

# “Conjugal Union”: John Gill on Christian Marriage

IAN HUGH CLARY

---

**Ian Hugh Clary** is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Colorado Christian University, Lakewood, Colorado, and lectures at Munster Bible College in Cork, Ireland. He earned his PhD at The University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Dr. Clary is the author of *God Crowns His Own Gifts: Augustine, Grace, and the Monks of Hadrumetum* (H&E, 2021), and *Reformed Evangelicalism and the Search for a Usable Past: The Historiography of Arnold Dallimore, Pastor-Historian* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020). He is the co-editor of *Pentecostal Outpourings: Revival and the Reformed Tradition* (RHB, 2016), and *The Pure Flame of Devotion: The History of Christian Spirituality* (Joshua Press, 2013). He is also a review editor for *Evangelical Quarterly*. Dr. Clary has served as a board member of the Davenant Institute, is a fellow of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, and the Center for Baptist Renewal. Dr. Clary and his family are members at Calvary Redeeming Grace Church in Lakewood.

## “THE GREATEST AND BEST OF MEN”: A SUMMARY LIFE

John Gill (1697–1771) was a Particular Baptist pastor and theologian who stood in the crosscurrent of the evangelical revivals and the Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup> He was born in Kettering on November 23, 1697, to Edward and Elizabeth (née Walker); his father was a wool merchant and deacon in a local Baptist church. The young Gill attended a grammar school in Kettering, but left at the age of eleven due to his parents’ refusal to let him attend Anglican prayer. They could not afford the cost of a Dissenting Academy, so his education concluded and he went to work with his father in the wool trade.<sup>2</sup> It is striking that in 1716, at around nineteen years of age, Gill began a preaching career that led to him becoming a key Baptist leader and theologian and a noted expert in biblical languages, particularly Semitics.<sup>3</sup> For one with an

incomplete education, his scholarly accomplishments are a testimony to his intellectual appetite and abilities; and justification for the conferring of a doctor of divinity by the University of Aberdeen in 1747.

Gill was baptized on November 1, 1716, just before his first foray into preaching. In 1718 he served a church in Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, where he met his wife Elizabeth Negus (d. 1764). A year later the young couple moved to London where Gill took the pastorate at Goat Yard Chapel in Horselydown, Southwark (later Carter Lane Baptist Church), a church notable for a previous pastor, the early Baptist and Puritan Benjamin Keach (1640-1704).<sup>4</sup> This congregation—though it would experience multiple name changes—continued in influence after Gill’s death with subsequent pastors like the hymnologist John Rippon (1751–1836), and Victorian preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892).<sup>5</sup> It was at the church in Southwark that Gill was ordained to gospel ministry on March 22, 1720.

Gill was a controversial theologian in two senses. He engaged various theological debates in his day, and he is a man over whom theologians and historians continue to disagree. Gill’s writing career began early with the publication of *Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song* (1728), based on the 122 sermons he preached on the OT book between 1724 and 1727.<sup>6</sup> It was around this time he also wrote two short tracts on baptism, and a work critiquing Deism called *The Prophecies of the Old Testament respecting the Messiah* (1728). Continuing his sortie against Enlightenment challenges to orthodoxy, Gill enjoined the Trinitarian dispute among Dissenters with *A Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity* (1731). This anti-Sabellian work was based on some of his early Great Eastcheap Lectures, a series that began in 1729 and continued for about 27 years, and challenged the growing Unitarianism in nonconformist churches.<sup>7</sup> His defense of the Trinity marks Gill as a major theologian of Late Orthodoxy. Richard A. Muller says that Gill “stands in the trajectory of the older Reformed orthodoxy . . . [and] remains one of the most significant representatives of so-called precritical exegesis in eighteenth-century Britain.”<sup>8</sup>

Gill’s scholarly oeuvre also includes a four-volume study of the doctrines of grace called *The Cause of God and Truth* (1735–1738). This work has been a source for dispute between later scholars over the question of whether Gill tended to hyper-Calvinism.<sup>9</sup> Gill became a household name amongst Baptists with the publication of his extensive *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*

that began to appear serially in 1745, concluding in 1766. Gill’s knowledge of rabbinic literature is on full display in this work that makes him the first person to complete a verse-by-verse commentary on the whole of Scripture in English.<sup>10</sup> After the commentary, Gill’s next most important book is his *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (1770), a systematic theology that was published in two halves just before his death in 1771. It serves as a compendium to his overall thought. After his death, Gill’s sermons and tracts were published in two volumes in 1773 that include ordination and funeral sermons. His successor John Rippon says that if Gill’s works were all put into folio volumes, they would add up to over “ten thousand folio pages of divinity.”<sup>11</sup> It is no wonder he was sometimes called “Dr. Voluminous.”<sup>12</sup>

