

# Remembering Baptist Heroes: The Example of John Gill

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Should Christians have heroes? It is very tempting in an age besotted with celebrities from the realms of entertainment and sport to answer this question with a resounding no, were it not for one fact—the Scriptures speak otherwise. The Bible is filled with narratives that are designed, among other things, to display patterns of life to emulate and ways of behavior to avoid.<sup>1</sup> The author of the letter to the Hebrews, for example, has a lengthy section of his work devoted to past heroes of the faith—what we know as Hebrews 11—that calls upon the original readers to live wholeheartedly for God by encouraging them through the lives of past saints who were faithful to God through thick and thin.<sup>2</sup> And in Hebrews 13:7 the readers are urged to

“remember” those who originally spoke the Word of God to them. They are to do this by spending time reflecting on aspects of these leaders’ lives so that they might imitate their faith-filled character.<sup>3</sup> As John Piper has noted by way of this verse, “God ordains that we gaze on his glory, dimly mirrored in the ministry of his flawed servants. He intends for us to consider their lives and peer through the imperfections of their faith and behold the beauty of their God.”<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 13:7 is thus nothing less than an exhortation to read church history through the lens of Christian biography.

This essay takes up this challenge through a reading of the life of one of the giants of Particular Baptist history: John Gill (1697–1771). This reading begins with an overview of the way Gill was regarded as a hero in his own day. This is followed by a brief biographical sketch of the Baptist divine. Then, this essay looks first at those areas where Gill’s influence was applauded by some—namely his development of Calvinistic thought—but regarded with concern by others. This portion of the essay reveals that our heroes, even the best of them, are flawed individuals. The essay concludes, though, on a positive note, as Gill’s piety is shown to be deserving emulation and his robust defense of Trinitarianism is seen to be a critical factor in the preservation of the people he served for most of his life, the English Calvinistic Baptists.<sup>5</sup>

### **“THE CELEBRATED BAPTIST MINISTER”**

In September, 1753, Samuel Davies (1723-1761), a Presbyterian minister from Virginia, left his home for Great Britain on what would turn out to be an arduous, though highly successful, fund-raising expedition for the then-fledgling College of New Jersey (later to be renamed Princeton University). He was gone for a total of eighteen months, and met quite a number of key British evangelicals and churchmen, among them the leading Baptist theologian of the era, John Gill.<sup>6</sup> In his diary he recorded some details of a visit he made to Gill on the morning of Wednesday, January 30, 1754. Describing him as “the celebrated Baptist Minister,” he found Gill to be “a serious, grave little Man,” who looked “young and hearty,” though Davies guessed rightly when he estimated his age to be “near 60.” Gill was quite willing to lend his support to the College, but he thought his “name would be of little service” and he warned Davies not to expect much from the English Calvinistic Baptists as a whole: “in general,” he said, they “were unhappily ignorant of the Importance of learning.”<sup>7</sup>

Davies was not the only one who considered Gill something of a celebrity. One of the members of Gill's congregation, Richard Hall (1728–1801), born and bred in Southwark and a hosier, had taken the time to write down all of Gill's sermons that he had heard over twenty-five years and had them bound for his own reading and edification. When Gill died in 1771, Hall commented:

Great is his loss in the Church and much felt by me. It is a great affliction when we know the worth of our privileges by the want of them, especially our spiritual mercies. It is possible to set too great an esteem on man—perhaps I did not prize my faithful Minister as I ought to have done. I wish I had improved more under his sound Ministry. I now will greatly miss him. Will the Lord be pleased, as a token for good to me, to bring me into a good fold and give me an appetite for His Word and Ordinances. I desire to be thankful I have my pastor's works to consult, which I much value.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, in the year following Gill's death Hall had printed, at his own expense—£1.14.6—200 copies of *What I remember of Dr Gill*, which he then proceeded to give to friends and acquaintances, but of which sadly there appears to be no surviving copy.<sup>9</sup>

Yet another fan of Gill was William Williams Pantycelyn (1717–91), one of the central figures of eighteenth-century Welsh Calvinistic Methodism and the author of "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah." When Williams was dying in 1791, he thanked God for the "true religion" that he had found particularly in the writings of "Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Dr. Gill, Marshall, Harvey, [and] Usher."<sup>10</sup> Four of these authors, are of course, Puritan figures—the two leading Independent theologians, Thomas Goodwin (1600–79) and John Owen (1616–83), the Anglo-Irish Episcopalian James Ussher (1581–1656), and the English Presbyterian Walter Marshall (1628–80). "Harvey" is the Anglican Calvinist James Hervey (1714–58), one of the members of the Wesleys' Oxford Holy Club, famous in his day for a defense of Calvinism, *Theron and Aspasio* (1755), and a close friend of Gill. That Gill should appear in the company of four Puritans says much about his way of doing theology as well as the form of his publications. In a day when brevity was highly prized as a literary quality, Gill's works read and definitely looked like the massive tomes of the baroque print culture of the Puritan era. In part, this may have had something to do with Gill's character. As Rippon noted in his memoir

of Gill, “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>11</sup> In part, it also reflected Gill’s deep love for the Word of God and the very Puritan conviction that all of divine revelation needed to be taught to the people of God.

