the subject.<sup>20</sup> Thus, as the "mental word . . . is the birth of the mind, begotten of it intellectually, and immaterially, without passion or motion . . . So Christ is the begotten of the Father."<sup>21</sup> This connection reveals that the name, Word, is closely tied to the name, Son, since it is the Son's generation that is intended by the use of the name, Word. This name, as Gill understood it, helped explain the nature of the Son's eternal generation. Thus, this divine name finds importance as it explains a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. In Gill's mind, the doctrine of eternal generation was indispensable, as it provided the foundation not only for the Son's deity, but was *the* means of explaining the distinction of Persons within the divine essence.<sup>22</sup>

The importance of this name appeared in Gill's *Body of Divinity*, where he gave his most detailed exposition and defense of eternal generation.<sup>23</sup> In these pages, Gill defended eternal generation against Socinian objections.

He approached the discussion from various angles, but explained that divine generation must be understood in a way that is reflective of God's divine, spiritual nature: "When Scriptures ascribe generation to the Divine Being, it must be understood in a manner suitable to it, and not of carnal and corporal generation; no man in his senses can ever think that God generates as man does; nor believe that ever any man held such a notion of generation in God."<sup>24</sup> Gill thus removed misguided notions of the Father's relation to the Son through generation, and made way for a proper understanding of the Son's eternal generation from the Father. After producing a citation of Socinus in which he accused "Evangelics" of holding to a view in which God generates "one like himself. . . as animals do," Gill demonstrated his own approach: "But generation must be understood of such generation as agrees with the nature of a spirit, and of an infinite uncreated spirit, as God is."<sup>25</sup> It is at this point that Gill began to rely upon the analogy of the mind, drawn from the meaning of the Son's identification as *Logos*. Additionally, it is at this point where Gill's theology of the Word can be thought of similarly to that of Thomas Aquinas. Gilles Emery explains Aquinas' theology of the Word in this way:

The Word is a person who subsists in himself, distinct from the Father from whom he proceeds; being equal to, and of the same nature as, the Father, he is the perfect expression and presentation of the Father. The notion of *Word* also enables one to grasp what it means for God to be Son, using an analogy which is adapted to the spiritual nature of God. To put it another way, it is the notion of the *Word* which, according to St Thomas, gives one an understanding of *begetting the Son* which is best fitted to God.<sup>26</sup>

Consonant with Emery's assessment of Aquinas, it may be said of Gill that he considered the name, Word, and the analogy that is signaled by it, to be a helpful means of understanding eternal generation in a way that rightly accords with the Son's divine nature. Gill produced an additional example to further the analogy entailed in this name when he wrote, "that spirits generate we know from the souls or spirits we have about us and in us; our minds, which are spirits, generate thought; thought is the *conception*, and *birth* of the mind; and so we speak of it in common and ordinary speech, *I conceive*, or such a man *conceives* so and so." This illustration of the relation between a thought

to the mind corresponds with the coexistence, distinction of persons in the Godhead, and of the relation of Father and Son in generation: “now as soon as the mind is, thought is, they commence together and they co-exist, and always will; and this the mind begets within itself; without any mutation or alterations in itself.” The internal and immaterial nature of generation is thus given shape by the analogy of the mind, to which this divine name points. As Gill penned it, “the mind to God who is *Νους*, the eternal mind, to Christ, the eternal *Λογος*, word and wisdom of God; who is in some sort represented by *λογος ενδιαθετος*, the internal mental word.” Gill provided further explanation of these analogies, quoting both Plato and Aristotle before concluding the discussion. The Son, who is the Word of God, is begotten from eternity. This biblical affirmation, however, does not mean that there was ever a time the Son was not. Nor does it mean that the Son is a created being—he is of the very same essence as God. All of this, Gill asserted, can be proved by this analogy, indicated by the Son’s identification as the Word:

Now if our finite created spirits, or minds, are capable of generating thought, the internal word or speech, and that without any motion, change or alteration, without any diminution and corruption, without division of their nature or multiplication of their essence; then in an infinitely more perfect manner can God, an infinite uncreated spirit, beget his Son, the eternal Word, wisdom, reason, and understanding, in his eternal mind, which he never was without, nor was he before it.<sup>27</sup>

These analogies are given, Gill instructed, to relieve minds and help Christians understand the mystery of eternal generation.<sup>28</sup> Gill quoted Amandus Polanus (1561–1610) at length to further demonstrate how the analogy connects to eternal generation:

Mental or metaphysical generation . . . is a similitude and adumbration of divine generation; as the mind begets by nature, not by power, so likewise God; as the mind begets a birth simple and perfect, so God; as the mind begets immutably (or without mutation) so God; as the mind begets of itself in itself, so God; as the mind does not beget out of matter without itself, so neither God, as the mind always begets and cannot but beget, so God the Father; as metaphysical generation abides, so the divine.<sup>29</sup>

In Gill's theology, the identity of the Son as the eternal *Logos* helped explain the nature of eternal generation against rival theologies. Contrary to Socinianism, the analogy of the mind provided Gill a means of understanding the Son's eternal generation that upheld the Son's eternal co-existence with the Father, his consubstantiality, and, contrary to Sabellianism, personal distinction between the Persons of the Trinity.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Image of God*

As the Son is the Word, he is also the image of the Father and the brightness of his glory. Gill tied this language from Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:15 to the analogy of the mind explicitly as mutually defining aspects of the Word. Gill's interpretation of these texts further illumine his theology of the Word, particularly as it related to the analogy of the mind.