While Gill’s concerns were often polemical, the breadth of subjects dealt with in his commentaries and systematic theology means that his thoughts on a broad range of theological topics are of ready service to the church—Rippon says, “The Doctor considered not any subject superficially, or by halves. As deeply as human sagacity, enlightened by grace, could penetrate, he went to the bottom of everything he engaged in.”<sup>13</sup> A study of Gill on almost any theme will bear fruit. In the following we will explore his teaching on Christian marriage, following the structure of his *A Body of Divinity*, comparing it with relevant selections from his commentaries, and examples from his own married life.

### **“LOVE AND REVERENCE”: JOHN GILL’S SYSTEMATIC TREATMENT OF MARRIAGE**

As the title indicates, Gill’s systematic theology is divided into two major parts: doctrinal and practical divinity.<sup>14</sup> Of the two, Gill spends most of his energy on doctrinal issues, organizing theological loci under the doctrine of God. Thus, in Book One he treats subjects like the person of God, his attributes, triunity, and the deity of each person of the Godhead. In Book Two Gill turns to the acts of God, *ad intra*, and explains them through the lens of covenant, concluding with the work of Christ and the Spirit. Correspondingly, Book Three concerns the *ad extra* works, including creation, providence, the covenant of works, and the fall of man. In Book Four he explores salvation in treatments on the covenant of grace and the relationship between law and gospel. Book Five is a major study in orthodox Christology, looking at the

person and work of Christ, with special attention given to his mediatorial offices. From this the discussion flows into Book Six and salvation, dealing with the atonement and the application of redemption. The final part of the doctrinal section not surprisingly ends with eschatology, including subjects like the soul, the resurrection, the millennium and final judgment.<sup>15</sup>

The second part, on practical divinity, is divided into four books which are all categorized under the worship of God. Book One is on the worship of God proper, with discussions of God as the object of worship, the fear of God, joy, spiritual mindedness, and communion with God. Book Two has to do with the practical forms of worship in the church, including the duties of members and officers, with the classic nonconformist delineation between pastors (elders) and deacons. Book Three is on the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, preaching, public prayer, and singing. Book Four has to do with private worship and other matters. It is in this section that household issues like marriage, childrearing, and master/servant relations are dealt with. As well, he touches on the duties of civil magistrates, good works, and the Ten Commandments.

### ***Marriage, the "Conjugal Union"***

Gill's discussion of marriage is relatively short when compared to other parts of *A Body of Divinity*; this does not mean that it is treated lightly.<sup>16</sup> It falls under the section on private worship, "by which I mean, not merely the private teachings and instructions of a master of a family . . . But what I mean by private worship, and intend to treat of, are the personal, relative, domestic, and civil duties, incumbent on particular persons, in their different relations to one another." These are done with a "respect to God, under his authority, according to his will and command, and in obedience to it, and with a view to his glory."<sup>17</sup> He says that the respective duties of husbands and wives to one another are "summed up in these two general comprehensive ones: love on the one part, and reverence on the other, Eph. v. 33."<sup>18</sup> This is based on the "conjugal union" and "marriage relation" between the husband and wife. This union is between "male and female," "one man" and "one woman," based on the original creation of Genesis 1:27.

Gill then makes an incidental and curious statement about God's providence respecting the male population. He argues that throughout history God has maintained an equal number of males and females on the earth;

the ratio typically being thirteen to twelve, or fourteen to thirteen with the "surplus on the side of the males" for the supply of war and for the seas.<sup>19</sup> While this appears to be a strained suggestion, recent sex ratio studies have shown demonstrable growths in the births of sons during war time. Based on a study of birth ratios during World War I and II, for instance, Marianne E. Berstein says, "In wartime, when opportunity for fertilization is decreased in a large segment of the population because husbands are away in the armed forces except for short leaves, proportionally more children will be born to the 'more quickly fertile parents and, since 'more quickly fertile' parents apparently have more than the average number of sons in the overall sex ratio will be raised."<sup>20</sup> So, interestingly, Gill's statement seems to conform to contemporary population studies.