But for some of his contemporary Christians, Gill’s bent for systematic theology was off-putting. Surely it is this lack of interest in the systematizing that attracted Gill which lies behind the famous remark of the younger Robert Hall (1764–1831) about Gill’s writings. Hall was once in conversation with the Welsh Baptist preacher Christmas Evans (1766–1838) when the latter expressed his profound admiration of Gill and said that he wished that Gill’s works had been written in Welsh. Hall, ever the vivacious conversationalist, quickly retorted, “I wish they had, sir; I wish they had with all my heart, for then I should never have read them. They are a continent of mud, sir.”<sup>12</sup> In point of fact, this is a singularly unfair remark that tells us more about Hall than it does about Gill. Few of those who read Gill in the eighteenth century would have described his work thus, even those who were critical of some of Gill’s theological emphases, authors like Andrew Fuller (1754–1815). For many, he was “the great & good Dr Gill,” as Augustus Montague Toplady (1740–78) described the London divine not long after his death.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Eruditione pietate ornatus: A Biographical Sketch*<sup>14</sup>**

Gill was born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, in 1697, at the very close of the Puritan era. His early schooling at a local grammar school came to an abrupt end in 1708 when the school’s headmaster demanded that all of his pupils attend Anglican morning prayer. Gill’s parents were decided Dissenters and consequently withdrew their son from the school. Due to the fact that his parents had limited financial resources—Gill’s father Edward was a woolen merchant—they could not afford to send their son to a Dissenting Academy and so Gill’s formal education was over. But this did not check his hunger for learning.

Gill had acquired a good foundation in Latin and Greek before leaving school, and by the time that he was nineteen he was not only adept in both of these languages, but he was also well on the way to becoming proficient in Hebrew. Knowledge of these three languages gave him ready access to a wealth

of Scriptural and theological knowledge, which he used to great advantage in the years that followed as he pastored Goat Yard Chapel, Southwark (later Carter Lane Baptist Church), in London from 1719 till his death in 1771.

During this long pastorate, Gill wrote a number of significant works. The first was a youthful exposition of the Song of Songs (1728), which approached this portion of Holy Scripture from the vantage-point that it was an allegory of the love between Christ and his church, a perspective that had a long pedigree all the way back to the patristic era, and which, according to John Rippon (1751–1836), who succeeded him as pastor, “served very much to make Mr. Gill known.”<sup>15</sup> Then, in the late 1730s, Gill issued a robust defense of the so-called five points of Calvinism, *The Cause of God and Truth* (1735–8). Written at a time when English Calvinism was very much a house in disarray, it helped to make Gill known as a prominent defender of the Reformed cause and revealed his deep indebtedness to seventeenth-century Reformed thought.<sup>16</sup> The story is told that when Gill was about to send this defense of Calvinism to the press, one of the members of his church told him in no uncertain terms that publication of the book would lead to the loss of some of Gill’s best friends as well as the loss of income. Gill’s reply was terse and gracious, but very much to the point: “I can afford to be poor,” he said, “but I cannot afford to injure my conscience.”<sup>17</sup> This anecdote says much about the man, in particular, his determination to stay the course when it came to cleaving to biblical truth. It also provides us with a central reason for his greatness as a Christian theologian, namely, his refusal to be shaped by pragmatic concerns. What mattered above all was the truth and its proclamation. Later in his life, when Gill published a solid critique of the views of John Wesley (1703–91) on the perseverance of the saints and predestination, Wesley referred to Gill as one who “fights for his opinions through thick and thin.”<sup>18</sup>

The 1740s saw the publication of Gill’s critical commentary on the entire New Testament (NT)—his profoundly learned *Exposition of the New Testament*, published in three folio volumes between 1746 and 1748. Gill’s companion to this commentary, his four-volume *Exposition of the Old Testament* did not appear for another fifteen years or so (1763–66). Together, these two sets became a central feature of the libraries of Baptist ministers throughout the British Isles. Also occupying a prominent place in those libraries was Gill’s *magnum opus*, *The Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, issued in 1769–70, which was the definitive codification of his theological perspective.

## **The *Pactum Salutis***

As a Reformed theologian, Gill inherited the theological concept of an intra-Trinitarian covenant of salvation called the *pactum salutis*, which was made in eternity past and which had been a feature of Reformed thought since the sixteenth century. However, Gill was also aware that while previous Reformed theologians like Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633–98), Louis de Dieu (1590–1642), Johann Cocceius (1603–69), Hermann Witsius (1636–1708), and John Owen (1616–83) had treated this eternal covenant at some length, they had focused their attention only on the involvement of the Father and the Son in this covenant. Justification for this focus had been found by these theologians in Zechariah 6:13, where it is stated that there shall be a “counsel of peace” between the Lord of hosts and the priest-king, namely, the Lord Christ.<sup>19</sup> But Gill, who, as has been noted, was a key defender of the complete sovereignty of God’s grace, and was also robust in his advocacy of Trinitarianism in a day when rationalistic forces were seeking to undermine the biblical concept of the doctrine of the Trinity,<sup>20</sup> sought to interpret the eternal covenant from a distinctly Trinitarian perspective.<sup>21</sup> As Gill explained:

[I]t was in Jehovah the Father’s thoughts, to save men by his Son; he in his infinite wisdom saw he was the fittest person for this work, and, in his own mind, chose him to it... Now in the eternal council he moved it, and proposed it to his Son as the most advisable step that could be taken, to bring about the designed salvation; who readily agreed to it, and said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God”, (Heb. 10:7) from Psalm 40:7, 8; and the Holy Spirit expressed his approbation of him, as the fittest person to be the Saviour, by joining with the Father in the mission of him,...and by forming his human nature in time, and filling it with his gifts and graces without measure.<sup>22</sup>

The Spirit was not “a mere bystander, spectator, and witness” of this eternal covenant, as previous theological discussions of the *pactum salutis* had implied since they did not clearly explicate his role in it. The divine Spirit was very much “a party concerned” in this everlasting covenant.<sup>23</sup>

Gill found support for this inclusion of the Spirit in the *pactum salutis* from such biblical assertions as the Spirit’s involvement in shaping the humanity of Christ within the womb of Mary (Matt 1:18–20), his empowerment of Christ

during his earthly ministry (e.g., Matt 12:28), and his enablement of Jesus to offer himself as a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father (Heb 9:14).<sup>24</sup> Gill also reasoned from the fact that since the Spirit is described in Ephesians 1:14 as the “Holy Spirit of promise,” he must be the one who makes real in the lives of the elect all of the promises made for them in eternity, things such as justification, pardon of sin, and adoption. But this would not happen if the Spirit had not “approved of and assented to” those very promises in eternity past when, together with the Father and with the Son, he made the everlasting covenant.<sup>25</sup>

