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THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF JOHN GILL (1697–1771):
CONTEXT, SOURCES, AND CONTROVERSY

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APPROVAL SHEET

THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF JOHN GILL (1697–1771):
CONTEXT, SOURCES, AND CONTROVERSY

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To God the Father,
To God the Son,
To God the Spirit,
Three distinct Persons
Yet, one infinitely glorious God

Be ascribed
glory and honor
might and majesty
dominion and power
now and forever.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANF</i>	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>NPNF</i> ¹	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1</i>
<i>NPNF</i> ²	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2</i>
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina

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PREFACE

The writing of a dissertation is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the many individuals who have contributed to its completion. First, I am thankful for my committee members, Thomas Nettles, Stephen Wellum, and especially my supervisor, Michael Haykin, whose patience and encouragement prodded me throughout the writing stage. I am also grateful to my external reader, Herman J. Selderhuis.

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Steven T. Godet

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In an anonymous work published in 1757, *The Christian Preacher Delineated*, the author described what many would consider an ideal preacher, rhapsodizing about the preacher's natural abilities, sedulous study, instructive sermons, animated delivery, and moral character.¹ The author then recommended a choice number of books for his reader's library, addressing such diverse topics as science and theology, literature and preaching, exposition and devotion. Among the recommended writers and works on theology, for example, he cited Stephen Charnock's *Attributes of God*, John Owen's *On the Holy Spirit*, his *Indwelling Sin*, and his *Mortification of Sin in Believers*, Herman Witsius's *Economy of the Divine Covenants*, and John Gill's *Treatise on the Trinity*.² Then, in what is surely a surprise to many today, the author asserted that Gill's work on the Trinity is the "best Book on the Subject."³ Such encomium for Gill's work on the Trinity was also expressed by his biographer, John Rippon (1751–1836), who stated that the work was "considered a master-piece on the subject."⁴ Caleb Evans (1737–91), former tutor and later principal of Bristol Baptist Academy, however, more reserved towards Gill's *Treatise on the Trinity*, when he stated in his two sermons, *The Scripture*

¹*The Christian Preacher Delineated* (London: D. Nottage, 1757).

²*The Christian Preacher Delineated*, 13–17.

³*The Christian Preacher Delineated*, 13.

⁴John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D. D.* (London: J. Bennett, 1838; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1992), 37.

Doctrine of the Deity of the Son and Holy Spirit, that the work was a “judicious tract” on the Trinity.⁵ Although some held Gill’s work on the Trinity in high praise and others not as high, what is unmistakable is the significance and defense of the doctrine throughout Gill’s life and ministry. As Gill admonished John Reynolds (1730–92) at his ordination to remember that the doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental article of revealed religion: “The doctrine of the Trinity of persons in one God . . . is the foundation of religion, and of the economy of man’s salvation; it is what enters into every truth of the gospel, and without which no truth can be truly understood, nor rightly explained.”⁶

History of Research

Although Gill wrote extensively on the Trinity throughout his published works, it is surprising that no one has written a substantive treatment of his trinitarian theology, setting it in its context, examining his Patristic sources, and evaluating his contribution to Baptist orthodoxy. Instead, theologians and historians have primarily viewed and examined Gill through the monocle of High or Hyper-Calvinism. Consequently, most of the attention has fixated on soteriological and evangelistic issues with little attention given to Gill’s trinitarian thought.

The first work published on Gill was an anonymous sketch of his life, labors, and character.⁷ Prefaced to Gill’s two volume *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* and published two years after his death, this work consists of a concise commentary of significant events and major publications during Gill’s life and includes a brief background to the initial publication of a *Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity*.⁸

⁵Caleb Evans, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Deity of the Son and Holy Spirit, Represented in Two Sermons Preached at Bristol, March 24 and April 21, 1765* (Bristol: S. Farley, 1766), 41.

⁶John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:53.

⁷Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, ix-xxxv.

⁸Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, xx.

Expanding upon the anonymous sketch, Gill's immediate successor in ministry, John Rippon published *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill*.⁹ Rippon's work provides a brief analysis, valuable background, and judicious quotations, but the work is primarily biographical and too brief, though it presents helpful information regarding the context of Gill's *Treatise on the Trinity*. Prior to 1950, the most extensive work examining Gill's trinitarianism was Daniel T. Fisk's article, "The Theology of Dr. Gill" in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*.¹⁰ While Fisk's article furnishes a brief outline of Gill's theology and helpful analysis of Gill's trinitarian theology, the article lacks the comprehensive and in-depth treatment the subject deserves.

Since 1950, several scholars have addressed some aspect of Gill's doctrine of the Trinity in either unpublished dissertations, books, or articles. In his dissertation, "John Gill, Baptist Theologian (1697–1771)," Robert Seymour devoted ten pages to discuss Gill's *Treatise on the Trinity*.¹¹ Within these pages, Seymour commented on the historical context of the *Treatise on the Trinity*, stated Gill's understanding of the doctrine, and highlighted the significance of and critiques Gill's concept of the eternal Sonship of Christ. Despite expanding on Fisk's article, Seymour's treatment is brief, neglects to consider Gill's Patristic sources, and ignores his trinitarian thought in his commentaries.

Thirty years after Seymour's work, Curt Daniel completed his massive dissertation, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill."¹² Although the focus and attention of Daniel's work was not the doctrine of the Trinity but Gill as the doyen of Hyper-Calvinism, Daniel interspersed comments on Gill's trinitarianism within the chapters on

⁹Rippon, *Brief Memoir*.

¹⁰Daniel T. Fisk, "The Theology of Dr. Gill," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 14 (1857): 343–89.

¹¹Robert E. Seymour, "John Gill, Baptist Theologian, 1697–1771" (Ph.D. diss., Edinburgh University, 1953).

¹²Curt D. Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill" (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1983).

methodology and covenants, the latter receiving more attention in relation to the doctrine of eternal Sonship. Daniel's work, however, neglects to examine Gill's trinitarian sources and lacks the thorough treatment the doctrine merits.

Following Curt Daniel's work, Thomas Ascol's dissertation, "The Doctrine of Grace: A Critical Analysis of Federalism in the Theologies of John Gill and Andrew Fuller," examined the role of English Federalism in the soteriology of John Gill and Andrew Fuller.¹³ Ascol's work is a helpful analysis of Gill's soteriology in relation to English Federalism. While Ascol mentioned the roles of each person of the Trinity in Gill's federalism, the doctrine of the Trinity is not the focus of the dissertation and is therefore basically ignored.

Hong-Gyu Park's 2001 dissertation, "Grace and Nature in the Theology of John Gill (1697–1771)," claimed that prior research has failed to interpret Gill in the context of the Reformed tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and consequently hindered researchers from properly assessing and analyzing Gill's understanding of the relation of divine sovereignty and man's responsibility.¹⁴ According to Park, scholars have failed to interpret Gill within the Reformed tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because most researchers have focused on whether Gill was a High or Hyper-Calvinist. Therefore, Park challenged the notion that Gill so stressed God's sovereignty (grace) that he ignored human responsibility (nature) by considering Gill's theological development, and his doctrines of Scripture, God, creation, and providence. Within the section on God, Park devoted one chapter to examine the doctrine of the Trinity, claiming one must first understand Gill's trinitarianism in order to comprehend his theology. Park's chapter on the Trinity is helpful, for he argued that Gill's

¹³Thomas Kennedy Ascol, "The Doctrine of Grace: A Critical Analysis of Federalism in the Theologies of John Gill and Andrew Fuller" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989).

¹⁴Hong-Gyu Park, "Grace and Nature in the Theology of John Gill (1697–1771)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2001).

trinitarianism is the substructure of all his other doctrines.¹⁵ He then reviewed Gill's arguments for the unity of essence, summarized his evidence for the plurality of the Godhead, examined his reasons for the distinction and order of persons, and discussed the grounds for belief in the distinctive personality and deity of the three persons. Despite Park's helpful treatment, his chapter lacked a thorough examination of the trinitarian controversy, analysis of Patristic sources, and engagement with Gill's trinitarian theology throughout his commentaries and sermons.

More recently, Jonathan White has written a significant dissertation, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism."¹⁶ His thesis is that if Gill's soteriology is understood in its historical and theological context, it is incorrect to classify him as a Hyper-Calvinist. Although White mentioned the three persons of the Godhead in his dissertation, with most of his discussion of Gill's trinitarianism being in chapter three, "Eternal Aspects of Gill's Soteriology," there is no concentrated discussion concerning the Trinity, nor any mention of the trinitarian controversy in the eighteenth century.