Being both the image and the brightness of the Father says much of the same with respect of the Word—that he is coessential (consubstantial) with the Father but is a distinct person from him. With respect to the analogy of the mind, the Word that proceeds by birth from the mind is the brightness of it. Specifically, the Son is the brightness of the Father. By this Gill believed the Scriptures pointed to the consubstantial nature of both the Father and the Son. It is all the glorious perfections of the Father that the Son shines forth. Being the brightness of the Father's glory with respect to the divine essence, "he has the same glorious nature and perfection, and the same glorious names, as Jehovah, the Lord of glory, &c. and the same glory, homage, and worship is given him." Seeking to further tease out the significance of the imagery of the sun—which points to the Father and Son's consubstantiality and personal distinction—he wrote, "the allusion is to the sun, and its beam or ray: so some render it *the ray of his glory*; and may lead us to observe, that the Father and the Son are of the same nature, as the sun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet distinct from each other, and cannot be divided or separated one from another." The concurrence with the mind analogy can hardly be missed. Although adding to the analogy with the imagery of the Son shining forth the Father's glory like a ray of sunlight from the sun, the import of this imagery leads to the same conclusions—that the Father and Son both exist together from eternity, share the same essence, and yet are personally distinct.<sup>31</sup>

The revelation of the Word as the brightness of the Father's glory provided another analogy, or imagery, for understanding eternal generation.

Immediately following Gill's discussion in the *Body of Divinity* regarding the analogy of the mind as a means of understanding eternal generation, Gill enlisted the imagery of the sun, taken from Hebrews 1:3, to help illumine the doctrine of eternal generation. His conclusions are the same with this analogy as they are with that of the mind:

To this may be added another similitude, which may help us in this matter, and serve to illustrate it; and that is the sun, to which God is sometimes compared; the sun generates its own ray of light, without any change, corruption, division, and diminution; it never was without its ray of light, as it must have been had it been prior to it; they commenced together and co-exist, and will as long as the sun endures; and to this there seems to be an allusion, when Christ is called the *brightness*, *απαυγασμα*, the effulgence, the beaming forth of *his Father's glory*, Heb. i.3.<sup>32</sup>

Commenting on the author of Hebrews' reference to the Son as God's image, Gill stated that the Scriptures' revelation of Christ as the image of the Father means also that he has "equality and sameness of nature, and distinction of persons." Gill quickly explained how: "for if the Father is God, Christ must be so too; and if he is a person, his Son must be so likewise, or he can't be the express image and character of him." Having again connected this analogy to the doctrines of consubstantiality and personal distinction, Gill referred the reader to his note on Colossians 1:15, where this imagery is explained further, and where it is also connected to the Son's identification as Word.<sup>33</sup> In his interpretation of this text Gill explained that the Son is the image of the Father—not deity. And he is so as the Son of God. This led Gill to conclude that rather than existing as a different substance that provides a "shadow" of the Father, it points to their equality, consubstantiality, and distinction within the divine nature:<sup>34</sup>

[he] is the natural, essential, and eternal image of his father, an increated one, perfect and complete, and in which he takes infinite complacency and delight: this designs more than a shadow and representation, or than bare similitude and likeness; it includes sameness of nature and perfections; ascertains the personality of the son, his distinction from the father, whose image he is; and yet implies no inferiority, as the following verses clearly shew, since all that the father hath are his.<sup>35</sup>

This description, Gill remarked, was consonant with Philo's writings about the *Logos*, whom he says is the image of God.<sup>36</sup>

The discussion of these texts is warranted by Gill's own mention of Hebrews 1:3 in his description of what the Son's identity as Word means. An examination of these critical texts reveal how Gill understood the meaning of the Son's identification as the *Logos* by way of the mind analogy, but also how he explained *that* analogy by pointing to other imagery that speak to the Son's eternal nature. Gill understood that the Scripture's images and analogies all come together to help Christians understand who the Son is in his divine nature. It should be noted that in the case of both the analogy of the mind and that of the sun, Gill used them to aid the Christian's knowledge of the Son's eternal generation, which is the Son's defining and "distinctive relative property" in the Godhead.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Wisdom of God*

Tied to the Son as the Word of God, is the consideration of him as the Wisdom of God.<sup>38</sup> Often in Gill's writings, the two names are mentioned together.<sup>39</sup> Considering the metaphor of the mind, it would make sense that the thought or conception of the mind would also be considered its wisdom. Gill understood references to God's wisdom in two ways—personally and essentially. Personally, it applies to the second Person. Essentially, it applies to the divine essence as an essential attribute shared by all divine Persons. In his *Body of Divinity*, Gill considered wisdom as an essential attribute of the divine nature.<sup>40</sup> In other places, such as his exposition of Proverbs 1 and 8, he considered it with respect to the Son personally.<sup>41</sup> The connection between God's wisdom, the divine Word, and the analogy of the mind, was made explicit in Gill's *Body of Divinity* when he tied both "word and wisdom of God" to the "internal mental word" represented by the *Logos*.<sup>42</sup>