The Spirit, therefore, makes the blessings promised to the elect in eternity past by means of the everlasting covenant a reality in time. For example, one of these blessings is the blessing of justification. The Holy Spirit brings this blessing into the lives of the elect by the preaching of the gospel and by setting it “in the view of an awakened sinner.” The “illumination of his [i.e. the Spirit’s] grace” then “works faith” in the elect “to receive it.” The same is true with regard to forgiveness of sins and adoption.<sup>26</sup> And without the “special energy of the Spirit,” the “most comfortable doctrines and precious promises of the gospel,” even when preached with great vehemence, will be of no avail to the one who hears of them.<sup>27</sup> “In short,” Gill emphasized, “all the grace given to the elect in Christ, before the world began, all the things that are freely given them of God in the covenant, the Spirit in time makes known unto them, and declares their interest in them.”<sup>28</sup>

Richard Muller has pointed out that because the seventeenth-century expression of the eternal *pactum salutis* did not explicitly include the Spirit, it thereby allowed the elect to be involved in their conversion. They could not co-operate in the covenanting of the Father and the Son for their eventual salvation, for that was done in eternity past. But as the Spirit made this eternal plan a reality in time, the conversion of the elect did not take place without the exercise of their faith and the commitment of their will. Gill, however, wished to be consistent in setting forth a completely monergistic view of salvation. The explicit inclusion of the Holy Spirit within the eternal council of peace removed any possibility of synergism and the human response of the elect to divine grace.<sup>29</sup>

## ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION

Gill’s desire to exalt God’s grace his doctrine of salvation can be seen most clearly in the London Baptist’s defense of the concept of eternal justification.

According to Gill, just as God's determination to elect a people for salvation actually constitutes their election, so his purpose to declare them righteous in Christ is their actual justification.<sup>30</sup> The pronouncement in time within the heart of a believer that he or she has been justified is simply then a repetition of "that grand original sentence of it, conceived in the mind of God from all eternity."<sup>31</sup>

Eternal justification thus precedes faith, and, in fact, a person's faith is a product of his or her being justified. As Gill forthrightly stated:

Faith adds nothing to the *esse*, only to the *bene esse* of justification; ... it is a complete act in the eternal mind of God, without the being or consideration of faith, or any foresight of it; a man is as much justified before as after it, in the account of God; and after he does believe, his justification does not depend on his acts of faith.<sup>32</sup>

In his tract *The Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love to his Elect, and their Eternal Union with Christ*, Gill simply stated that:

union to Christ is before faith ... Vital union is before faith ... Faith does not give us a being in Christ, or unite us to him; it is the fruit, effect, and evidence of our being in Christ, and union to him.<sup>33</sup>

If justification is actually antecedent to faith, though, why does the NT—for example, Galatians 2:16; Romans 5:1—regularly speak of faith as a pre-requisite to justification? Gill rejects the argument that faith *per se* is able to save anyone, for he knows that by faith "Christ, and his righteousness" is "apprehended, received, and embraced."<sup>34</sup> What these texts must mean, then, is that faith is needed to know that one is justified and to revel in this fact.<sup>35</sup>

The doctrine of eternal justification also means that the status of the person who is both among the elect and yet to be converted must be viewed from two different angles. On the one hand, this person is under God's condemnation and as such needs to be regarded as a child of wrath. But, as one who has been justified from eternity past, in Christ they are "always viewed and accounted righteous."<sup>36</sup> Theoretically this argumentation could open the door to genuine antinomianism. Little wonder that Gill had to fend off charges of antinomianism at a number of points in his ministry.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to spirituality, there is also little doubt that Gill's doctrine of eternal justification helped to foster a climate of profound introspection. To

come to Christ for salvation, one first had to determine if one was among the elect justified in eternity past. The net effect of this teaching—though unintended by Gill—was to place the essence of conversion and faith not in believing the gospel, but in believing that one was among the elect. Instead of attention being directed away from oneself towards Christ, the convicted sinner was turned inwards upon himself or herself to search for evidence that he or she was truly elect and therefore able to be converted. And by making eternal justification so central to his soteriology, Gill essentially reversed the biblical order in which one must believe in Christ before one is capable of knowing that he or she is among the elect.<sup>38</sup>

It is also important to note that in the most influential Baptist confessional statement in Baptist history, the *Second London Confession of Faith* (1677/89), Gill's seventeenth-century Calvinistic Baptist forebears explicitly rejected the notion of eternal justification. In the article on justification, it is clearly stated that "God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them."<sup>39</sup> The strongest theological influences on Gill, however, came through the early eighteenth-century London Baptist John Skepp (d.1721), who participated in Gill's ordination and whose sole literary publication, *A divine energy* (1722), was an out-and-out rejection of the free offer of the gospel. Gill reprinted it with a recommendatory preface in 1751.<sup>40</sup>

### **THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL**

It should occasion no surprise that Gill's development of the doctrine of the everlasting covenant, in which he highlighted the role of the Spirit, along with his tenacious commitment to the notion of eternal justification, should then lead to the rejection of the free offer of the gospel.<sup>41</sup> For example, in a tract that he wrote in response to a rejection of predestination by the Methodist leader John Wesley (1703–91), Gill considered biblical verses like Acts 17:30, which states that God "now commands all men everywhere to repent" and Mark 16:15, in which there is a command to "preach the gospel to every creature." Gill did not believe that either of these verses can be used to support the idea of the free offer of the gospel. He admitted that the "gospel is indeed ordered to be preached to every creature to whom it is sent and comes." But,