The conjugal union makes the husband and wife "one flesh," according to Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:6; of the latter Gill says, "They were two before marriage, but now no more so."<sup>21</sup> The union is "indissoluble" except by death or by infidelity on the part of either party, whether by adultery or fornication (Romans 7:2; Matthew 5:32). In his comment on Romans 7:2 he includes desertion, based on 1 Corinthians 7:15, in what is permissible for divorce; both adultery and desertion are "equal to death."<sup>22</sup> Commenting on the Matthew text, Gill argues that "fornication" includes adultery, incest, or "any unlawful copulation." He also says that Jesus' permissibility clause for divorce is directly contrary to the Pharisaic understanding, based on Rabbi Hillel's teaching, that "admitted of divorce, upon the most foolish and frivolous pretences whatever."<sup>23</sup>

Marriage is to be entered into not by compulsion, but "mutual consent" and with the consent of the parents or guardians of the couple: "[N]one are to be forced into it against their wills; no, not by their superiors; it must be their own voluntary act and deed."<sup>24</sup> Citing Hebrews 13:4, Gills says that marriage is an honorable state, and is so because God instituted it at creation. The marriage between Adam and Eve was constructed by God who "made the woman for an help-meet, and brought her to the man, proposed her to him ... and she became his wife ... it was the Lord's act and deed."<sup>25</sup> Likewise, in his comment on Genesis 1:28 he says that marriage is an ordinance instituted in paradise, and is thus honorable.<sup>26</sup> It is also honorable because "Christ honoured it by his presence, and at such a solemnity wrought his first miracle, and manifested forth the glory of his Deity" at the wedding

feast of Cana in John 2:1, 2, 11.

Gill further discusses the relationship between marriage and Christ by arguing that the marriage in Eden typifies “the conjugal union of Christ and the church, Eph. v. 32.”<sup>27</sup> Adam is a type of Christ while Eve is a type of the church: “Adam was first formed, and then Eve; Christ was before the church and, indeed before all things; Eve was formed from Adam . . . the church has her original from Christ, and her subsistence by him.” As the Lord brought Eve to Adam,<sup>28</sup> so the church is brought to Christ “and given to him by his Father, to be his spouse and bride, who he liked, accepted of, and betrothed to himself; and her consent is obtained by the drawings and influences of his Father’s grace.”<sup>29</sup> This prelapsarian prefiguring of Christ’s relationship with the church—argued in a fashion not surprising for Gill—is an illustration of what he calls “the supralapsarian scheme”: Christ had an interest in his church before she fell in Adam.<sup>30</sup> Gill admits, however, that “this is no direct proof” of supralapsarianism, but only serves to illustrate it. Gill cites Ephesians 5:23 as a proof-text for his allegorical interpretation of Eve as a type of the church, though in a literal reading of this verse, Paul is not making a typological connection, but rather is discussing the metaphorical relation between wives and the church. Surprisingly, Gill does not refer to 1 Timothy 2:15, nor does he make this connection in his commentary on this passage nor on Genesis 2:22-24. It is worth noting that Gill’s interpretation of Eve as a type of the church was common in church history. For instance, Jerome (ca. 342–420) argued, based on this Paul’s words to the Ephesians, that, “Even all that is said of Adam and Eve is to be interpreted with reference to Christ and the church.”<sup>31</sup> John Flood shows that this view was held by patristic and medieval theologians like Tertullian, Augustine, Bonaventure, or Nicholas of Lyra—Flood says “it is the spirit of Tertullian, which, to one degree or another, presides over the history of subsequent Genesis exegesis.”<sup>32</sup>

Gill is on sure exegetical ground when he roots the original intent of marriage in creation. The command to “increase and multiply” remains in effect, but since the Fall marriage also serves to protect against sexual sin: it is “to prevent incontinence, and to avoid fornication.”<sup>33</sup> In his discussion of Eve’s creation from Adam’s side in Genesis 2:22 Gill links the purpose of marriage to companionship and love—and also affirms the ontological equality of man and woman: “It is commonly observed, and pertinently enough, that the woman was not made from the superior part of man, that

she might not be thought to be above him, and have power over him; nor from any inferior part, as being below him, and to be trampled on by him; but out of his side, and from one of his ribs, that she might appear to be equal to him; and from a part near his heart, and under his arms, to show that she should be affectionately loved by him, and be always under his care and protection."<sup>34</sup>