The identification of the Son as Wisdom was made explicit in Gill's exegesis of Proverbs. He wrote that Wisdom is best thought of in Proverbs as referring to the Son. This designation speaks "of the consummate and perfect wisdom that is in him." Gill applied this to the Son in various respects, such as his mediatorial office and his incarnation. Identifying "wisdom" in Proverbs 1:20 with the Son, he referred to wisdom as "a divine Person," immediately invoking the name "*Logos*," or "Word."<sup>43</sup> In Proverbs 8:22, Gill further clarified that the Wisdom of God was possessed by God "in right of paternity." This

verse, used by Arius (according to Gill) to prove the Son was created, was interpreted by Gill as a reference to eternal generation. According to Gill, the Wisdom of God has eternally existing with God as the Father's Wisdom and is the Creator of the universe. He commented that this verse "denotes the Lord's having, possessing, and enjoying his word and wisdom as his own proper son; which possession of him is expressed by his being with him and in him, and in his bosom, and as one brought forth and brought up by him . . . when he went forth in his wisdom and power, and created all things; then he did possess his son, and made us of him; for by him he made the worlds."<sup>44</sup> Gill teased out the implications of Proverbs 8:22: "This shews the real and actual existence of Christ from eternity, his relation to Jehovah his Father, his nearness to him, equality with him, and distinctions from him."<sup>45</sup> This name, given in Scripture to the Son, provided yet another way of understanding the relation of the Father and Son in eternal generation and divine action: the Word is the Wisdom of the Father begotten from all eternity.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Gill's Initial Objection to the Analogy*

While in much of Gill's *Exposition*, and especially in his *Body of Divinity*, he made use of the analogy of the mind when considering the divine Word, it appears that he was not always so comfortable with it. In his sermon, *Paul's Farwel Address at Ephesus*, he provided a near-identical description of the analogy which appeared in the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, but then argued that this understanding of the name may be too speculative to be useful:

But this [the analogy of the mind] may be thought too curious, and as falling short (as all things else in nature do) of expressing that adorable mystery of godliness. And, indeed, oftentimes, when we indulge our own curiosity, and give a loose to our thoughts this way, we run into confusion, and every evil work. For though Christ is certainly and really God, as well as man; yet I am afraid that our abstracted ideas of him, as God, of his Generation and Sonship, distinct from him, as Mediator, often lead us into labyrinths, and draw off our minds from the principle things we have in view. God having set bounds around his inscrutable and incomprehensible Deity, as he ordered to be set about mount Sinai, when he descended on it; that we may not too curiously gaze upon it, and perish. It seems to be his will, that our saving knowledge of him, and converse with him, should be all in and through Christ the glorious Mediator. With this we should

be contented. It is enough for us, that this Divine Person, who is called *λογος*, *the Word*, is God; for John expresses it in so many words.<sup>47</sup>

Having made this argument, Gill followed by stating that he believed the Son is called Word because of his work *in the economy of salvation*.<sup>48</sup>

For reasons not given by Gill in later writings, Gill was not comfortable with the analogy for the mind as an explanation of this appellation. But, by the time this sermon was incorporated into the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, Gill elided the qualifying statement and put the analogy forth as a reason for the divine name. In fact, it is the first reason he gives. While there is no explicit reason given for this change of heart, Gill's use of the analogy as an explanation for eternal generation, which he reaffirmed later in his *Body of Divinity*, may provide a clue. It is likely, considering the enormous pressure of antitrinitarianism in England, that Gill was pressed to see the fruitfulness of this analogy for understanding, explaining, and defending the nature of the eternal Son.

### ***Exegetical Underpinnings from John 1***

While the analogy of the mind, derived from the divine Word, is laden with significance, it arose in Gill's theology as a product of exegetical and theological reflection. Gill's understanding of the divine Word drew heavily from the Prologue of John's Gospel, where the divine *Logos* prominently appears.<sup>49</sup> Gill stated at the opening of his chapter on the divine Word that John 1:1-2 proves his deity, eternity, co-existence with the Father, and distinct personhood—all realities included in the analogy of the mind. These realities are given shape and significance as they are further revealed in the Prologue of John.