Besides these dissertations on Gill, a few books have been written on the eighteenth-century Baptist theologian and pastor. The first book was a major biography published in 1995 by George Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth*.¹⁷ In this work, Ella discussed the doctrine of the Trinity, mentioning some of Gill's antagonists, explaining the circumstances that merited a revision to the church's *Confession of Faith*, and identifying his significant trinitarian works. While Ella's work is useful and provides

¹⁵ Park, "Grace and Nature in the Theology of John Gill," 233.

¹⁶ Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

¹⁷ George M. Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Durham, England: Go Publications, 1995).

helpful contextual data, his treatment of Gill's doctrine of the Trinity lacks an examination of Patristic sources and an in-depth study of the trinitarian controversy.

Two years after Ella published his work, Michael Haykin edited a volume, *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*, which examined various aspects of Gill's theological works.¹⁸ Although the work treated a diversity of subjects, such as Gill's sources, doctrine of believer's baptism, interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, his relation to the Evangelical Awakening, and his spirituality, the book omitted a discussion of Gill's trinitarianism.¹⁹

In addition to these two books, several authors have contributed articles and chapters in books in which they discuss Gill's doctrine of the Trinity. Timothy George has contributed a chapter on John Gill in an edited book, *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*.²⁰ After a synopsis of Gill's life, George reviewed three major doctrinal areas in Gill's theology: Scripture, the Trinity, and the Doctrines of Grace. George's review of the Trinity is a profitable précis. It is nevertheless too concise for such a prominent theme in Gill's writings.

Following the work by George, Thomas Nettles has written a chapter on John Gill in his three-volume work, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*.²¹ Nettles interacted with Gill's writings, including his defense of the Trinity, in order to support his thesis that Baptist identity—which he defined according to a fourfold criteria of orthodoxy, evangelicalism, separate-ness, and consciously confessional—

¹⁸Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹⁹Haykin acknowledges that “one or two key areas of Gill's main theological interests . . . have not been examined” (Haykin, *The Life and Thought of John Gill [1697–1771]*, 6). It is most likely that one of these key areas would have been a discussion on the Trinity.

²⁰Timothy George, “John Gill,” in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 11–33.

²¹Tom J. Nettles, “John Gill (1697–1771),” in *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2005), 1:195–242.

should be understood as a “coherent-truth” view over a “soul-liberty” view.²² While Nettles’s treatment of the Trinity is helpful, it is a summary, lacking the thorough treatment such an important subject deserves in Gill’s writings.

In his 743-page *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, James Leo Garrett Jr. examined the doctrinal beliefs of Baptists from the beginning of the seventeenth century through the twentieth century.²³ As expected, Garrett surveyed Gill’s work, but he devoted less than two pages to the Trinity.²⁴

Besides these dissertations, books, and articles on Gill, Michael A. Smith has investigated seventeenth-century English Baptist use of the Fathers in his dissertation, “The Early English Baptists and the Church Fathers.”²⁵ Smith divided his seminal work into three periods and analyzes three Baptists during each period. Despite the helpful analysis, the study does not extend to the eighteenth century and thus lacks any consideration of John Gill.

Further, histories of doctrines have generally neglected the eighteenth century and the controversy surrounding the Trinity. Despite the numerous surveys of the doctrine of the Trinity, most of which focus upon the development of the doctrine during the Patristic period,²⁶ the general pattern of historians is to overlook the eighteenth century,²⁷

²²Tom J. Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2002), 1:13.

²³James Leo Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009).

²⁴Garrett, *Baptist Theology*, 95–96.

²⁵Michael A. Smith, “The Early English Baptists and the Church Fathers” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982).

²⁶Some of the more significant works are as follows: Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. John Bowden, vol. 1 (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1978); R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988).

²⁷Adolph von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. William M’Gilchrist, 7 vols. (London:

though a few mention the trinitarian controversy between Samuel Clarke and Daniel Waterland.²⁸ Similarly, with a few exceptions,²⁹ specialized studies of the doctrine of Trinity have treated the eighteenth century similar to the histories of doctrine.³⁰

Recently, Philip Dixon authored a monograph on the doctrine in the seventeenth century, *Nice and Hot Disputes*.³¹ Likewise, Thomas Pfizenmaier published his dissertation on the *Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729)*, which addressed the trinitarian controversy in the early eighteenth century.³² Richard Muller has also acknowledged Gill’s contribution to the trinitarian crisis in the eighteenth century.³³ While scholars have written on various aspects of Gill’s theology and even briefly addressed his doctrine of the Trinity, no one has given detailed attention to his doctrine of the Trinity. What is needed then is an examination of Gill’s trinitarian theology, setting it in its context, examining his sources, and surveying the controversy. Unless one understands not only that but also how Gill defended the Trinity against the avalanche of anti-trinitarianism, his contribution as a trinitarian luminary in the eighteenth century

Williams & Norgate, 1894–99); Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Books of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles Hay, 2 vols. (1895–98; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1952); Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971–89).

²⁸K. R. Hagenbach, *A History of Christian Doctrines*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880–81); William G. T. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894); Henry Sheldon, *History of Christian Doctrine*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1895); George Park Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896).

²⁹R. S. Franks, *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., 1953).

³⁰Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972); Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: Its Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004). Fortman does devote a chapter to the eighteenth century, but he focuses upon the philosophers and their impact upon the doctrine.

³¹Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: T & T Clark, 2003).

³²Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997).

³³Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 4:139–140.

whose writings helped preserve Particular Baptists from abandoning the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity will continue to be overlooked.

Thesis

How then did Gill formulate and defend the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity amid the growing influence of rationalism, increasing acceptance of anti-trinitarianism among Anglicans and Dissenters, changing methods of exegesis, and a rising unease of traditional trinitarian terminology? In seeking to address this main question, this dissertation will argue that Gill's formulation and defense of the doctrine of the Trinity was faithful to the Scriptures and was vital to the preservation of orthodox trinitarianism among Particular Baptists in the long eighteenth century. As part of the examination of Gill's doctrine of the Trinity, this dissertation will examine Gill's Patristic scholarship and how he used Patristic sources to formulate and defend his doctrine of the Trinity.

Methodology

This dissertation intends to address the lack of a thorough examination of John Gill's formulation and defense of the doctrine of the Trinity, and his use of Patristic sources in that defense. This dissertation will examine, therefore, the extensive corpus of Gill's writings, paying particular attention to his *Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated*,³⁴ *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*,³⁵ *Sermons and Tracts*,³⁶ especially his *Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ*,³⁷ and

³⁴John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731).

³⁵John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004); John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1770; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004).

³⁶Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*.

³⁷Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:534–64.

Exposition of the Old and New Testaments,³⁸ which is his commentary on each book of the Bible, and his church's *Confession of Faith*. Gill's varied and extensive writings will form a significant part of the primary sources for two reasons. First, Gill not only defended the doctrine of the Trinity throughout his lengthy ministry, but his critical thought and understanding of the Trinity pervades his treatises, books, sermons, and commentaries. Second, if one wants to analyze Gill's use of sources, then his primary works provide the best place to start, for he presents copious information to locate his original sources. For example, in the footnotes, he invariably identified the author, title of the work, page number or locating reference. Sometimes he mentioned the edition he is using and generally quoted the original Greek or Latin.

Moreover, Gill's writings will be supplemented with other primary sources, such as pamphlets, sermons, books, treatises, and letters from other writers embroiled in the long eighteenth-century trinitarian controversy. These multiple sources will be analyzed, compared, and synthesized in order to place Gill's trinitarian theology in its proper context. Gill's Patristic sources will be examined in order to assess his understanding and interpretation of such writings in the development of his thought.

³⁸John Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament* (London, 1757–66; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006); John Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament* (London, 1746–48; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006).

CHAPTER 2

GILL'S CONTEXT, LIFE, AND WORKS

Context

This chapter will examine the political, cultural, and theological context of Gill and then examine his life and works. An understanding of the context will help one to appreciate something of the turbulent and tumultuous period in which Gill ministered and defended the Trinity. Politically, Gill outlived four monarchs. Culturally, he witnessed seismic moral and intellectual changes. Theologically, he observed the growth of Deism and Revivalism. After examining the context, Gill's life and works will be examined over three periods.