### ***"Glued Together": The Duties of Husbands to their Wives***

Continuing with Ephesians 5:23 in *A Body of Divinity*, Gill explains the duties of husbands and wives. Beginning with husbands, Paul tells them that they are to love their wives. Gill divides husbandly love into three parts: the nature of love; the manner of loving; and the reasons for love. A husband's love for his wife, first of all, is superior to love he may have for "any other creature." Thus, his love for her supersedes love for neighbour, parent, or child because "a man's wife is himself, and loving her is loving himself, the other part of himself."<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere he says, "[T]hey are, as it were, glued together, and make but one."<sup>36</sup> A husband's love should be rooted in delight; he should take pleasure in his wife's "person, company, and conversation." This is so because Christ's delight is the church, "his Hephzibah," a reference to the wife of King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 21:1, her name meaning "my delight is her."<sup>37</sup> His love is to be chaste and singular, which bars against polygamy: "a man should not have more wives than one, whereby his love would be divided or alienated, and hate the one and love the other, as is commonly the case."<sup>38</sup> Gill reaffirms the stance of the *Second London Confession of Faith* (1689) against polygamy and distances the Baptist community from continental Anabaptists, the more extreme of who practiced it.<sup>39</sup>

In a tender section, Gill writes that the husband is to express his love not only in words, but also "in deed and in truth" because facts "speak louder than words."<sup>40</sup> This is done by providing for her material comforts including food and clothing. He is also to protect her from harm and is to be a "covering to her, as Abraham was to Sarah."<sup>41</sup> His protection of her is to extend so that he would "risk his life in her defense and for her rescue."<sup>42</sup> The husband should do "every thing that may contribute to her pleasure, peace, comfort, and happiness," he is to show deep care for "how he may please his wife."<sup>43</sup> Finally, he is to seek her spiritual welfare, especially her conversion if she is not a Christian, and her "spiritual peace, comfort, and edification."<sup>44</sup> When

it comes to a husband's demeanor towards his wife Gill says, "be not bitter against them; not giving bitter language, threatening words, sour looks, and especially bitter blows; which is cruel, churlish, barbarous, and brutish, unbecoming the man and the christian [*sic*]."45

Gill modeled this tenderness with his own wife. Early in his ministry, Elizabeth had experienced a miscarriage, and Gill devoted much time and energy to see that she was comforted. This became a cause for trouble in the church, as a number of the women believed that he was spoiling her.<sup>46</sup> He maintained this care for Elizabeth throughout their marriage, especially as she suffered chronic ill-health. A story about Gill's devotion to his wife is recounted in a letter to the editor of *The Baptist Magazine*. Written by Thomas Quinn, a friend of Gill's niece, Jane Smith, it details aspects of the Gills' home life. Smith, who was elderly at the time of Quinn's writing, told of what her time living with the Gills in her younger years had been like. Smith had been brought into the Gill home to help care for her sick aunt. The Gills lived in an attached house next to their daughter and her husband, Gill's publisher, George Keith (d. 1782). The shared walls of the two houses had been knocked down on the top floor so that the Gills' daughter moved between them to help care for her mother. Smith described Gill as being "unwearied in his assiduity to alleviate [Elizabeth's] distress." He labored so diligently to help his wife that "injury was done to his health." Quinn, summarizing Smith, described the Gill home as one of "harmony and mutual goodwill," and described the Gill marriage as one of "domestic felicity."<sup>47</sup> In her final years, Elizabeth was an invalid, and Gill spent much of his time caring for her. She died on October 10, 1764, and on the following October 21 Gill preached her funeral sermon on Hebrews 11:16. At the end he was to give a short account of her life, "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."<sup>48</sup>

In his comment on Ephesians 5:25 Gill says, "Many are the reasons why husbands should love their wives" and proceeds to list them; for instance, they are companions, covenant partners, and their own bodies.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, in *A Body of Divinity* he lists the first reason as the "nearness" between spouses because they are one flesh; the wife is "himself" and she is to "be loved as his own body." In turn, she is his "help-meet" and companion "in prosperity and adversity" and shares the joys and sorrows of life, which is the second



reason.<sup>50</sup> The third is that she is the glory and honor of her husband who makes him respectable among his peers. The fourth reason Gill says is “[t]he strongest and most forcible argument of all.” This is the “love of Christ to his church; which is the pattern and exemplar of a man’s love to his wife, and most strongly enforces it.”<sup>51</sup>