Gill observed, it needs noting that God has not seen fit to send the gospel to every person in the world: “there have been multitudes in all ages that have not heard it.” Therefore, Gill stated, “that there are universal offers of grace and salvation made to all men, I utterly deny.” Not even to the elect does God make an “offer” of salvation. Rather, the proclamation of the gospel informs the elect that “grace and salvation are provided for them in the everlasting covenant, procured for them by Christ, published and revealed in the gospel, and applied by the Spirit.”<sup>42</sup>

In his systematic theology, Gill suggests another way of dodging the plain import of such verses: they are really only speaking about “an external reformation of life and manners,” not “spiritual and internal conversion.”<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly Gill warns gospel preachers to be careful lest, when they preach repentance, they give their hearers the idea that repentance is “within the compass of the power of man’s will.” To preach like this is what Gill calls the “rant of some men’s ministry, . . . low and mean stuff, too mean for, below, and unworthy of a minister of the gospel.”<sup>44</sup>

### **JOHN GILL AND HYPER-CALVINISM**

Now, it would be easy to think that Gill had simply allowed his reading of the Bible on these issues to be determined by his theological system. But the truth is more complex than this. Guiding Gill, first of all, was a genuine desire to exalt God and his sovereign grace. What he said early on in his ministry shaped his entire life: “I would not willingly say or write anything that is contrary to the purity and holiness of God.”<sup>45</sup>

Then, his was a day, when the doctrines of grace were under heavy attack from the rationalism of the Deists and the moralism in much of the Church of England. It would have been natural for Gill and his fellow Calvinistic Baptists to view themselves as one of God’s last bastions of truth in England. In such a situation, it is easy to see how one’s defense of certain biblical doctrines—in this case, the doctrines of grace—could become unbalanced, and even produce error.

It is noteworthy that Gill’s day was the so-called Age of Reason, when men and women began to trust in their own abilities and wisdom to understand the world in which they lived and what was incumbent upon them as human beings. Gill would have been horrified to think that his theology was deeply

shaped by this culture that was beginning to trust in human reason alone. But it seems to this reader of Gill's works, that the Baptist theologian takes Scriptural matters to a logical end beyond what Scripture clearly affirms. Like it or not, Gill was shaped by the rationalism of his day.

However, when all is said and done, Gill's theology did hamper passionate evangelism and outreach. And not surprisingly, there is a long tradition that regards Gill as the doyen of eighteenth-century hyper-Calvinism.<sup>46</sup> But this is not all there is to Mr. Gill. If it were, it would constitute a dubious reason to see him as a Baptist hero.

### **THE PIETY OF JOHN GILL: A GLIMPSE**

In the debates among historical theologians about whether or not Gill was a Hyper-Calvinist—not at all an unimportant question and one in which the man whom this essay seeks to honor has played no small part—there is a side of Gill that has been far too frequently forgotten, namely, his piety.<sup>47</sup> Richard Muller, for example, in his fine examination of Gill's thoughts on the *pactum salutis*, argues that "Gill's precise systematization . . . of Christian theology" lacked "the warm piety of earlier Reformed and Puritan thought."<sup>48</sup> While Christopher J. Ellis, in an otherwise superb study of the history of Baptist worship, contrasts the "warm evangelical spirituality" of the West Country Particular Baptists that was centered on Bristol Baptist Academy with the dominant Hyper-Calvinist tradition of Gill in London which was accompanied, according to Ellis, by "a deep suspicion of the religious affections."<sup>49</sup> But the actual situation is far more complex.

An excellent entrance-point into Gill's piety is first of all found in his poignant funeral sermon for his daughter Elizabeth, who died at the age of twelve on May 30, 1738. After preaching on 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Gill intended to give some details about his daughter's conversion, Christian walk, and final days, but the emotion of the moment appears to have overwhelmed him and he added his remarks later.<sup>50</sup> Among the things that Gill especially noted about his daughter was her "great desire after, and a wonderful esteem of the grace of humility." And to acquire such, Gill observed that his daughter would "retire into corners, to read good books, and to desire of God to give her his grace."<sup>51</sup> Gill believed that God did indeed answer her prayers, for, he remarked, "to the last she entertained a mean and low opinion of her self."<sup>52</sup>

In his *Body of Divinity* Gill noted, in the section on humility, that humility entails, among other things, “a man’s thinking meanly and the worst of himself.”<sup>53</sup> He may well have been thinking of his daughter when he wrote this. For Gill went on to say, “pride is the devil’s livery; but humility is the clothing of the servants of Christ, the badge by which they are known.”<sup>54</sup>

This stress on the importance of humility in the Christian life connects Gill to a much larger Christian tradition of spirituality that goes back to such early Christian authors as Basil of Caesarea (c.330–79) and his sermon *Of humility*,<sup>55</sup> or the emphasis by Augustine (354–430) that ultimately the City of God is a holy community that lives by faith, hope, and self-denying love, and is thus marked by humility and obedience to God.<sup>56</sup> But the major source of Gill’s piety was, after Scripture, Puritan divinity. Evidence of this can be found especially in his early treatise on the Song of Songs, but also at various points throughout his voluminous corpus. For example, he himself practiced and also recommended to his readers and hearers the Puritan discipline of meditation, which, when it forms a regular part of a believer’s walk with God, will, according to Gill, “sweetly ravish our souls, raise our affections, inflame our love, and quicken our faith.”<sup>57</sup> As he explained further:

By meditation a soul feeds on Christ, on his person, blood, and righteousness; and finds a pleasure, a sweetness, and a delight therein; ... by it a believing soul feeds upon the gospel, its truths, and promises, and receives much refreshment from thence; ... being cleansed in some measure from their former filthiness and uncleanness of their minds, they ascend heavenwards in their thoughts, desires, and affections, which they employ by meditating upon pure, spiritual, and heavenly things; ... Meditation fits a man for prayer, and fills him with praise.<sup>58</sup>

Gill’s works would have helped, therefore, to nourish elements of a vital piety among Calvinistic Baptists even when other areas of their communal life—such as the free offer of the gospel—were in disarray.