Political Context

This section will examine the major political events that occurred during the reigns of William III, Queen Anne, George I, and George II.

William III (1689–1702). Hearing the news of peace with France in September 1697, England exulted. In Plymouth, in celebration of the Treaty of Rhyswick (1697),¹ the newspaper, the *Post Man and the Historical Account*, reported that guns discharged, trumpets blasted, and drums pounded.² There the people also shouted,

¹Two significant concessions from France in the Treaty were (1) the recognition of William as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland and (2) the promise not to engage in war against England or any of its territories, nor support any insurrectionists against William in any manner.

²*Post Man and the Historical Account*, no. 373 (September 18–21, 1697). *The Post Man and the Historical Account* was an English newspaper that began in October 1695. Its publisher was Richard Baldwin and original editor John de Fonvive. Appearing three times a week, the paper reported domestic news, but its focus was foreign news. Baldwin was affiliated with the publishers of *Post Boy* (Abel Roper and Abel Boyer), which began in May 1695, but on account of a bitter dispute, Baldwin separated and

“repeated huzzah’s and loud acclamations of long live King William . . . the Restorer of the peace of Europe.”³ While Bristol celebrated with “all manner of rejoycings,”⁴ in Portsmouth festivities included bells, bonfires, and jubilation.⁵ When William⁶ returned in the middle of November, London also celebrated and honored their King with a memorable and majestic parade through the city, memorable for the thunder of the joyful throng and majestic for the retinue of the stately grandeur.⁷ William Bates (1625–99) expressed the joyous sentiment of his fellows ministers in and around London, when he said to the King that “your happy return with Peace in your retinue, has rais’d a spring-tide of joy, that overflows the nation.”⁸ After nine years of strife and slaughter, battle and bloodshed, conflict and carnage, England’s war with France had ceased. William had inaugurated a *Pax Anglia*.

started the *Post Man*.

³*Post Man and the Historical Account*, no. 373.

⁴*Post Man and the Historical Account*, no. 373.

⁵*The Post Boy*, no. 372 (September 21–23, 1697). Similarly, *The Post Boy* reported on September 23, 1697, in issue 372 that “the Mayor and Alderman of Richmond in Yorkshire, together with the High Sheriff of the Country of York and all the Gentlemen of the North-riding assembled themselves, and with Bonfires, Bell ringing, and Trumpets sounding, drank [to] the King’s health with all imaginable joy and satisfaction.” Similar reports can be found in the same newspaper and same issue on September 20 from Cows.

⁶For biographies on William III, see Stephen B. Baxter, *William III and the Defense of European Liberty, 1650–1702* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966); Tony Clayton, *William III* (London: Pearson Education, 2002).

⁷*An Account of His Most Excellent Majesty’s Splendid Reception Into the Famous City of London: Together with His Royal Entertainment in and Through the Said City, on Tuesday the 16th of This Instant November, 1697* (London, 1697). In addition to the account above, an orphan composed a speech to commemorate the return of the King: Isaac Crew, *A Speech Spoken by Isaac Crew: An Orphan of the Grammar-School in Christ’s-Hospital; To His Majesty King William III. In His Passage Through the City of London, November 16, 1697 on His Return from Flanders, After the Happy Conclusion of the Peace*. (London: G. G., 1697). Further, an anonymous poet penned a heroic poem that was published to mark the joyful and triumphant occasion: *The Triumphant Reception of His Most Sacred Majesty, King William III: In His Passage Through the City of London, to His Royal Palace, on His Return from Flanders, After a Firm Conclusion of Peace, November the 16th 1697. A Heroick Poem* (London, 1697).

⁸William Bates, *Dr. Bates’s Congratulatory Speech to the King, Novemb. 22, 1697: In the Name of the Dissenting Ministers in and About London* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1698), 1.

When John Gill was born, William had already ruled over England for nine years and would continue for another four years. From the beginning, his rule evoked great expectations, spread joy throughout the nation, and dispelled black clouds of political despair.⁹ Among his major accomplishments that impacted the kingdom of England, three are noteworthy: (1) he championed the religion of Protestants, (2) he supported the toleration of Dissenters, and (3) he mediated between absolutism and republicanism.

When many in the nation became both incensed by James II's unwise actions and exacerbated by his imprudent policies, William of Orange received an invitation by letter signed by the "Immortal Seven" on June 30, 1668.¹⁰ The letter requested that William visit England with an army in order to rescue the nation from Roman Catholicism, deliver them from arbitrary power, and champion the religion of Protestants. Before William departed for England, he defended his expedition with arms by explaining that one of the reasons for his visit was the preservation of Protestantism.¹¹ Similarly, William appealed to the navy captains and soldiers in the English fleet and the officers and soldiers in the English army to assist him because the purpose of his voyage was to safeguard the Protestant religion.¹² Later, when ninety Dissenting ministers visited

⁹Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1823), 4:1.

¹⁰The Immortal Seven consisted of the following persons: Charles Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury (1660–1718), William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire (1640–1707), Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby (1632–1712), Richard Lumley (1650–1721), the Bishop of London, Henry Compton (1632–1713), Edward Russell (1653–1727), and Henry Sidney (1641–1704). For the names and copy of the invitation sent to the Prince of Orange from the Immortal Seven, see Maurice Ashley, *The Glorious Revolution of 1688* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 121–22, 201–2.

¹¹William Prince of Orange, *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry Orange, by the Grace of God Prince of Orange, &c. of the Reasons Inducing Him to Appear in Armes in the Kingdome of England; for Preserving of the Protestant England, for Restoring the Lawes and Liberties of England, Scotland and Ireland: Here Unto Are Added the Letters of the Aforesaid His Illustrious Highnesse to the Sea and Land Forces of England, Together with the Prayer for the Present Expedition* (Hague: Arnout Leers, 1688), 8, 10.

¹²Prince of Orange, *Declaration of His Highness William Henry Orange*, 15–16.

the Prince on January 2, 1689, William reassured them that the design of his journey was the “defense of the Protestant religion,” a religion which he stated that he embraced himself, along with his country and ancestors.¹³ The promise made to champion the Protestant religion culminated with William taking the Coronation Oath, swearing that he would do all within his power to “maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law.”¹⁴ Shortly before his death, William secured a Protestant successor to the English and Irish thrones by establishing the Act of Settlement (1701).¹⁵ This Act vested the succession to the English and Irish thrones to Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover and her Protestant heirs who had not married a Roman Catholic. Therefore, it was no exaggeration for an Anglican to declare in a memorial sermon that the king was “the great defender of our Faith and Religion.”¹⁶

Along with championing the Protestant religion, William also advocated religious toleration, though such toleration did not extend to all groups, such as Roman Catholics. As William prepared to visit England, he expressed his hope that a free parliament would enact laws that concurred with the Established Church and all Nonconformists.¹⁷ Not too long afterwards, in reply to the Dissenting ministers who visited him on January 2, 1689, William assured them that he would endeavor to promote a unity among all the Protestants.¹⁸ Later that same year, King William and Queen Mary

¹³*The Address of the Nonconformist Ministers (in and About the City of London) to His Highness the Prince of Orange* (London: Thomas Cockerill, 1689), 2.

¹⁴Coronation Oath, 1689, 1 Will. and Mar., sess. 1, c. 6. See Statutes Great Britain. Laws, etc., *A Collection of Statutes Connected with the General Administration of the Law*, 3rd ed. (London: Thomas Blenkarn, Edward Lumley, and W. H. Bond, 1836), 5:30.

¹⁵Act of Settlement, 1701, 12 and 13 Will, sess. 3, c. 6.

¹⁶Edward Clarke, *A Sermon Preach'd at St. Mary's Nottingham; on Sunday the 15th of March, 1701. Upon Occasion of the Death of King*. (London: Edw. Evets, 1702), 3.