### ***“Not Servile”: The Duties of Wives to their Husbands***

Following still with Paul in Ephesians, Gill turns to the seven duties wives have toward their husbands, namely, reverence; submission; obedience; assistance; curtailed authority; and steadfastness. Reverence is to be both internal and external, meaning that though she may outwardly show her husband respect, a wife should also revere her husband in her heart because he is given to her by God. She should think highly of him and not despise him. Gill’s statements on submission and obedience, which are so controversial today, are surprisingly balanced and warm. He takes Paul’s words in Ephesians 5:33 about wives submitting in “everything” to mean “relating to family affairs” only; the husband does not have absolute control over his wife.<sup>52</sup> More than this, a wife is not to go along with her husband if he does anything “contrary to the laws of God and Christ,” because God is to be obeyed over men. Subjection of the wife to her husband is “not a servile one”—she is not to be treated like a servant, and even less like a slave. Rather, the picture of the body following the head is a better analogy; the head governs, but it is to govern wisely, with tenderness and a “gentle manner” as Abraham did with Sarah.<sup>53</sup> In his comment on Ephesians 5:22 Gill says that a wife is subject to her husband only, “not to any other man, nor to her children, nor to her servants, or any brought into her house.” Because of this, the wife should render her subjection more easily, willfully, and cheerfully.<sup>54</sup>

The main marital function of a wife is to help her husband in the affairs of the family; the “original end of her creation.” She has rule over the home, including the servants (if there are any), and citing 1 Timothy 2:14, she manages “all domestic business with wisdom and prudence.”<sup>55</sup> At this point it might have been useful for Gill to cite Proverbs 31 and the industrious wife who serves her family in business ventures. As Sharon James rightly observes, Gill’s treatment of wives omits any discussion of Proverbs 31. When he does interpret it, he falls to allegory: “[T]he whole chapter is seen only as a picture of the Church; and thus he loses sight of the reality of the ideal

presented: a powerful woman indeed!”<sup>56</sup> Because the woman is to have no authority over her husband in family affairs, she is to “do nothing without his will and consent, and never contrary to it.” Rather, she is to go “with him wherever God in his providence, and his business in life call him,” just as Sarah did with Abraham in Egypt and Ruth did with Naomi.

In their marriage, Elizabeth Gill took similar charge of her home so that her husband could devote his time to ministry and writing. In the introductory biography to *Sermons and Tracts*, probably written by Rippon, Gill’s sentiments to Elizabeth are described: “The Doctor was always of opinion, that his marriage with this excellent person, was the principal thing for which God in his providence sent him to that place [the church where Gill met her]: and he ever considered his marriage to her, as one of the capital blessings of his life. For she proved affectionate, discreet, and careful: and, by her unremitting prudence, took off from his hands all domestic avocations, so that he could, with more leisure, and greater ease of mind, pursue his studies, and devote himself to his ministerial service.”<sup>57</sup>

These duties to wives are then followed by six reasons—though Gill says these are only “some”—why she is to perform them. The first is the role given to women at creation. Following Paul in 1 Timothy 2:13, Gill argues that because Adam was formed first, and because Eve was made from Adam, she has a subordinate role, though in his comment on the creation of Eve in Genesis 1, she is fully his equal before God. Secondly, Eve was deceived by the serpent in the Fall and drew her husband into it, and so earned part of the curse for herself. Thirdly, the wife is subject to her husband because he is her head. James observes that for Gill, male headship “is not to be exercised for the good of the husband, but for the good of the wife; just as Christ, the head of the Church, sacrificed himself for her good.”<sup>58</sup> The value of male headship for the wife is seen in his comment on Ephesians 5:24: “[B]eing wholly dependent upon him, and entirely resigned to him, and receiving all from him; who is alone all her expectation of provision, protection, comfort, and happiness, wherefore she has respect to all his commands, and esteems all his precepts concerning all things to be right.” Thus she “yields a cheerful [*sic*], voluntary, sincere, and hearty obedience to them; arising from a principle of love to him, and joined with honour, fear, and reverence of him.”<sup>59</sup> In this connection, fourthly, women are the weaker vessel and are in need of protection, which is provided by their head.