### **ON THE TRINITY**

Moreover, it was this man’s theology that was used by God when revival came to the Baptists at the close of the eighteenth century.<sup>59</sup> In a world in which men

were abandoning the main contours of biblical orthodoxy—the infallibility of the Word of God, the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation and resurrection of Christ—Gill held fast to all of these and enabled the Calvinistic Baptists to weather the intellectual storms of the eighteenth century. And in so doing, his fidelity gave form and shape to the coals of orthodoxy upon which the fire of revival fell later in the century through men like Andrew Fuller.

Take, for example, his robust defense of Trinitarianism. As William C. Placher and Philip Dixon have clearly demonstrated, the growing rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to a “fading of the trinitarian imagination” and to the doctrine of the Trinity coming under heavy attack.<sup>60</sup> Informed by the Enlightenment’s confidence in the “omnicompetence” of human reason, the intellectual *mentalité* of this era either dismissed the doctrine of the Trinity as a philosophical and unbiblical construct of the post-Apostolic Church, and turned to classical Arianism as an alternate perspective, or simply ridiculed it as utterly illogical, and argued for Deism or Socinianism.<sup>61</sup> Gill’s *The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated*—first published in 1731 and then reissued in a second edition in 1752—proved to be an effective response to this anti-Trinitarianism. In it he sought to demonstrate that there is “but one God; that there is a plurality in the Godhead; that there are three divine Persons in it; that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; that these are distinct in Personality, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”<sup>62</sup> The heart of this treatise was later incorporated into Gill’s *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* (1769), which, for most Baptist pastors of that day, was their major reference work of theology.<sup>63</sup>

In Chapter 9, for example, Gill seeks to prove the personhood and the deity of the Holy Spirit. According to Scripture, the Holy Spirit acts as a person when

he is said to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment [John 16:8]; to comfort the hearts of God’s people [John 16:7]; witness their adoption to them [Rom 8:16]; teach them all things [John 14:26]; guide them into all truth [John 16:13]; assist them in their prayers; make intercession for them, according to the will of God [Rom 8:26–7]; and seal them up unto the day of redemption [Eph 4:30].<sup>64</sup>

In his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* Gill expands on some of these items. For instance, he notes that the Spirit is depicted in the Scriptures not only as “a

Spirit of grace and supplication”—so Zechariah 12:10—and “an helper of the infirmities of the saints in prayer, but as making intercession for them, according to the will of God”—thus Romans 8:26–7. Gill continues: “Now as the advocacy and intercession of Christ, prove him to be a Person, and a distinct one from the Father, with whom he intercedes; so the intercession of the Spirit, equally proves his personality, even his distinct personality also.”<sup>65</sup> Here Gill clearly departs from his Puritan theological heritage, for the Puritans had argued that Romans 8:26–7 cannot mean the Holy Spirit actually prays for believers, for that would obviate the need for Christ’s intercessory work. It would also indicate, John Owen argued, that the Spirit is not fully God, for “all prayer . . . is the act of a nature inferior unto that which is prayed unto.”<sup>66</sup> What the passage must then indicate is a parallel to the thought behind Zechariah 12:10: the Spirit is the creator of all genuine prayer. David Clarkson (1622–86), who assisted John Owen for a number of years, has a detailed analysis of this passage along these lines in a sermon entitled “Faith in Prayer.” He speaks for the Puritan tradition when he states:

It is his function to intercede for us, to pray in us, i.e., to make our prayers. He, as it were, writes our petitions in the heart, we offer them; he indites a good matter, we express it. That prayer which we are to believe will be accepted, is the work of the Holy Ghost; it is his voice, motion, operation, and so his prayer. Therefore when we pray he is said to pray, and our groans are called his, and our design and intent in prayer his meaning. . . . Rom. viii.26, 27.<sup>67</sup>

It appears, though, Gill was never afraid to differ from his Reformed tradition when Scripture led him a different way.

Personal properties are also ascribed by the Bible to the Spirit. “He is an intelligent agent,” and thus he is said to search the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10) and “does all things according to his pleasure and will” (1 Cor 12:11).<sup>68</sup> He is the subject of “personal affections:” he loves the elect (Rom 15:30<sup>69</sup>) and is grieved by “the sins and unbecoming conversation of the saints” (Eph 4:30).<sup>70</sup> Gill also discerns proof of his personhood in his eternal procession from the Father and the Son,<sup>71</sup> his being described by Jesus as “another Comforter” and thus distinct from him,<sup>72</sup> and his being mentioned alongside the Father and the Son in the baptismal formula—“was he a mere power, quality, or attribute, and not a distinct divine person, he would never be put upon an

equal foot with the Father and the Son.”<sup>73</sup>

Seeking then to set forth the Spirit’s deity, Gill argues first from the names given to the Spirit. Gill rightly notes that his being called “Lord” in passages like 2 Corinthians 3:17 bears witness of his deity.<sup>74</sup> It is noteworthy that in this regard he also appeals to 2 Thessalonians 3:5. In Gill’s words,

[the Holy Spirit] is that Lord who is desired to direct the hearts of the saints into the love of God and patient waiting for Christ; where he is manifestly distinguished from God the Father, into whose love, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, into a patient waiting for whom, he is entreated to direct the saints.<sup>75</sup>