¹⁷Prince of Orange, *Declaration of His Highness William Henry Orange*, 8.

approved the Act of Toleration, which was meant to be a “means to unite their Majesties’ Protestant subjects in interest and affection.”¹⁹ Whereas the law did not benefit Roman Catholics or non-trinitarians, with a few restrictions the law granted Dissenters freedom of worship.²⁰

Besides his defense of Protestant religion and advocacy of religious toleration, William promoted constitutional monarchy, though it was with some reluctance. Prior to the arrival of William of Orange, James II had provoked the passions of his people by his exercise of arbitrary power. Consequently, in order to allay the concerns of the people that he or future rulers may abuse their power, William acceded to the Bill of Rights, which restrained royal prerogative and required future monarchs to subscribe to Protestantism. Due to pressure from growing resistance overseas, a threat of withdrawal of war funds, and having provoked outrage by vetoing the Place Bill, William capitulated to the Triennial Bill (1694) and thus limited the maximum term of Parliament to three years. Gilbert Burnet reported that many in Parliament rejoiced over the approval of the Triennial Bill, believing that this new law would prevent great corruption in elections and secure previous laws and liberties.²¹ Another important contribution to constitutional monarchy was established when William accepted the restrictions placed on the power of future monarchs in the Act of Settlement (1701), such as the potentate must receive

¹⁸*Address of the Nonconformist Ministers*, 2.

¹⁹Act of Toleration, 1689, 1 Will. and Mar., sess. 1, c. 6. For entire act, see Great Britain. Laws, *A Collection of Statutes Connected with the General Administration of the Law*, 5:30–35.

²⁰Act of Toleration, 1689, 1 Will. and Mar., sess. 1, c. 6., vi, viii–x, xvii. Dissenting ministers were exempted from Articles 34–36 and the first clause of Article 20, while Baptists were also exempted from Article 27. Some of the restrictions included the following: (1) Nonconformist ministers must subscribe to thirty-six of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England with Baptist ministers exempted from one more article due to their rejection of infant baptism. (2) All Nonconformist ministers must still pay tithes to the Church of England. (3) Dissenting congregations must license their place of worship, and the minister of the congregation must take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy.

²¹Burnet, *Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time*, 4:232–33. As a result of Triennial Bill, England (later Britain) experienced ten elections over the next twenty years. Elections were conducted in 1695, 1698, 1700/01, 1701, 1702, 1705, 1708, 1710, 1713, and 1715.

parliamentary consent before leaving the country, must be a communicant of the Church of England, and must not engage in war with any nations or territories that do not belong to the crown.²²

Anne (1702–14). In his last speech in Parliament before the Houses of Peers and Commons, William informed the two houses that Louis XIV had breached the Treaty of Ryswick not only by declaring James Francis Edward Stuart (1688–1766), the Old Pretender, the King of England but also by placing his grandson Philip (1683–1746) on the throne of Spain.²³ For this reason, William exhorted the “Lords and Gentlemen” to act wisely and quickly and “exert the ancient Vigour of the English Nation,” since “the Eyes of all Europe” are upon them.²⁴ William stressed that French aggression must be stopped. In the same session, William reminded the two houses that from beginning of his reign he had desired to see England and Scotland unified.²⁵ These two themes of French aggression and the union of England and Scotland dominated the reign of Queen Anne.

In Queen Anne’s first speech to both houses on March 11, 1702, she renewed her brother-in-law’s admonition that Parliament do whatever is necessary to reduce the “exorbitant power of France.”²⁶ On May 4, 1702, England declared war against France

²²John Piggott (d. 1713) expressed the significance of this Settlement in his funeral sermon of William III: “And how great a concern did this Prince discover for posterity, by his earnest and seasonable recommending to the late Parliament the succession to the crown in the Protestant line, thereby extinguishing the hopes of a *suppositious* heir, to make the clearer way for that admirable princess that now fills the throne?” John Piggott, *The Natural Frailty of Princes Consider’d; in a Sermon Preach’d the 29th of March, 1702. Upon the Sad Occasion of the Death of the Late and Mighty Prince William the Third, King of England* (London: Dan. Brown, A. Bell, and J. Baker, 1702), 18.

²³*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present* (London: Richard Chandler, 1742), 3:183–84.

²⁴*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 3:184.

²⁵*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 3:189.

²⁶*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 3:198. In this speech, the Queen acknowledged that she was wholeheartedly English and that her word was completely trustworthy. *History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 3:190. Bishop Gilbert Burnet commented that these remarks from Anne about her devotion to England and that her word was trustworthy caused some concern because

and Louis XIV's grandson, Philip. This war became known as the War of Spanish Succession, a war that sought to redress the balance of power throughout Europe and prevent French hegemony over continental Europe.²⁷ Under the command of the Duke of Marlborough, England and its Allies won decisive victories over France. Consequently, at least three times, the Queen appointed a day of public thanksgiving for victories in war: September 7, 1704; June 27, 1706; and February 17, 1708/09. On each of these occasions, a popular London Particular Baptist minister and hymnwriter Joseph Stennett I (1663–1713) preached a thanksgiving sermon,²⁸ the first of these sermons not only received the approbation of the Queen but also her remuneration.²⁹ John Piggott (d. 1713), a London Particular Baptist minister, also published a sermon on the first public thanksgiving.³⁰ Despite Allied victories, it was not until 1713 that the War of Spanish Succession ended with the Treaty of Utrecht.³¹

Moreover, Queen Anne also reminded Parliament in her first speech that they consider what must be done to unify England and Scotland into one kingdom.³²

her father, James II, had uttered the same thing in his first speech. Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, 5:2–3. Some biographers have also interpreted Anne's comment—that she is wholeheartedly English—as a swipe at William and his preoccupation with foreign affairs. Clayton, *William III*, 188; Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne*, new ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 152–53.

²⁷*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present*, 3:200–201.

²⁸Joseph Stennett, *A Sermon Preach'd on Thursday the 7th of September 1704: Being the Day Appointed by Her Majesty for a Solemn Thanksgiving... for the Late Glorious Victory... at Bleinheim...* (London: A. Bell, and J. Baker, 1704); Joseph Stennett, *A Sermon Preach'd on Thursday the 27th of June 1706: Being the Day Appointed by Her Majesty for a Solemn Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the Late Glorious Progress of Her Majesty's Arms and Those of Her Allies in Flanders and Spain* (London: J. Baker, A. Bell, S. Crouch, and D. Brown, 1706); Joseph Stennett, *A Sermon Preach'd on Thursday, February 17. 1708/9, Being Appointed by Her Majesty for a Solemn Thanksgiving to Almighty; for the Many and Great Successes of the Confederate Arms This Last Campaign.* (London: J. Baker, 1709).

²⁹Joseph Stennett, *The Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. Joseph Stennett... To Which is Prefix'd Some Account of His Life* (London: J. Darby, D. Midwinter, and A. Ward, 1732), 1:23.

³⁰John Piggott, *A Sermon Preach'd the 7th of September, 1704. Being the Solemn Thanksgiving-Day for the Late Glorious Victory... at Bleinheim* (London: John Baker, 1704).

³¹The Treaty required France not only to recognize Queen Anne as the sovereign of Britain but

Concerned about the Protestant succession in Scotland and the nation's reputation abroad, the Queen wrote to the Scottish Parliament and emphasized that further delay would be deleterious and disastrous.³³ She added a little later in the same letter that “a longer delay of settling the succession in the Protestant line may have very dangerous consequences; and a disappointment of it would infallibly make that our kingdom the seat of war, and expose it to devastation and ruin.”³⁴ Writing to the Parliament of Scotland, Fourth Session on July 31, 1706, Anne commented that the union of England and Scotland would be considered the “greatest glory of our reign” because the union would be the “greatest happiness of Our people.”³⁵ On May 1, 1707, the two kingdoms of England and Scotland united to become known as the kingdom of Great Britain.³⁶ As a result of the Act of Union, the succession to the throne of Great Britain was secured so that a Protestant monarch would always rule over the one kingdom.³⁷

George I (1714–27). On August 1, 1714, the *London Gazette* reported that on
“this day, at half an hour past seven in the morning, died our late most gracious sovereign

also cease to support James Francis Edward Stuart's ambitions to regain the crown of Britain.

³²*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 3:198.

³³Anne, *Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne*, ed. Beatrice Curtis Brown (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968), 146.

³⁴Anne, *Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne*, 147.

³⁵Anne, *Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne*, 191.

³⁶*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present* (London: Richard Chandler, 1742), 4:16. “That the two Kingdoms of Scotland and England, shall, upon the first Day of May next ensuing the Date hereof, and for ever after, be united into one Kingdom by the Name of Great-Britain.”

³⁷*History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 4:16. “That the Succession to the Monarchy of the united Kingdom of Great-Britain, and of the Dominions thereunto belonging, after her most sacred Majesty, and in default of Issue of her Majesty, be, remain, and continue to the most Excellent Princess Sophia, Electress and Duchess Dowager of Hanover, and the Heirs of her Body, being Protestants. . . . And that all Papists, and Persons marrying Papists, shall be excluded from, and for ever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the imperial Crown of Great-Britain, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, or any Part thereof.”