Gill took the opportunity when interpreting the very first phrase of John 1:1 to explain how it refers to the Son, the essential word, and for what reasons. He is the essential Word, Gill reasoned, on account of his being the eternal Son, begotten from eternity as a thought is in the mind. He is also called Word on account of his actions and by his being "the interpreter of his father's mind."<sup>50</sup> Gill asserted that by "beginning" (1:1), the apostle John speaks of eternity. As he was in the beginning, he was *with* God. Here Gill highlighted the personal distinction, but also the consubstantial nature of the Father and Son: "but this phrase denotes the existence of the word

with the father, his relation and nearness to him, his equality with him, and particularly the distinction of his person from him, as well as his eternal being with him; for he was always with him, and is, and ever will be.”<sup>51</sup> The full deity of Christ was then expounded as Gill continued, commenting on John’s statement that “*the word was God*” (Gill’s translation, italics original):

not made a God, as he is said hereafter to be made flesh; nor constituted or appointed a God, or a God by office; but truly and properly God, in the highest sense of the word, as appears from the names by which he is called; as Jehovah, God, our, your, their, and my God, God with us, the mighty God, God over all, the great God, the living God, the true God, and eternal life; and from his perfections, and the whole fulness of the Godhead that dwells in him, as independence, eternity, immutability, omniscience, and omnipotence.<sup>52</sup>

Adding to these comments the Son’s works and the worship given to him, Gill argued for the divinity of the Word from John 1:1. The deity of Christ is also substantiated, according to Gill, by the Apostle’s statement in John 1:4, that *in him was life* (Gill’s translation, italics original). Gill argued that “life” points to two things. First, the “divine life” that the Son has in himself (*autotheos*), and also the life that he communicates to others. In a likely reference to Job 19:25, Gill correlated this text with Job’s understanding of the Word “as his living redeemer.” This, Gill continued, “regards him as the word and living God, and distinguishes him from the written Word, and shews that he is not a mere idea in the divine mind, but a truly divine Person.”<sup>53</sup>

The divine Word who has life is also the light and the giver of light. It is the divine life of the second Person through which men receive their capacity to perceive as rational beings. Gill identified the creating power of the living Word when he wrote, “for when Christ, the word, breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, he filled him with rational light and knowledge.” For Gill, this proved the divinity of the Word. He went on to argue that all “spiritual and supernatural light,” by which people are saved, sanctified, and glorified, is from Christ. Gill connected the light of men to the light spoken of in John 1:7, whom he identified as Christ: “by which is meant, not the light of nature, or reason; nor the light of the Gospel: but Christ himself, the author of light, natural, spiritual, and eternal.”<sup>54</sup> This identification is further supported, in Gill’s estimation, by appeals to both

the OT and Philo, who connected this name to the *Logos*.<sup>55</sup>

While the above only samples Gill's exposition of John's Prologue, these few passages highlight Gill's understanding of the essential characteristics of the divine Word, namely, his deity, eternity, co-existence with the Father, and distinct personality.

### **THE WORD IN THE ECONOMIC TRINITY**

Gill's theology of the divine Word pertains not only to the immanent Trinity, but also the economic Trinity. There are works of the Son both *ad intra* and *ad extra* that provide a basis for his divine name. These works include the Son's role in the eternal council and covenant of grace, his work as Creator, his revelation of the Father's will throughout all ages, and his work as Mediator.<sup>56</sup>

#### ***The Word in the Covenant of Grace***

Important to Gill's system of theology is his conception of the covenant of grace.<sup>57</sup> In his view, the covenant of grace is "the foundation of all the grace and glory, comfort and happiness, of the saints in time and to eternity."<sup>58</sup> Gill connected the work of the Son as it related to his identity as the *Logos* in this way: "He spake in the ancient council, when the methods of man's salvation were consider'd, consulted and agreed on; and declared, that he would be a surety for all the elect. He spoke for every blessing, and every promise in the covenant of grace. He assented to every article in the covenant between them."<sup>59</sup> In his *Body of Divinity*, Gill distinguished between the eternal council and eternal covenant of grace in this way: "these are generally blended together by divines; and indeed it is difficult to consider them distinctly with exactness and precision; but I think they are to be distinguished, and the one [eternal council] to be considered as leading on, and as preparatory and introductory to the other [covenant of grace], though both of an eternal date."<sup>60</sup> In this eternal council, all three persons of the Godhead were included. When Gill mentioned the role of the second Person in the council, he referred to him as Wisdom, who "was on all accounts fit" to take part in the council. One of the ways Gill identified the Son's fitness for this council was the fact that he shares "the same wisdom, counsel and understanding" with the Father.<sup>61</sup> The Son's fitness corresponds with Gill's understanding of the mind analogy. As the Word, the Son knows the thoughts of the Father

because he is “the very image and representation of the mind.”<sup>62</sup> In this way, the Son’s participation in the council agreed with his identity as the divine Word and Wisdom of the Father:

Jehovah the Son, has the same wisdom, counsel and understanding his Father has; for all that he hath are his; nor does Christ think it any robbery to be equal with him; he is wisdom itself, or *wisdoms*, he is possessed of the most consummate wisdom; in him, even as Mediator, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and he himself says, *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom*, Prov. i.20 and viii. 14. See Col. ii. 3. yea, he is called the *Wonderful, Counsellor*, Isa. ix. 6. Which not only respects his capacity and ability to give the best counsel and advice to men, as he does, but to assist in the council of God himself; and so the *Septuagint* interpreters understood that passage, rendering it, *the Angel of the great council*; whereby it seems as if those Jews then had a notion of this great transaction, and of the concern of the Messiah in it; to whom the whole verse belongs: to which may be added, that Christ the Son of God, was as one brought up with his divine Father, lay in his bosom, was privy to his designs, and must be in his council, and was on all accounts fit for it.<sup>63</sup>