This Trinitarian reading of 2 Thessalonians 3:5 ultimately goes back to Basil of Caesarea, who makes the identical argument for the Spirit’s deity in his classic defense of the Spirit’s deity, *On the Holy Spirit*.<sup>76</sup> Gill also employs this text to prove that the Spirit is the object of prayer, and therefore divine.<sup>77</sup> There are also a few passages, Gill notes, where the Spirit is implicitly called God: Acts 5:3–4, where lying to the Spirit is equated with lying to God, and 1 Corinthians 3:16, where the saints are first described as “God’s temple” and then Paul states that God’s Spirit lives in them, thereby calling the Spirit “God.”<sup>78</sup>

Divine attributes are also ascribed to the Spirit, such as eternity (“eternal Spirit,” Heb 9:14), omnipresence (“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? And whither shall I flee from thy presence?,” Ps 139:7), omniscience—here Gill has a number of texts—and omnipotence—he formed Christ’s “human nature in the womb of the virgin.”<sup>79</sup> The Spirit also does what only God can do: he creates, “all the miracles which Christ wrought, he wrought by the Holy Ghost,” he regenerates and he sanctifies.<sup>80</sup> Finally, Gill notes that prayer is made to the Spirit (he adduces 2 Thess 3:5 and Rev 1:4–5<sup>81</sup>) and that Paul swears by the Spirit (Rom 9:1), “which is a solemn act of religious worship.”<sup>82</sup>

John Rippon, who followed Gill as pastor, rightly noted in his biographical sketch of his predecessor:

The Doctor not only watched over his *people*, “with great affection, fidelity, and love;” but he also watched his *pulpit* also. He would not, if he knew it, admit any one to preach for him, who was either cold-hearted to the doctrine of the Trinity; or who *denied* the divine filiation of the Son of God; or who *objected* to conclude his prayers with the usual *doxology* to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as three equal

Persons in the one Jehovah. Sabellians, Arians, and Socinians, he considered as real enemies of the cross of Christ. They *dared* not ask him to preach, nor *could* he in conscience, permit them to officiate for him. He conceived that, by this uniformity of conduct, he adorned the pastoral office.<sup>83</sup>

He did more than “adorn the pastoral office.” Through such written works as his treatise on the Trinity he played a key role in shepherding the English Calvinistic Baptist community along the pathway of biblical orthodoxy.

Like all heroes, Gill has flaws, as we have seen, but nevertheless D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a keen and ardent student of eighteenth-century church history, was surely right when he stated: “Dr. John Gill was a man, not only of great importance in his own century, but a man who is still of great importance to all of us.”<sup>84</sup>

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1. See, for example, Rom 15:4 and 1 Cor 10:6. Moreover, as historian Sean Michael Lucas has noted, we really cannot “swear off looking for heroes” since “we are wired to ‘look up’ to others, to search for models and patterns, to cherish dreams and aspirations inculcated by others” (Sean Michael Lucas, post May 19, 2006; <http://seanmichaellucas.blogspot.com/2006/05/heroes.html>; accessed May 13, 2010).
  2. One of the clearest windows into the situation of the original readers can be found in Heb 10:32–6, to which Heb 11 is linked by both textual context and theme.
  3. For *anatheōrountes* as the means by which we remember, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews. A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 346. For the possibility that *anatheōrountes* is imperative, thus indicating a command in addition to remember, see George J. Zemek, “The Modeling of Ministers” in *The Master’s Perspective on Pastoral Ministry* (ed. Richard L. Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas; Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2002), 268, n.61.
  4. John Piper, “Thanksgiving for the Lives of Flawed Saints” (*desiringGod* post, November 18, 1999; [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/TasteAndSee/ByDate/1999/1143\\_Thanksgiving\\_for\\_the\\_Lives\\_of\\_Flawed\\_Saints/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/TasteAndSee/ByDate/1999/1143_Thanksgiving_for_the_Lives_of_Flawed_Saints/); accessed May 13, 2010).
  5. In what follows I am drawing on three sources. First, my “*Eruditione pietate ornatus: A Profile of John Gill (1607–1771)*” in [Gary W. Long, ed.,] *Baptist History Celebration 2007* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2008), 10–14, which is used by permission, and then, an unpublished paper, “Hyper-Calvinism and the Theology of John Gill,” that I gave at the True Church Conference, Grace Life Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama, on February 19, 2010. For the full version of the latter, see <http://www.andrewfullercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/hyper-calvinism-and-the-theology-of-john-gill.pdf>. Most of this essay has already appeared as “Remembering Baptist Heroes: The Example of John Gill” in Thomas K. Ascol and Nathan A. Finn, eds., *Ministry By His Grace And For His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2011), 17–37. Used by gracious permission.
  6. The standard biographical sketch of Gill is John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late Rev. John Gill, D.D.* (Repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1992). For more recent studies of Gill and his theology, see John W. Brush, “John Gill’s Doctrine of the Church” in Winthrop Still Hudson, ed., *Baptist Concepts of the Church* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 53–70; B.R. White, “John Gill in London, 1719–1729: A Biographical Fragment,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 22 (1967–1968): 72–9; Olin C. Robison, “The Legacy of John Gill,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 24 (1971–1972): 111–125; Graham Harrison, *Dr. John Gill and His Teaching*, Annual Lecture of The Evangelical Library (London: The Evangelical Library, 1971); Richard A. Muller, “The Spirit and the Covenant: John Gill’s Critique of the *Pactum Salutis*,” *Foundations* 24 (1981),