Fifthly, womanly honor demands that she act in a creditable way. Decency is an ornament to women, “and the best ornament they can deck themselves with.”<sup>60</sup> Gill’s sixth and final reason for the wife’s duty to her husband is “the chief argument of all”: it is the subjection of the church to Christ. In Ephesians 5:22–24, Paul lays out a typological relationship between husbands and wives, and Christ and the church. Because the wife typifies the church in her marriage, she is to model godly submission to her husband, who typifies Christ.

Gill sums up all that he has said about the mutual duties of husbands and wives to one another saying, “In short, both parties should consult each other’s pleasure, peace, comfort, and happiness, and especially the glory of God; that his word, ways, and worship, may not be reproached and evil spoken of, through any conduct of theirs.”<sup>61</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In all that John Gill says about marriage, it is clear from his concluding reasons for the duties of each the husband and the wife that the gospel is the bedrock of Christian marriage. Because marriage typifies Christ’s relationship with the church, Christians are to strive toward love, companionship, humility, and balance in their marriages. George M. Ella observes that Gill’s “doctrines of the atonement and redemption show clearly a suffering Husband dying vicariously for the Bride he loved, loves and always will love. Few have depicted this truth better than Gill.”<sup>62</sup> The witness of the gospel is at stake. From his own marriage to Elizabeth, we see that Gill strove to picture this, for the good of his family and for the glory of God.

---

1. For more on Gill see John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late John Gill*, D. D. (London: John Bennett, 1838; rpr. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Gano Books, 1992), the first page of which comes the quote at the beginning of this section; George Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Durham, UK: Go Publications, 1995); Robert W. Oliver “John Gill (1697–1771): His Life and Ministry,” in Michael A. G. Haykin ed., *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden/New York/Koln: E. J. Brill, 1997), 6–50; Robert W. Oliver, “John Gill (1697–1771),” in Michael A. G. Haykin ed., *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 1:145–166; Olin C. Robinson, “The Legacy of John Gill,” *Baptist Quarterly* 24.3 (July 1971): 111–125. For Rippon as Baptist historian see K. R. Manley, “John Rippon and Baptist Historiography,” *Baptist Quarterly* 28.3 (1979): 109–125.

2. Rippon indicates that Gill did not pursue post-secondary education because of his Dissenting beliefs, England's universities required conformity to the Church of England: "Dr. Gill was conscientiously a Dissenter, though he might in his youth have been sent to one of the universities, had he and his parents approved of it," Rippon, *Memoir*, 135–136.
3. For an example of Gill's Hebrew learning see John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of Hebrew-Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents* (London: G. Keith, 1767).
4. Cf. Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd Rev. Ed. (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2015).
5. Tom Nettles, *The Child is Father of the Man: C. H. Spurgeon* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2021).
6. Gill interprets Songs as an allegory of Christ's love for the church, and so this text is not directly relevant to his views of marriage per se. Cf. Eric Williams, "John Gill (1697–1771): Some Bi-Centenary Thoughts, especially on his Work on The Song of Solomon," in *The Evangelical Library Bulletin* 47 (Autumn 1971), 2–7; Jerad Adam File, "John Gill's Ecclesiology with Reference to His Work: An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song Commonly Called Canticles," (unpublished ThM dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).
7. Cf. B. R. White, "John Gill in London, 1719–1729, A Biographical Fragment," *Baptist Quarterly* 22.2 (April 1967), 87. For the problem of Unitarianism amongst Dissenters more broadly, see Ian Hugh Clary, "Not the same God': Alexander Carson (1776–1844) and the Ulster Trinitarian Controversy," *Perichoresis*, forthcoming.
8. Richard A. Muller, "Review of The Collected Writings of John Gill by John Gill," in *Calvin Theological Journal* 38.2 (2003), 380. For a discussion of Late Orthodoxy, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 1:32. For pre-critical exegesis see David Steinmetz's classic essay, David Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," in David Steinmetz, ed., *Taking the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–14.
9. Curt Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1983), for a response see Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 73–107. Reviewing Nettles' work, Oliver disagrees with his treatment of Gill and hyper-Calvinism, see Robert W. Oliver, "By His Grace and for His Glory," *The Banner of Truth* 284 (May 1987), 32. Nettles has since tempered his conclusions in Tom J. Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771)*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin, 153 n.60.
10. Oliver, "John Gill," 161.
11. Rippon, *Memoir*, 111.
12. Cf. Timothy George, "The Ecclesiology of John Gill" in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771)*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin, 225.
13. Rippon, *Memoir*, 137.
14. While there are a number of recent reprints, this essay quotes from the third volume and fourth book of John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity; or, A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures New Edition* (London: W. Winterbotham, 1796).
15. For a summary of the method, sources, and select treatment of Gill's Body of Divinity see Richard A. Muller, "John Gill and the Reformed Tradition," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771)*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin, 51–68.
16. In terms of sources for the section on marriage, Gill only refers to Scripture, the only non-biblical reference is a footnote where he quotes the Stoic philosopher Seneca.
17. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:399.
18. *Ibid.*, 3:400.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Marianne E. Bernstein, "Studies in The Human Sex Ratio 5. A Genetic Explanation of the Wartime Increase in the Secondary Sex Ration" in *American Journal of Human Genetics* 10.1 (1958): 69-70.
21. John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament Both Doctrinal and Practical New Edition* (London: George Keith, 1774), 1:274. *Comment on Matthew 19:6*.
22. *Ibid.*, 3:461.
23. *Ibid.*, 1:62. David Instone-Brewer also argues that Jesus agreed more generally with the school of Shammai on appropriate grounds for divorce, against the school of Hillel. David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).
24. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:400.