As the Son took part in the eternal council, the divine Word also took part in the covenant of grace, to which it pertained. Gill defined the relation between the eternal council and the covenant of grace as follows: “The council before treated of, is the basis and foundation of the covenant of grace, and both relate to the same thing, and in which the same persons are concerned. In the former, things were contrived, planned, and advised; in the latter, fixed and settled.”<sup>64</sup> What was considered and then settled was the salvation of God’s elect. For Gill stated, “the covenant of grace is a compact or agreement made from all eternity between the Father and the Son, concerning the salvation of the elect.” As a covenanting party, Gill understood the divine Word to be the one who took on the work given him by the Father for the salvation of his people.<sup>65</sup> Gill expounded Psalm 40:6–8 to outline the Son’s involvement in the covenant, which further illustrates the meaning of the Son’s identification as the divine Word in Gill’s theology. In sum, the Son’s participation in the covenant involved his “assent to his Father’s proposals, his acceptance of them, and open declaration of his readiness and willingness to act according to them, which formally constitute the covenant and compact between them.”<sup>66</sup>

### ***The Creator Word***

The divine Word may not only be considered Savior, but must also be considered Creator. Gill wrote, “He spoke all things out of nothing in the first creation.”<sup>67</sup> Gill understood that all three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, act together in creation as “co-efficient” causes. Yet, he affirmed that “by him, the eternal Logos, the essential Word of God, the worlds are said to be framed.”<sup>68</sup> Gill considered it important to point out that the Word’s action in creation not be understood instrumentally with respect to causation.<sup>69</sup> Rather, the Word is an efficient cause along with the Father and the Spirit.<sup>70</sup> Gill buttressed these claims in his comments on John 1:3 by appealing to the Jewish Targums and Philo, which spoke of the Word as the Creator of the world.<sup>71</sup> In his comments on Genesis 1:3, Gill stated that “Perhaps the divine Person speaking here is the Logos or Word of God, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, and who himself is the light that lightens every creature.”<sup>72</sup> The one who spoke creation into being, then, was the divine Word of God.

### ***The Interpreter of the Mind***

As the Word is the thought, or mental word of the mind, he is also the interpreter of it. As the interpreter, the Word is the one who knows the mind and will of God and reveals it to others.<sup>73</sup> Thus, this characteristic of the divine Word has both immanent and economic implications. The eternal nature of the Word, as interpreter of the mind, is demonstrated by Gill from John 1:14, “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father; he hath declar’d him.”<sup>74</sup> From this text, Gill found proof for eternal generation, but, more than that, he postulated that the Son’s being in the Father’s bosom “denotes unity of nature, and essence, in the father and son; their distinct personality; strong love, and affection between them; the son’s acquaintance with his father’s secrets.”<sup>75</sup> The Word is the interpreter because, as one who partakes of the same nature as the Father, he knows his mind as a distinct divine person.

Sharing in the same essence, yet being distinct as a person, the divine Word knows the Father’s mind. The economic implications of this are that “he was capable of declaring his mind and will to his people; which he has done in all generations.”<sup>76</sup> According to Gill, The Word’s divine act of declaring the Father’s will is evident in Scripture from the very beginning.

In Genesis 3, Gill attributes God's voice in the Garden to the Word: "It was he, the Word of the Lord God, whose voice *Adam* heard in the garden; and who said unto him, *Adam* where art thou? And it was the same Word of the Lord who continued his discourse with him, and his wife, and the serpent; and made the first discovery of grace to fallen man." In addition to this, Gill believed that it was the Word who appeared to OT saints as God's will became progressively known.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, Gill's comments on John 1:10 reveal that he believed the Word came in human form before the incarnation: "and he was frequently visible in the world, in an human form, before his incarnation, as in Eden's garden to our first parents, to Abraham, Jacob, Manoah, and his wife, and others."<sup>78</sup> Again, bearing out the meaning of John 1:10, Gill wrote,

Now Christ, the word, came to the Jews before his incarnation, not only in types, personal and real, and in promises and prophecies, and in the word and ordinances, but in person; as to Moses in the bush, and gave orders to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt: he came and redeemed them himself with a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm; in his love and pity he led them through the Red Sea as on dry ground; and through the wilderness in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; and he appeared to them at Mount Sinai, who have unto them the lively oracles of God.<sup>79</sup>

Gill then connected the rejection of the Word in the OT to the rejection of the incarnate Christ, "And so they treated this same *Logos*, or word of God, when he was made flesh, and dwelt among them."<sup>80</sup> Gill held to the idea that revelation progressed throughout OT leading to the coming of the incarnate Christ. He expressed this revelatory progression by contrasting the revelation of God's incarnate Son with previous eras of revelation:

And there is a difference between these two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at sundry times, and in diverse manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piece-meal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counsel, all that Christ heard of the father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the saints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God spoke by many persons, by the prophets, but now by one only, *by his son*; who is so not by creation, nor

by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own son, his proper son, begotten of him, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and so infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is son, and not a servant, in whom the father is, and he in the father, and in whom the spirit is without measure; and God is said to speak by him, or in him, because he was now incarnate.<sup>81</sup>