Queen Anne. . . . Upon her death the Lords of the Privy Council immediately assembled at St. James, and gave orders for proclaiming the Most High and Mighty Prince George, Elector of Brunswick Lüneburg, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland.”³⁸ Many in Great Britain celebrated the accession of George, but James Francis Edward Stuart, son of James II, did not. In a formal protest dated August 29, 1714, James objected that not only was he unlawfully denied his inheritance, but he, not the Elector of Brunswick, was the legitimate heir to the throne.³⁹ Therefore, he demanded the return of his hereditary right and resolved never to cease such pursuit.⁴⁰

Shortly after George I ascended to the throne of Great Britain, he encountered the first of two major crises: the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. This rebellion, also known as “the Fifteen,” was an attempt by the Old Pretender to regain the crown of Great Britain and restore the throne to the exiled House of the Stuart family. Supporters of the Old Pretender continued to exist in Britain, especially among the Scots, who considered James Francis Edward Stuart as the lawful king of Scotland. But it was the Whig party’s tactics that contributed and fueled the uprising. Having gained a dominant victory over the Tories in the elections of March 1715, the Whigs began to displace Tories at the national and local levels, remove prominent Tory politicians as directors from the South Sea Company,⁴¹ and replace Tories with Whig supporters. Further, the Whigs inflamed

³⁸*London Gazette*, no. 5247 (1 August 1714).

³⁹*Culloden Papers: Comprising an Extensive and Interesting Correspondence from the Year 1625 to 1748: Including Numerous Letters from the Unfortunate Lord Lovat, and Other Distinguished Persons of the Time; with Occasional State Papers of Much Historical Importance. The Whole Published from the Originals in the Possession of Duncan George Forbes... To Which is Prefixed, an Introduction, Containing Memoirs of the Right Honourable Duncan Forbes* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1815), 30.

⁴⁰*Culloden Papers: Comprising an Extensive and Interesting Correspondence from the Year 1625 to 1748: Including Numerous Letters from the Unfortunate Lord Lovat, and Other Distinguished Persons of the Time; with Occasional State Papers of Much Historical Importance. The Whole Published from the Originals in the Possession of Duncan George Forbes... To Which is Prefixed, an Introduction, Containing Memoirs of the Right Honourable Duncan Forbes*, 31–32.

⁴¹John Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), 68–

the Tories by impeaching Henry St. John (1678–1751), 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, James Butler (1685–1745), Duke of Ormonde, and Robert Harley (1661–1724), Earl of Oxford, for high treason, high crimes, and misdemeanors and Earl of Strafford for high crimes and misdemeanors. As a result, many Tories who did not initially support open rebellion reconsidered and began to support the invasion of the Old Pretender.⁴² Meanwhile, pro-Jacobites began to riot in many parts of England. These rioters destroyed many buildings, including several Dissenting meeting places, among which were two Baptist meeting houses in Oxford and Wrexham in Denbighshire.⁴³ While the rioters destroyed the Baptist meeting houses, they shouted, “No foreigners, no presbyterians, King James III, etc.”⁴⁴ Appearing before George I on August 16, 1715, on behalf of the Dissenting ministers in and around London, the Baptist minister, Nathaniel Hodges (1655–1727) reassured the King that he had “undoubted right and title to the imperial crown,” and they abhorred any and all efforts to reinstate the Old Pretender.⁴⁵ In September, the Earl of Mar raised the standard in Scotland, declaring the Old Pretender their King,⁴⁶ and assuring the Scots that James would support them in their rising.⁴⁷ But by the time James had arrived in Scotland on December 22, it was too late. The Jacobite army had dwindled. George I’s army, however, had increased with the arrival of 6,000 Dutch soldiers.⁴⁸ Therefore, in February

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⁴²Ragnhild Hatton, *George I*, foreword by Jeremy Black (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 175.

⁴³Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists* (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2001), 4:136, 140.

⁴⁴Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 4:125.

⁴⁵Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1811–30), 3:121–22. Nathaniel Hodges delivered the letter on behalf of the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists.

⁴⁶Daniel Szechi, *1715: The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 51.

⁴⁷Hatton, *George I*, 176.

1716, the Old Pretender and the Earl of Mar fled to France.⁴⁹

The next crisis during the administration of George I was the South Sea Bubble.⁵⁰ The South Sea Company was established by Robert Harley (1661–1724), Earl of Oxford, in 1711 to consolidate the debt of the government and counteract the Whig-dominated Bank of England. The South Sea Company was granted a monopoly to trade in the South Seas—South America—which was thought to possess great wealth, since people had heard there were gold and silver mines in Peru and Mexico.⁵¹ With government debt at £9 million in 1711, primarily incurred due to the War of Spanish Succession, the South Sea Company offered creditors of the government a debt for equity swap. The creditors would exchange their debt for shares in the new company at par, while government promised to pay annual interest and expenses of almost £600,000.⁵² In a speech delivered in 1717, George I requested that the House of Lords and Commons consider how to reduce the national debt. Parliament responded by accepting the South Sea Company proposal to convert £31 million of government debt into shares.⁵³ In exchange for the debt swap, the government agreed to pay an annual interest of five percent until 1727, when the rate would then reduce to four percent.⁵⁴ Fueled by speculation and greed,⁵⁵ the South Sea's shares quickly shot up from £128⁵⁶ on February

⁴⁸Hatton, *George I*, 178.

⁴⁹For a more thorough examination of the Jacobite Rebellion in 1715, see Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites, Britain and Europe, 1688–1788* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 59–84; Szechi, *1715: The Great Jacobite Rebellion*.

⁵⁰For an extended treatment of the South Sea Bubble crisis, see Carswell, *South Sea Bubble*.

⁵¹Charles Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* (London: National Illustrated Library, 1852), 1:46.

⁵²Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, 1:45.

⁵³Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, 1:48.

⁵⁴Hatton, *George I*, 250.

⁵⁵Hatton, *George I*, 248. This period was inebriated with speculation so that joint-stock

1, 1720 to £1,000⁵⁷ at the end of June of the same year, varying throughout July and August, but by the end of September the price plummeted to £200.⁵⁸ With such a wild ride in prices, many people, including the nobility,⁵⁹ were ruined and lost vast sums of money,⁶⁰ “suicide became commonplace,”⁶¹ and, “it was impossible to find accommodation for patients in any private mad-house.”⁶² Among those with an investment in the South Sea’s shares was the London Particular Baptist Fund, which had an investment of £300.⁶³ Samuel Chandler (1693–1766), a Dissenting minister, lost everything and consequently was forced to open a bookstore in order to survive.⁶⁴ Public outrage compelled the House of Commons to investigate the financial fiasco of the South Sea shares and discovered that several ministers and members of parliament had accepted bribes of stock and profited from speculative activity.⁶⁵ Although George I was rumored

companies, which came to be called bubbles, sprung up everywhere. Mackay identified over eighty bubble companies that were deemed illegal. And to appreciate the craze of this time, someone started a company called, “A company for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is.” Within several hours of offering subscriptions, this unknown venturer was able to generate 2,000 pounds before he absconded to the continent. Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, 1:52–60.

⁵⁶*Daily Courant*, no. 5703 (February 1, 1720).

⁵⁷*Daily Post*, no. 232 (June 29, 1720).

⁵⁸*Daily Courant*, no. 5911 (September 30, 1720).

⁵⁹The *London Journal* reported a list of the “names of 247 noblemen and people of note” who were ruined by the decline of the South Sea stock. *London Journal*, no. 61 (September 17–24, 1720).

⁶⁰In a letter to the editor of the *London Journal*, an anonymous person lamented that thousands of persons lost money and consequently were bankrupt. *London Journal*, no. 70 (November 19–26, 1720). For a great appreciation of the scope of losses and consequences, see Viscount Erleigh, *The South Sea Bubble* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s sons, 1933), 112–18.

⁶¹Erleigh, *South Sea Bubble*, 116.

⁶²Erleigh, *South Sea Bubble*, 117.

⁶³Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 3:158–59. There is no indication, if the shares were sold and realized a gain or whether the Particular Baptist Fund incurred a loss. Further, Ivimey does not record whether the shares were a gift from a generous benefactor or whether they were purchased using the Fund’s money.