- 4–14; Thomas 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, 1986), 73–107, passim Thomas Ascol, “The Doctrine of Grace: A critical Analysis of Federalism in the Theologies of John Gill and Andrew Fuller” (PhD Thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989); George M. Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Eggleston, Co. Durham: Go Publications, 1995); Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997); and Timothy George, “John Gill” in his and David S. Dockery, ed., *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, Rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2001), 11–33.
7. *The Reverend Samuel Davies Abroad: The Diary of a Journey to England and Scotland, 1753–55*, ed. George William Pilcher (Urbana/Chicago/IL: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 65.
  8. This citation is from a diary of Richard Hall in the possession of one of his descendants and cited by Gary Brady, “Richard Hall 02” (Benjamin Beddome, post October 30, 2008; <http://benbeddome.blogspot.com/2008/10/richard-hall-02.html>; accessed May 5, 2010). In other posts on this blog that deal with Richard Hall, Brady gives details of other aspects of Hall’s life as gleaned from the diary that Hall’s descendant has allowed him to consult.
  9. Brady, “Richard Hall 02.”
  10. Cited Eifion Evans, “William Williams of Pant Y Celyn,” *The Evangelical Library Bulletin*, 42 (Spring, 1969): 6.
  11. Rippon, *Brief Memoir*, 137.
  12. Cited Olinthus Gregory, “A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.” in his ed., *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), 82. Hall expressed an identical opinion about the works of the Puritan John Owen. See John Greene, “Reminiscences of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.” in Gregory, ed., *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, IV, 37–8, note \*.
  13. Augustus Montagu Toplady, Letter to William Lunell, October 25, 1771 (Thomas Haweis Collection, Center for Methodist Studies Collections, Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University).
  14. The Latin is a portion of the inscription carved onto Gill’s tombstone. Translated it means “Adorned with piety [and] learning.” For the full inscription, see Ella, *John Gill*, 246–7.
  15. Rippon, *Brief Memoir*, 24.
  16. For details of this indebtedness, see Richard A. Muller, “John Gill and the Reformed Tradition: A Study in the Reception of Protestant Orthodoxy in the Eighteenth Century” in Haykin, ed., *Life and Thought of John Gill*, 51–68.
  17. Quoted C.H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, eds. Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald (Rev. ed.; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1973), 2:477.
  18. Cited George, “John Gill,” 18.
  19. John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* 2.6 (1839 ed.; repr. Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1989), 211. Subsequent references to this work will refer to it as either Doctrinal Divinity or Practical Divinity, and they will include book and chapter, and, in brackets, the respective pagination from this edition.
  20. See discussion below.
  21. Muller, “Spirit and the Covenant,” 4–14.
  22. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 2.6 (213).
  23. *Ibid.*, 2.14 (244).
  24. *Ibid.*, 2.14 (244–6).
  25. *Ibid.*, 2.14 (244–5). See also Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689–1765* (London: Olive Tree, 1967), 113–4; Muller, “Spirit and the Covenant,” 9–10.
  26. *Ibid.*, 2.14; 6.8 (245, 506).
  27. John Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song, Commonly called Canticles* (London: Aaron Ward, 1728), 143 (commentary on Song of Songs 3:4).
  28. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 2.14; 6.8 (245, 506). See Muller, “Spirit and the Covenant,” 10.
  29. Muller, “Spirit and the Covenant,” 10–12.
  30. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 2.5 (203 and 205). On this concept in Gill, see especially George M. Ella, *John Gill and Justification from Eternity: A Tercentenary Appreciation* (Eggleston, Co. Durham: Go Publications, 1998); Peter Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists: A Study of English Calvinistic Baptists from the Late 1600s to the Early 1800s* (Studies in Baptist History and Thought, vol.7; Carlisle, Cumbria; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003), 190–9; and Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1771–1892: From John Gill to C.H. Spurgeon* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), 6–8. Ella defends Gill’s teaching on this issue, while both Naylor and Oliver are critical of it.
  31. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 2.6 (209).
  32. *Ibid.*, 2.5 (204).

33. John Gill, *The Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love to his Elect, and their Eternal Union with Christ*, 3rd ed. (London, 1752), 33 and 39.
34. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 6.8 (511).
35. *Ibid.*, 2.6 (208).
36. *Ibid.*
37. For Gill's rejection of antinomianism, see his *The Necessity of Good Works unto Salvation Considered* (London: A. Ward, 1739) and *The Doctrine of Grace clear'd from the Charge of Licentiousness*, 2nd ed. (London: G. Keith, 1751). And for a study of this area of Gill's thought, see especially Curt Daniel, "John Gill and Calvinistic Antinomianism" in Haykin, ed., *Life and Thought of John Gill*, 171–90. See also Alan P. F. Sell, *The Great Debate: Calvinism, Arminianism and Salvation* (1982 ed.; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 79–80.  
 Chad van Dixhoorn has identified the concept of eternal justification as a key intellectual origin for various forms of seventeenth-century antinomianism ("Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly 1642-1652", 7 vols. [PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2004], 1:277). I am indebted to Mark Jones and Gert van den Brink, "Thomas Goodwin and Johannes Maccovius on Justification from Eternity" (Unpublished paper, 2010), 9, for this reference.
38. Andrew Fuller, *Strictures on Sandemanianism, in Twelve Letters to a Friend in The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (revised Joseph Belcher; 1845; repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 2:563–4; E. F. Clipsham, "Andrew Fuller and Fullerism: A Study in Evangelical Calvinism," *The Baptist Quarterly* 20 (1963–1964): 103; Sell, *Great Debate*, 82; Pieter de Vries, *John Bunyan on the Order of Salvation* (trans. C. van Haafte; New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 109.
39. *The Second London Confession of Faith* 11.4. See the comments of Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 6–7.
40. On Skepp, see Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark* (London, 1808), II, 572–4; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and The Modern Question: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 16 (1965): 117–8; Toon, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, 85–9; Sell, *Great Debate*, 78; James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 91–2.
41. Nettles believes differently; see his "John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening" in Haykin, ed., *Life and Thought of John Gill*, 131–70.
42. John Gill, *The Doctrine of Predestination Stated, and Set in the Scripture-Light*, 2nd ed. (London: G. Keith, 1752), 28–9.
43. Cited Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 9.
44. Gill, *Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love*, 79–80. I owe this reference to Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology*, 99.
45. *Ibid.*, 41.
46. See, for example, J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Present Time* (London: Elliot Stock, 1871), 435–6, 443; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 2nd ed. (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1956), 135; W. R. Estep, Jr., "Gill, John" in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1958), I, 560; H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 176–8; Donald Macleod, "Dr T.F. Torrance and Scottish Theology: a Review Article," *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 72 (2000): 57; Anonymous, "hyper-Calvinism" in George Thomas Kurian, ed., *Nelson's Dictionary of Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2005), 347.  
 For various definitions of Hyper-Calvinism, see Toon, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, 144–6; idem, "Hyper-Calvinism" in Donald K. McKim and David F. Wright, ed., *Encyclopedia of The Reformed Faith* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press; Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1992), 190; Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology*, 89. For problems with the use of the term "Hyper-Calvinism," see Muller, "John Gill and the Reformed Tradition," 51–6.  
 Geoffrey F. Nuttall ("Northamptonshire and The Modern Question," 101, n.4) prefers the term "High Calvinism" to "the now more usual Hyper-Calvinism as less prejudiced and question-begging." Nuttall also prefers this term since it was in use in the late eighteenth century. As support for the latter point, he refers to the English edition of the New England historian Hannah Adams' *A View of Religions*, which Andrew Fuller edited and to which he also contributed a few entries, where the term "High Calvinists" appears in an article written by Fuller himself ["Calvinists," *A View of Religions* (3rd ed.; London: W. Button, 1805), 111]. Yet, in the same book, in the article entitled "Puritans"—in a passage that appears to have been added by Fuller—it is stated that in the eighteenth century the Congregationalists and Baptists "first veered towards high Calvinism, then forbore to exhort the unregenerate to repent, believe, or do any thing spiritually good; and by degrees many of them settled in gross Antinomianism" (*View of Religions*, 270–1). From this statement it seems that "high Calvinism" was seen as a step towards a form of Calvinism that had problems with the