While the divine Word was revealed in the OT, and while God made his mind known through various ways and by various means—the definitive revelation of his mind has come in the incarnate Word. In his comments on John 1:18, Gill stated that the divine Word, who has “acquaintance with his father’s secrets,” has made him known finally and definitively: “[The Son] has clearly and fully declared his [Father’s] nature, perfections, purposes, promises, counsels, covenant, word, and works; his thoughts and schemes of grace; his love and favour to the sons of men; his mind and will concerning the salvation of his people; he has made, and delivered a fuller revelation of these things, than ever was yet; and to which no other revelation in the present state of things will be added”<sup>82</sup> The divine Word not only knows the mind of the Father, but he has set about to reveal it. Thus, the appearance of the incarnate Word constitutes the full and final revelation of the Father’s mind in this era of redemptive history.

Gill also believed that the Son is called the Word because he was spoken of in the OT. Gill stated, “He is the Word that was spoken of to all the Old Testament-saints, and prophesied of by all the prophets, which have been since the world began; this is the sum and substance of all the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament.”<sup>83</sup> This idea of the divine Word, who is spoken of in the OT and is the summation of all God’s promises, must be connected with Gill’s covenant theology. The Word is the “sum and substance of all the promises” as he is the “sum and substance” of the covenant of grace:

he is the Alpha and the Omega, as of the scriptures, so of the covenant of grace; he is the first and the last in it, the sum and substance of it; he is every thing, ALL in ALL in it; all the blessings of it are the sure mercies of him, who is David, and David’s Son; he is prevented with all the blessings of goodness, and the covenant-people are blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, as their covenant-head; all the promises are made to him, and are all year and amen in him.<sup>84</sup>

All the promises spoken of in the OT pertain to the Word, who is the sum and substance, the centerpiece and faithful one who brings all the promises of the covenant to their completion.

### ***Mediator and Intercessor***

The Son's role as Mediator of the covenant of grace constitutes the final aspect of his work for which he is termed the divine Word: "Besides, he, as the Word speaks for the elect in the court of heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for them; acts the part of a Mediator on their account; calls for, and demands the blessings of grace for them, as the fruit of his death; pleads their cause, and answers all charges and accusations exhibited against them."<sup>85</sup> As the head of the covenant of grace, the Word acts as mediator, and, as mediator, he acts as priest.<sup>86</sup> The works that Gill has described are all acts that Christ performs as mediator and priest of the covenant of grace, which, as we have shown, are all acts that the Word assented to do in the covenant of grace.<sup>87</sup> These priestly works of Christ provide yet another way of apprehending the significance of the Son's identity as divine Word. Gill believed that the Word who is himself God, who possesses the power to create, also has the power to effect his work as priest. In this way, the Word's divine action is descriptive of his work from the foundation of the covenant in eternity to its completion.<sup>88</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

John Gill's theology of the divine Word had implications for his understanding of both the Son's divine nature and his divine works. The analogy of the mind drawn from this divine name provided Gill with a way of understanding the Son's eternal generation in accordance with his spiritual nature. Gill's doctrine of eternal generation is further understood by the mutually defining metaphors of brightness and image, which Gill tied closely to the analogy of the mind. Additionally, Gill understood that there is a close connection between the identification of the Son as Wisdom and Word. Crucial to Gill's understanding of this divine name is his exegesis of John's Prologue, which supported his understanding of the analogy of the mind by proving that the Word is divine, eternal, co-existent with the Father, and yet a distinct Person from him. The meaning of this divine name underscores his role in

the economic Trinity. The Son is identified as the Word who spoke at the eternal council and covenant of redemption, who created the world, and who interprets and reveals the Father's mind. Being the sum of all God's covenant promises, he is the Word spoken of in the OT and is the final revelation of the Father's mind, who, as Mediator and priest, intercedes and provides the blessings of salvation promised in the covenant of grace.