⁶⁴Erleigh, *South Sea Bubble*, 116.

to have profited from the speculation, which according to a biographer, he did not,⁶⁶ the South Sea Bubble inflicted considerable embarrassment to the king and diminished public confidence. Through the efforts of Robert Walpole (1676–1745), parliament instituted efforts to restore public confidence.⁶⁷

George II (1727–60). When George I died on June 22, 1727 in Hanover, Robert Walpole⁶⁸ was the first to inform the new king of Great Britain, George II.⁶⁹ Through his vital role in directing foreign affairs, despite intermittent conflicts with cabinet ministers, George II embroiled Britain in three foreign wars.⁷⁰ First, England and Spain clashed with one another in the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–48). The war arose when the two nations could not resolve its dispute over British trade to South America. This war was subsumed into the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48), a war over Maria Theresa's claim to the Habsburg throne. Initially, the major European powers had agreed to the Pragmatic Sanction (1713), which permitted a daughter of Charles VI to inherit the Habsburg throne. Prussia and France, however, contravened the Pragmatic Sanction, while George II and other kingdoms upheld it, leading to war. Towards the end of George II's reign, Britain participated in the Seven Years War (1756–63). The Seven

⁶⁵Hatton, *George I*, 251.

⁶⁶Hatton, *George I*, 251–54.

⁶⁷Hatton, *George I*, 256.

⁶⁸The Whig Party, exercised a dominating control over the government from 1714–1760. During the Whig supremacy, Walpole led the party between 1721–42. For an extensive treatment of Whig Supremacy, see Basil Williams, *The Whig Supremacy, 1714–1760*, 2nd ed., rev. C. H. Stuart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); H. T. Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy* (London: English Universities Press, 1973).

⁶⁹Andrew C. Thompson, *George II: King and Elector* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 69. In addition to Thompson's biography on George II, Jeremy Black has written a recent biography. Both of these biographers have reassessed George's legacy and contribution. Jeremy Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007).

⁷⁰Thompson, *George II*, 5.

Years War was a continuation of the War of Austrian Succession, but Prussia became an ally of Britain and Austria an adversary. Despite initial losses, Britain gained major victories over France in North America, India, and West Africa. As a result of the Seven Years' War, Great Britain expanded its territories, prompting George Macartney to comment later that Great Britain was a "vast empire, on which the sun never sets, and whose bounds nature has not yet ascertained."⁷¹

While Britain was engaged in the War of the Austrian Succession, George II was compelled to return to England in order to quash the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, also known as "The '45."⁷² The year before the '45, France and Britain had declared war against one another as part of the War of Austrian Succession.⁷³ Meanwhile, Charles Edward Stuart (1720–88), also known as the "Young Pretender" and "Bonnie Prince Charlie," made secret plans to invade Scotland in order to reestablish the exiled House of Stuart. Despite France's lack of support for the invasion, Charles proceeded. Evidently, he thought the time was apt for an invasion for the following reasons: (1) George and his armies were preoccupied with France, (2) Britain had sustained many casualties at Fontenoy, and (3) few soldiers remained in Britain to defend the land.⁷⁴ On July 23, 1745, the Young Pretender arrived on the island of Eriskay, and on August 19, he raised the standard at Glenfinnan. Having gathered sufficient support, he captured Edinburgh and then routed the government army led by Sir John Cope at the Battle of Prestonpans.

⁷¹George Macartney, *An Account of Ireland in 1773: By a Late Chief Secretary of That Kingdom* (London, 1773), 55. Macartney wrote these words in the context of whether Ireland was conquered or not, it has an obligation to submit to and depend upon Great Britain.

⁷²For a thorough examination of the rebellion, see Christopher Duffy, *The '45* (London: Cassell, 2003).

⁷³Louis XV, *The King of France's Declaration of War. In French, and English* (London: M. Cooper, 1744); George II, *A Copy of the Declaration of War of the King of Great Britain, Against the French King*. (Boston: T. Fleet, 1744).

⁷⁴Henry Fielding, *True Patriot and History of Our Own Times (London, England)*, no. 6 (December 10, 1745).

Spurred on by his success in Scotland, Charles Edward proceeded south, entered England, and quickly captured Carlisle, while the people of Derby to the south panicked.⁷⁵

Meanwhile, George and his subjects responded to this “unnatural rebellion.” First, the king requested that his son, the Duke of Cumberland, immediately send home “eight battalions and also nine squadrons of the British troops.”⁷⁶ Next, George issued several proclamations, forbidding Jacobite sympathizers from approaching within ten miles of London and Westminster and enjoining British subjects to set apart a day of fasting for the blessing and mercy of God.⁷⁷ Third, Dissenting ministers in London and Westminster reaffirmed their support for the king.⁷⁸ Even a woman identified as a British lady admonished her countrywomen to oppose the rebellion: “Let the young and fair, who have it in their power to reward heroes, look with contempt on every man who does not attend his King and country’s call in their defence . . . and drive their sons and husbands to the field.”⁷⁹ Further, Particular Baptists supported the king in their preaching and writing. In a sermon preached on December 18, 1745, Joseph Stennett II (1692–1758) reminded his hearers of the Young Pretender’s upbringing, warned against the

⁷⁵Thompson, *George II*, 166.

⁷⁶*Westminster Journal or New Weekly Miscellany (London, England)*, no. 201 (October 5, 1745).

⁷⁷George II, *By the King, a Proclamation, for Putting the Laws in Execution Against Jesuits and Popish Priests, and Promising a Reward for Apprehending Them Within London, Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, or Within Ten Miles of the Said Cities of London and Westminster* (London: Robert Baskett, 1745); George II, *By the King a Proclamation, for Putting the Laws in Execution Against Papists and Nonjurors, and for Commanding All Papists and Reputed Papists, to Depart from the Cities of London and Westminster, and from Withing Ten Miles of the Same; and for Confining Papists, and Reputed Papists, to Their Habitations; and for Putting in Execution the Laws Against Riots and Rioters* (London: J. Stanton, 1745); George II, *By the King, a Proclamation for a General Fast* (London: Thomas Bakett and Robert Baskett, 1745).

⁷⁸Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 3:240–41.

⁷⁹*An Epistle from a British Lady to Her Countrywomen, on the Occasion of the Present Rebellion* (London: M. Cooper, 1745), 12.

enticements of the Catholics, and recalled the blessings of the present king.⁸⁰ While writing his commentary on Psalm 25:3 on December 2, 1745, Gill paralleled those that rebelled against David as similar to those that were rebelling against their “rightful sovereign King George” and prayed that “they might be ashamed; that they may fail in their attempts and designs, and be brought to deserved punishment.”⁸¹

Having seized Carlisle, the Young Pretender set his ambitions on the citadel, London. But before he departed Derby, the Young Pretender and his council of war received news that compared to their 5,000 troops, they would soon encounter three British armies of about 30,000 men.⁸² Despite the insistence of Charles to advance, Lord George Murray and all the other council members advised that they retreat to Scotland, and they did.⁸³ After a few subsequent battles with the British armies, the Young Pretender lost a decisive battle on April 16, 1746 at Culloden to the Duke of Cumberland.⁸⁴ Afterwards, Bonnie Prince Charlie hid for several months and then escaped at the end of September to France.

In response to the victory, George appointed October 9, 1746 as an appointed day of thanksgiving to God. The Church of England composed a prayer for the occasion.⁸⁵ John Wesley published seven hymns to express thanksgiving,⁸⁶ and Joseph

⁸⁰Joseph Stennett, *Rabshakeh's Retreat. A Sermon Preach'd in Little-Wild-Street, December 18, 1745. Being the Day Appointed for a General Fast, an Occasion of the Present Rebellion* (London: Aaron Ward, H. Whitridge, and G. Hawkins, 1745), 39–43.

⁸¹John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 3:633nx.

⁸²Robert Chambers, *History of the Rebellion of 1745–6*, new ed. (London: W&R Chambers, 1869), 195–96.

⁸³Chambers, *History of the Rebellion of 1745–6*, 195–96; Duffy, *The '45*, 301, 312–13.

⁸⁴Chambers, *History of the Rebellion of 1745–6*, 278–301; Duffy, *The '45*, 501–26.

⁸⁵Church of England, *A Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God; to Be Used in All Churches and Chapels Throughout England, the Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick Upon Tweed, on Thursday the Ninth Day of October Next* (London: Thomas Baskett and Robert Baskett, 1746).