- evangelization of all and sundry, but not exactly equivalent to the latter. I have, therefore, chosen to retain the use of the term “Hyper-Calvinism.”
47. See the extremely helpful study of Gill’s piety by Gregory A. Wills, “A Fire That Burns Within: The Spirituality of John Gill” in Haykin, ed., *Life and Thought of John Gill*, 191–210. Also see Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 12–15.
  48. Muller, “Spirit and the Covenant”, 12.
  49. Christopher J. Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 32.
  50. See John Gill, *An Account of Some Choice Experiences of Elizabeth Gill in his A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Elizabeth Gill* (London, 1738), 33–44.
  51. *Ibid.*, 38–9.
  52. *Ibid.*, 39.
  53. Gill, *Practical Divinity* 1.14 (801).
  54. *Ibid.*, 1.14 (804).
  55. For a study of this sermon, see Michael A. G. Haykin, “‘Strive for Glory with God’: Some Reflections by Basil of Caesarea on Humility,” *The Gospel Witness*, 82, no.3 (September 2003): 3–6.
  56. Augustine, *City of God* 19.23.
  57. Gill, Solomon’s Song, 32 (commentary on Song of Songs 1:4).
  58. *Ibid.*, 171 (commentary on Song of Songs 4:2).
  59. On this revival, see Michael A. G. Haykin, “‘A Habitation of God, Though the Spirit’: John Sutcliffe (1752–1814) and the revitalization of the Calvinistic Baptists in the late eighteenth century,” *The Baptist Quarterly*, 34 (1991–1992): 304–19 and *idem*, *One heart and one soul: John Sutcliffe of Olney, his friends, and his times* (Durham, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1994), *passim*.
  60. William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence. How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 164–78; Philip Dixon, *‘Nice and Hot Disputes’: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003). The quote is from Dixon, ‘Nice and Hot Disputes’, 212.
  61. G. L. Bray, “Trinity” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 694.
  62. John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731), 203–4. For a good example of the serious light in which Gill viewed deviation from the doctrine of the Trinity, see Sayer Rudd, *Impartial Reflections on the Minute Which The Author received, from The Ministers of The Calvinistical Baptist Board, by the hands of Mess. Gill and Brine* (London, 1736).
  63. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 1.31.
  64. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 192–3.
  65. Gill, *Doctrinal Divinity* 1.31 (167–8).
  66. John Owen, *A Discourse of the Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer* (1682) in *The Works of John Owen* (ed. William H. Goold; Repr. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), IV, 258.
  67. *The Practical Works of David Clarkson, B.D.* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), I, 207. See also Owen, *Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer* (Works, IV, 288–290); Thomas Manton, *Several Sermons upon the Eighth Chapter of Romans* (Worthington, Pennsylvania: Maranatha Publications, n.d.), XII, 226.
  68. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 193.
  69. Gill interprets the phrase “the love of the Spirit” as a subjective genitive. The interpretation of John Calvin, though, is to be preferred. He interprets the phrase as the love “by which the saints ought to embrace one another” [Commentary on Rom 15:30, trans. Ross Mackenzie, *The Epistles of Paul The Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians, Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 317].
  70. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 194.
  71. *Ibid.*, 194–5.
  72. *Ibid.*, 195–6.
  73. *Ibid.*, 196–7.
  74. *Ibid.*, 197–8.
  75. *Ibid.*, 198–9.
  76. See Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* 21.52.
  77. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 203.
  78. *Ibid.*, 199.
  79. *Ibid.*, 199–201.

80. Ibid., 202–3.

81. Gill rightly understands the mention of the “seven spirits” to be a reference to the Holy Spirit. For modern identification of the “seven Spirits” as a symbolic allusion to the Holy Spirit, see Richard J. Bauckham, “The Role of the Spirit in the Apocalypse,” *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 52 (1980): 75–7; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 1999), 189–90.

82. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 203.

83. Rippon, *Brief Memoir*, 127–8.

84. See Harrison, *Dr. John Gill*, 31.