25. Ibid.
26. John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament* (London: George Keith, 1763), 1:10.
27. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:400. For more on Gill on marriage as a picture of Christ and the church see Matt Haste, “A Type of the Marriage of Christ: John Gill on Marriage,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 6.2 (2014): 289–302.
28. In his comment on Gen 2:21 Gill notes Adam’s surprise at awakening to meet Eve for the first time: Adam was put to sleep so “that he might be the more surprised at the sight of her, just awaking out of sleep, to see so lovely an object, so much like himself, and made out of himself, and in so short a time, as whilst he was taking a comfortable nap.” Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:19.
29. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:400–401.
30. Ibid., 3:401.
31. Jerome, “Epistle to the Ephesians 3.5.32,” in Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VII: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 189.
32. John Flood, *Representations of Eve in Antiquity and the English Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 14. See also C. P. Bammel, *Tradition and Exegesis in Early Christian Writers* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum Collected Studies, 1995), 180.
33. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:401. Gill does not come down strong on whether “increase and multiply” is an express command; at the very least it is advice for the increase of mankind and the filling of the earth. Gill *Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:10. For marriage as a means of resisting sexual sin see Jonathan Boyd, “John Gill on Resisting Sexual Temptation,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 6.1 (2014): 254–271.
34. Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:19.
35. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:401.
36. Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:19.
37. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:401.
38. Ibid.
39. John Witte remarks that the Anabaptists at Münster “thought polygamy was a spiritual duty for all members of the community to channel their natural passions toward the production of more saints in emulation of the Old Testament patriarchs and in anticipation of the return of the Lord.” John Witte Jr., *The Western Case for Monogamy Over Polygamy*, Cambridge Studies in Law and Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 239
40. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:401.
41. Ibid., 3:402.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Sharon James, “‘The Weaker Vessel’: John Gill’s Reflections on Women, Marriage and Divorce,” in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771)*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin, 217.
47. Thomas Quinn, “Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill,” *The Baptist Magazine* (April 1829): 148–151. I am grateful to Jared Skinner of Louisville, Kentucky, for this source.
48. Rippon, *Memoir*, 10. The sermon was printed in *Sermons and Tracts*, and includes a footnote reprinting an unpublished manuscript found in Gill’s study with his thoughts on Elizabeth’s death. John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 1:578–579.
49. John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament Both Doctrinal and Practical*, New Edition (London: George Keith, 1774), 4:289.
50. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:402–403.
51. Ibid., 3:403.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, 4:288.
55. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:403.
56. James, “Weaker Vessel,” 219.
57. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 1:xiv.
58. James, “Weaker Vessel,” 217.
59. Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, 288–289.
60. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 3:404.

61. Ibid.
62. Ella, *John Gill*, 24.