Stennett II and other ministers commemorated the victory in their preaching.⁸⁷

Cultural Context

Having considered the political context and some of the major events under the reigns of William III, Anne, George I and II, this section will now examine the cultural context under two major sections: the moral and intellectual contexts.

Moral context. Although one can analyze the moral context through several vices, this section will limit itself to three of the more prominent: the stage, drinking, and gambling. While examining this triad of vices, one must be careful not to smear the picture more than it warrants. It cannot be denied that some noble efforts and achievements occurred in the first half of the eighteenth century. For example, George Frederick Handel (1685–1759) composed his illustrious works, such as *Zadok the Priest* for the coronation of George II and the incomparable oratorio *Messiah* (1742). Nevertheless, throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the bawdiness of many English plays vitiated the British society. Writing in the *Spectator* in 1712, the essayist Joseph Addison (1672–1719), who was not opposed to plays in themselves, complained about the debauchery on stage. He said,

It is one of most unaccountable things in our age, that the lewdness of our theatre should be so much complained of, so well exposed, and so little redressed. It is to be hoped, that sometime or other we may be at leisure to restrain the licentiousness of the theatre, and make it contribute its assistance to the advancement of morality, and to the reformation of the age. As matters stand at present, multitudes are shut out from this noble diversion, by reason of those abuses and corruptions that accompany it.⁸⁸

⁸⁶John Wesley, *Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving-Day, October 9, 1746* (London, 1746).

⁸⁷Joseph Stennett, *The Lord Was There: Or, the Triumphs of Judah and Israel Over the Edomites. A Sermon Preach'd in Little-Wild-Street October 9, 1746* (London: Aaron Ward; J. Oswald; and H. Whitridge, 1746); Samuel Chandler, *National Deliverances Just Reasons for Publick Gratitude and Joy. A Sermon Preached at the Old-Jury, October 9, 1746, Being the Day Appointed... for a General Thanksgiving* (London: J. Noon and J. Highmore, 1746).

⁸⁸Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* (London: S. Buckley and J. Tonson, 1713), 6:272.

The essayist and dramatist Richard Steele (1672–1729), who like Addison did not oppose plays in general, but in fact wrote a few, criticized the play, *London Cockolds*, for exposing its audience to a “heap of vice and absurdity.”⁸⁹ At the same time, the satirist Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) argued in his *Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners* that the nation was very corrupt in religion and morals and therefore in need of a reformation.⁹⁰ Among the chief areas that Swift identified in need of reformation was the stage, which he bemoaned because performers mocked the clergy, commended vice, and censured virtue.⁹¹ Provoked by what he considered as “horrid blasphemies and impieties,” Arthur Bedford (1668–1745) crusaded against the stage and, in his most well known work, expressed the judgment that the English plays seemed almost always “to destroy or confound the notions of good and evil, to laugh us out of our virtue and religion, to turn the most serious and sacred things into a jest, and in short to debauch and corrupt the minds and manners of both men and women under the pretence of diverting them.”⁹² Commenting on a proposed bill in 1735 to limit the number of theaters and regulate its conduct brought by Sir John Bernard to the House of Commons, James Erskine (1679–1754) deplored the degradation of the theater and its deleterious effects on the British people when he said, “It is no less surprizing than shameful, to see

⁸⁹Isaac Bickerstaff, *The Tatlers* (London: H. Hills, 1710), 1:46.

⁹⁰Jonathan Swift, *A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners* (London: H. Hills, 1709), 4.

⁹¹Swift, *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, 16.

⁹²Arthur Bedford, *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion, Against the Horrid Blasphemies and Impieties Which Are Still Used in the English Play-Houses, to the Great Dishonour of Almighty God, and in Contempt of the Statutes of This Realm*. (London: John Darby, 1719), 5. In this work, Bedford cited 7,000 examples of immoral sentiments, most of which were taken from the last five years. See also previous warning against English play houses. Arthur Bedford, *The Evil and Danger of Stage-Plays: Shewing Their Natural Tendency to Destroy Religion, and Introduce a General Corruption of Manners; in Almost Two Thousand Instances, Taken from the Plays of the Two Last Years, Against All the Methods Lately Used for Their Reformation* (Bristol: W. Bonny, 1706).

so great a change for the worse in the temper and inclinations of the British nation, which though cheerful and facetious formerly, yet was sedate and solid; but now so extravagantly addicted to lewd and idle diversions, that the number of Play-Houses in London was double to that of Paris.”⁹³

Besides the corrupting influence of the theater, many of the British became ensnared with the vice of drunkenness. It is true that drunkenness existed before the eighteenth century. The evidence is too plain to cite. What was unique in the eighteenth century, however, was the ascent of “the master curse of English life,” gin-drinking.⁹⁴ According to William Lecky, gin-drinking became an epidemic in the early years of George I’s reign.⁹⁵ Many in the upper class consumed it. Joseph Addison, Lord Oxford (who was reported to have appeared drunk before Queen Anne on several occasions), and Lord Bolingbroke were said to be addicted to gin.⁹⁶ While at the beginning of the century, the poor in England primarily drank beer and ale, but that changed, according to Lecky, around 1724 when gin-drinking became the craze.⁹⁷ Writing to the Lord Mayor of London, one citizen complained to the mayor of the building of a new theater in Goodman’s Field. The anonymous citizen then warned that if the mayor permitted the new theater to remain, then it is very possible that plays would “spread, as drinking of gin has done, all over the kingdom.”⁹⁸ Moreover, gin was very affordable for people to

⁹³William Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England* (London: T. C. Hansard, 1806–20), 9:944–48.

⁹⁴William Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1878–90), 1:476.

⁹⁵Lecky, *History of England*, 1:477.

⁹⁶Lecky, *History of England*, 1:477–78.

⁹⁷Lecky, *History of England*, 1:478–79.

⁹⁸A Citizen, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir Richard Brocas, Lord Mayor of London* (London: T. Reynolds, 1730), 29.

purchase and thus greatly contributed to its ease of access.⁹⁹ Commenting on the Spirituous Liquor Bill (1742) in his *History of England, from the Revolution to the Death of George the Second*, Tobias Smollett (1721–71) remarked how the “populace of London were sunk into the most brutal degeneracy, by drinking to excess the pernicious spirit called Gin, which was sold so cheap, that the lowest class of the people could afford to indulge themselves in one continued state of intoxication, to the destruction of all morals, industry, and order.”¹⁰⁰ While William Hogarth (1697–1764) graphically portrayed the devastating effects of gin upon the nation in his famous print *Gin Lane* (1751), Parliament introduced several acts to suppress the consumption of gin, but it was probably the Gin Act (1751) along with other reasons that petered out the Gin Craze.

Along with the Gin Craze, gambling captivated many British subjects.¹⁰¹ William Sydney described gambling to be so endemic to the people that they “turned to it as they did to an ordinary recreation. . . . Few appear to have escaped the infection. Most, if not all, from the highest to the lowest carried with them some traces of it.”¹⁰² In her book, *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel*, Jessica Richard remarked that gambling “permeated the daily lives of eighteenth-century Britons of all classes and economic strata.”¹⁰³ William Lecky reported that many of the upper class were habitual gamblers.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹Philanthropos, *The Trial of the Spirits: Or, Some Considerations Upon the Pernicious Consequences of the Gin-Trade to Great Britain* (London: T. Cooper, 1736), 4.

¹⁰⁰Tobias Smollett, *The History of England, from the Revolution to the Death of George the Second (Designed as a Continuation of Mr. Hume’s History)* (London: Printed for T. Cadell and R. Baldwin, 1785), 3:92.

¹⁰¹For a history, though not comprehensive, of gambling in England in the eighteenth century, see Andrew Steinmetz, *The Gaming Table: Its Votaries and Victims, in All Times and Countries, Especially in England and in France*, 2 vols. (London: Tinsley brothers, 1870); William Sydney, *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Ward & Downey, 1891), 1:219–47; John Ashton, *The History of Gambling in England* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1898).

¹⁰²Sydney, *England and the English*, 1:219.