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1. Gill republished a second edition in 1752, from which I will cite for the remainder of this essay. John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduc'd into the Form of a Treatise*. (Little-Britain: Aaron Ward, 1731).
  2. John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D. D.* (1838 repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 2006), 37.
  3. In Gill's extended treatment of the personal distinctions between the Trinitarian Persons in Book I of his *Body of Divinity*, published at the end of his life, Gill would eventually consider eternal generation the *sine qua non* for maintaining Trinitarianism. John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: Or A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1839 ed.; repr.; Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1989), 142.
  4. John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduc'd into the Form of a Treatise*, 2nd ed. (Southwark: George Keith, 1752), 84–86; This same discussion can also be found in his sermon, Paul's Farewell Discourse at Ephesus, on Acts 20:32. John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (1814 ed.; repr.; Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel Press, 1999), 4: 162–63; Very similar comments are also made in Gill's comments on John 1:1. John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (1809–1810 ed.; repr. ed.; Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 7: 737.
  5. I mention Clarke as an example of one whose theology challenged classical Trinitarianism in the eighteenth century. Gill did not cite him on this point in any of the works I have examined, although it is not unlikely that Gill had his, or similar views, in mind when speaking to these issues. It may also explain the reason he devoted an entire chapter to this divine name. Clarke rejected a Trinitarian understanding of the "Word" in John 1:1 as polytheism: "That the Word was Another Self-existent, Underived, Independent Person, co-ordinate to Him with whom he was: And This is the Impiety of Polytheism; fubverting That First and Great Foundation of All Religion both Natural and Revealed, the Unity of GOD." Clarke instead argued that the Son is a person whose being was derived from the Father and who received "divine" attributes in a way unexplainable by human wisdom. He cited both Origen and Eusebius as authorities in his favor: "that the Word is a Perfon, deriving from the Father (with whom he existed before the World was,) both his Being it felf, and incomprehensible Power and Knowledge, and other divine Attributes and Authority, in a Manner not revealed, and which humane Wifdome ought not to perfume to be able to explain: And This is the Interpretation of the Learnedeft and moft Antient Writers in the Primitive Church." Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity: In Three Parts: Wherein All the Texts in the New Testament Relating to That Doctrine, and the Principle Passages in the Liturgy of the Church of England, Are Collected, Compared, and Explained* (London: James Knapton, 1712), 86, emphasis original.
  6. My assessment of Gill on this point has been illumined by Gilles Emery's work on Thomas Aquinas. See more below, specifically endnote 44.
  7. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101; See his similar explanations of this analogy in comments on John 1:1, Acts 20:32, and Hebrews 4:12 in Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:737; 8:342; 9:396.
  8. This is a major part of Gill's argument and use of this analogy. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 145; Emery's chapter, "The Person of the Son" (176–218), has been invaluable for understanding the significance of Gill's thought, especially on the use of the analogy as a way of understanding eternal generation. Much like Aquinas, Gill's theology of the Word helped him understand the nature of eternal generation. Gilles. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 178.

9. I am indebted to Dr. Tyler Wittman for helping to point towards Thomas Aquinas and Gilles Emery as I sought to investigate Gill's use of the analogy of the mind. My conversations with Dr. Wittman have proved invaluable for understanding eternal generation and other related areas of inquiry. Aquinas' condensed thoughts in this area can be found below. I am thankful also to Layne Hancock who originally pointed me to this book that has helped me better understand these issues. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* (trans. Richard J. Regan; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 35–39.
10. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation* (ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 324–25.
11. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca 1725: The Trinity of God*, 2nd ed., vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 313.
12. Emery, *Trinitarian Theology of Aquinas*, 179.
13. It is of note that while it is Aquinas who is credited with developing this theory, his work is rarely cited in the reformed documents that were accessed for my research. Additionally, I have yet to see a citation of Aquinas in my readings of Gill. However, I do not believe this is because Gill did not read him. Gill appears to have owned a folio edition of Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*. *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late Reverend and Learned John Gill, D.D. Deceased. Comprehending a Fine Collection of Biblical and Oriental Literature*; (Cambridge: Unpublished manuscript, 1772), 9.
14. "As to the Evangelist calling the Son of God the Speech, the simple reason appears to me to be, first, because he is the eternal Wisdom and Will of God; and, secondly, because he is the lively image of His purpose; for, as Speech is said to be among men the image of the mind, so it is not inappropriate to apply this to God, and to say that He reveals himself to us by his Speech." John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 17:26; Gill himself cites Calvin as holding to this view. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 4:167, footnote q.
15. He additionally cited a "Theophilacti," whom I understand to be Theophylact of Ohrid (1055-1107). Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 4:167.
16. Edward Leigh, *A Systeme or Body of Divinity: Consisting of Ten Books. Wherein the Fundamentals and Mina Grounds of Religion Are Opened; the Contrary Errors Refuted; Most of the Controversies Between Us, the Papists, Arminians and Socinians Discussed and Handled; Several Scriptures Explained, and Vindicated from Corrupt Glosses.*, 2nd ed. (London: A.M for William Lee, 1662), 264, emphasis original.
17. Dan. Waterland, *Eight Sermons Preach'd at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in Defense of the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ; Upon the Encouragement given by the Lady Moyer, and at the Appointment of the Ld. Bishop of London*. (Cambridge: London, 1720), 5, emphasis original.
18. For support of this doctrine, Gill cites Ignatius, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Tatian. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101; Godet has reference to modern editions of these authors' works Gill cites. Steven Tshombe Godet, "The Trinitarian Theology of John Gill (1697–1771): Context, Sources, and Controversy" (PhD diss, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 175.
19. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101.
20. See Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 145.
21. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101.
22. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 143–144.
23. See *ibid.*, 143–159.
24. *Ibid.*, 145.
25. *Ibid.*
26. With respect to this name, Emery's entire chapter is illuminating (176–218). According to him, Aquinas' "doctrine of the Word is incontestably the heart of Thomas' Trinitarian theology" (179). Emery, *Trinitarian Theology of Aquinas*, 189, emphasis original.
27. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 146.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Gill cited Polanus' *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* (1615), 204. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 146.
30. The way in which Aquinas' theology of the Word functions to hem out both Arianism and Sabellianism, which at root is the same as Gill on this point, is summarized here: Emery, *Trinitarian Theology of Aquinas*, 188.
31. At this point in his exposition, Gill cross-references the Chaldee paraphrases as using the phrase, "the brightness of his glory," and points the reader to Wisdom 7:26. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:375, emphasis original.

32. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 146, emphasis original.
33. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:375.
34. *Ibid.*, 9:171–72.
35. Gill also states that this could refer to his office as Mediator, “in whom, as such is a most glorious display of the love, grace, and mercy of God, of his holiness and righteousness, of his truth and faithfulness, and of his power and wisdom.” *Ibid.*, 9:172.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 143–44; Similarly, Emery notes that it is the “relation of origin” that is “uncovered in the divine Word.” Emery, *Tritarian Theology of Aquinas*, 188.
38. Recall also the quotations from Calvin and Leigh above.
39. While there are more, these will suffice. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 145, 252; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:333, 349, 382; 7:741.
40. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 64–70.
41. See especially his commentary on Proverbs, specifically his comments on Prov 1:20. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:333.
42. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 145.
43. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:333, emphasis original.
44. *Ibid.*, 4:382.
45. *Ibid.*, 4:383.
46. See Gill’s comments on Proverbs 8:22–24, *ibid.*, 4:382–3.
47. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 4:167–168, emphasis original.
48. *Ibid.*, 4:168–171. Gill cited a Targum of Hosea 1:7 as proof that the Son is called Word in this sense. He then outlined four ways in which the Son acts as Word in the economy of salvation. First, he spoke in the eternal council and covenant; second, he spoke creation into existence; third, he knows and speaks the mind of the Father; fourth, he speaks as an advocate for his people in heaven’s court. See more on these four points below.
49. With respect to teasing out the meaning of the mind analogy, Gill’s commentary does far less than Aquinas’ commentary on the same book. Nevertheless, Gill’s exegesis supports the primary doctrinal assertions that he attributes to the analogy. Emery, *Tritarian Theology of Aquinas*, 178, 183–185.
50. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:737.
51. *Ibid.*, 7:738.
52. *Ibid.*, 7:738–39.
53. *Ibid.*, 7:740.
54. *Ibid.*, 7:740–41.
55. *Ibid.*, 7:741.
56. Gill distinguished between both “external” and “internal” works of God, as well as “personal” and “essential” acts of God: “The *external* acts and works of God, are such as are done in time, visible to us, or known by us; as creation, providence, redemption, &c. His *internal* acts and works, which will be first considered, and are what were done in eternity, are commonly distinguished into personal and essential. *Personal* acts are such as are peculiar to each person, and distinguished the one from the other; and which have been taken notice of already, in treating of the doctrine of the Trinity. *Essential* acts are such as are common to them all; for as they have the same nature and essence, they have the same understanding, will, and affections; and the same acts appropriate to these belong unto them, both with respect to themselves and the creatures they meant to make; that is to say, they mutually know one another, love each other, and will each other’s happiness and glory; and have the same knowledge of, will concerning, and affection for creatures to be brought into being be them.” John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: Or A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1839 ed.; repr.; Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1989), 172, emphasis original.
57. For more on Gill and the covenant of redemption, or covenant of grace, see Muller, who argues that Gill provides development of this doctrine by locating all three divine Persons in it. Richard A. Muller, “The Spirit and the Covenant: John Gill’s Critique of the Pactum Salutis,” *Foundations* 24, no. 1 (March 1981): 4–14.
58. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 214.
59. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101.
60. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 209.
61. *Ibid.*, 212.

62. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101.
63. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 212, emphasis original.
64. *Ibid.*, 214.
65. Gill's chapters on the council and covenant are found in Book II, chapters 6–15. See *ibid.*, 209–250. For a short introduction to Gill's covenant theology, see Greg Nichols, *Covenant Theology: A Reformed and Baptist Perspective on God's Covenants* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2011), 17–28; For a larger introduction, see Thomas K. Ascol, "The Doctrine of Grace: A Critical Analysis of Federalism in the Theologies of John Gill and Andrew Fuller" (PhD diss., Southwestern Theological Seminary, 1989).
66. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 226–27; Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101.
67. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 101–102.
68. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 260.
69. Additionally, in his *Body of Divinity*, Gill argued that the Father, Son, and Spirit all act as efficient causes, and that there can be no other principle or instrumental causes. Gill, 260.
70. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:739; 9:375.
71. *Ibid.*, 7:739.
72. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 1:4.
73. On this point, Gill cites Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 102; Godet has identified these and given reference to modern translations. Godet, "The Trinitarian Theology of John Gill," 175–176.
74. Gill's translation, Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 102.
75. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:746.
76. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 102.
77. *Ibid.*, 102-03, emphasis original.
78. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:742.
79. *Ibid.*, 7:742.
80. *Ibid.*, emphasis original.
81. *Ibid.*, 9:374, emphasis original.
82. *Ibid.*, 7:746.
83. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 102.
84. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 226, capitalization original.
85. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 103.
86. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 226, 424.
87. For more on Christ as mediator and priest of the covenant, see his exposition of Hebrews and chapters on the priesthood of Christ in the *Body of Divinity*. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:372–493; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 427–39.
88. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 429–430.