¹⁰³Jessica Richard, *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel*

In his *History of Gambling in England*, John Ashton believed that although gambling was common from the reign of Charles to the rule of Anne, the vice either became more publicized or intensified during the latter's reign.¹⁰⁵ In 1709, Jonathan Swift acknowledged that gambling was one of the nation's problems that had prevailed so much at that time.¹⁰⁶ During the reign of Anne, gambling became such a problem that Parliament amended the existing statutes in order to curb "excessive and deceitful gambling" by restricting losses to ten pounds.¹⁰⁷ Despite such efforts, gambling increased during the reigns of George I and II. Spurred on by the speculation of the South Sea Bubble and fueled by the state lottery reinstated in 1710, the English people became engrossed in gambling.¹⁰⁸ Speaking about the lottery, Sydney expressed the conviction that "of all baneful things that the evil propensities of Government ever induced it to patronize, assuredly they [lotteries] were the worst."¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, British society demonstrated their enchantment with gambling by their demand for multiple reprints of the *Compleat Gamester*, the standard instruction manual on playing games. Originally published in 1674 and attributed to Charles Cotton (1630–87), the *Compleat Gamester* went through multiple editions in the first half of eighteenth century. By 1750, the *Compleat Gamester* was in its seventh edition, having

(Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.

¹⁰⁴Lecky, *History of England*, 1:522.

¹⁰⁵Ashton, *History of Gambling in England*, 51.

¹⁰⁶Swift, *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, 5, 11.

¹⁰⁷Anne, *An Act for the Better Preventing of Excessive and Deceitful Gaming* (London: Thomas Newcomb, and Henry Hills, decess'd, 1711).

¹⁰⁸See comments under George I in the Political Context for summary of South Sea Bubble crisis.

¹⁰⁹Sydney, *England and the English*, 224.

been updated by Richard Seymour and Charles Johnson.¹¹⁰ At the same time the *Compleat Gamester* was enchanting the people, Edmund Hoyle was instructing Britons to play whist in his short treatise, which went through ten editions between 1742–50.¹¹¹ Although the government attempted to redress the mania of gambling by passing legislature in 1739, 1740, and 1745, the problem persisted throughout the century.¹¹²

Intellectual context. While England battled with its moral climate from plays, drinking, and gambling, the end of the seventeenth century witnessed a revolutionary intellectual change in English thought. “Assumptions which had been accepted for centuries were abandoned as obsolete. New principles began to govern human thought.”¹¹³ These intellectual changes began with Francis Bacon’s (1561–1626) seminal work, *Novum Organum* (1620). After growing dissatisfied with Aristotle’s deductive reasoning to explore science,¹¹⁴ Bacon introduced the scientific method with its “stress on

¹¹⁰Richard Seymour, *The Court-Gamester: Or, Full and Easy Instructions for Playing the Games Now in Vogue*, 2nd ed. corrected (London: E. Curll, 1720); Richard Seymour, *The Compleat Gamester: In Three Parts*, 8th ed, rev. Charles Johnson (London: J. Hodges, 1754).

¹¹¹Edmund Hoyle, *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist: Containing the Laws of the Game* (London: John Watts, 1742); Edmond Hoyle, *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist: Containing the Laws of the Game*, 10th ed. (London: T. Osborne, 1750).

¹¹²George II, *An Act for the More Effectual Preventing of Excessive and Deceitful Gaming* (London: John Baskett, 1739); George II, *An Act to Restrain and Prevent the Excessive Increase of Horse Races, and for Amending an Act Made in the Last Session of Parliament Entitled, An Act for the More Effectual Preventing of Excessive and Deceitful Gaming* (London: John Baskett, 1740); George II, *An Act to Explain, Amend, and Make More Effectual the Laws in Being, to Prevent Excessive and Deceitful Gaming; and to Restrain and Prevent the Excessive Increase of Horse Races* (London: Thomas Baskett and Robert Baskett, 1745).

¹¹³Gerald R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 1.

¹¹⁴Bacon expressed his rejection of Aristotelian logic in Book 1 of *Novum Organum*: “The sole cause and root of almost every defect in the sciences is this, that while we falsely admire and extol the powers of the human mind, we do not search for its real helps. . . . As the present sciences are useless for the discovery of effects, so the present system of logic is useless for the discovery of the sciences. The present system of logic rather assists in confirming and rendering inveterate the errors founded on vulgar notions than in searching after truth, and is therefore more hurtful than useful.” Francis Bacon, *The Physical and Metaphysical Works of Lord Bacon, Including The Advancement of Learning and Novum Organum*, ed. Joseph Devey, Bohn’s Philosophical Library (London: Bell, 1904), Aphorisms IX, XI, XII.

observation, experiment and inductive reasoning.”¹¹⁵ He believed that the scientific method was the true way to investigate and discover truth¹¹⁶ and thus laid the foundation for the empirical method that would be advanced upon by John Locke.

John Locke (1632–1704), said Colin Brown, was “the most brilliant creative thinker of his age”¹¹⁷ and Cragg called him “the moving spirit of the eighteenth century.”¹¹⁸ Building upon Bacon’s empirical method, Locke believed all ideas are derived from sensation or reflection on sensation¹¹⁹ and, like Bacon, he rejected Descartes innate ideas.¹²⁰ The consequence of Locke’s rejection of innate ideas led to his rejection of the sense of the deity inscribed upon the conscience of man, for he said, “it seems to me plainly to prove, that the truest and best notions men have of God were not imprinted, but acquired by thought and meditation, and a right use of their faculties.”¹²¹ Another significant implication of Locke’s theory of knowledge was his displacement of the supremacy of revelation to reason, for he declared that “whatever God hath revealed is certainly true: . . . but whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge.”¹²² Thus,

¹¹⁵Colin Brown, *From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment*, vol. 1 of *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers Ideas and Movements* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 216.

¹¹⁶In Book 1 of *Novum Organum*, Bacon wrote, “There are and can exist but two ways of investigating and discovering truth. The one hurries on rapidly from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms, and from them, as principles to the most general axioms, and from them, as principles and their supposed indisputable truth, derives and discovers the intermediate axioms. This way is now in use. The other constructs its axioms from the senses and particulars, by ascending and gradually, till it finally arrives at the most general axioms, which is the true but unattempted way.” Bacon, *The Physical and Metaphysical Works of Lord Bacon, Including The Advancement of Learning and Novum Organum*, Aphorism XIX.

¹¹⁷Colin Brown, *From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment*, 220.

¹¹⁸Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, 5–6.

¹¹⁹John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding: In Four Books* (London: Tho. Basset, 1690), 2.2.23–24.

¹²⁰Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, bk. 1.

¹²¹Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, 1.4.15.

Locke's epistemology furnished two significant shifts in the intellectual thought of England. First, he supplanted innate ideas with an empirical method, and second he displaced the supreme position of the traditional understanding of biblical authority with the role of reason.¹²³

The influence of Locke upon the English intellectual environment was matched, and in some people's eyes exceeded, by Isaac Newton (1642–1727). Hume considered Newton as “the greatest and rarest genius that ever rose for the ornament and instruction of the species.”¹²⁴ Locke referred to him as “the incomparable Mr. Newton” in his epistle to the reader in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.¹²⁵ What distinguished Newton and brought him notoriety was his formulation of the laws of motion and gravity. “He had discovered a single principle which explained both the falling of a pebble and the movements of the stars.”¹²⁶ This discovery would result in a mechanistic view or mechanical theory of the world in which the world was governed by mathematical laws. Man, who was at a loss to explain the phenomena in the world, now had an explanation and that by the use of his reason. As one writer stated, “It is no wonder that anyone challenging the competence of reason to answer important questions had an intolerable burden of proof on his shoulders.”¹²⁷

¹²²Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, 4.18.10. Locke also wrote in the same chapter and paragraph, “There can be no evidence that any traditional revelation is of divine revelation, in the words we receive it, and in the sense we understand it, so clear and so certain as that of the principles of reason: and therefore *Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason, has a right to be urged or assented to as a matter of faith, wherein reason hath nothing to do.*”

¹²³Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 22.

¹²⁴Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, 16.

¹²⁵Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*.

¹²⁶Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, 16.

¹²⁷Lewis White Beck, *Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (New York: Free, 1966), 5.

Theological Context

Anti-Catholicism. Despite the doctrinal and practical differences between the Anglicans and the Dissenters, one menace united them—Catholicism.¹²⁸ Both feared and dreaded the re-establishment of the Papacy in England. This vein of dread did not cease at the beginning of the century, but it continued throughout the heart of and into the late eighteenth century, so that Colin Haydon has noted in his work, *Anti-Catholicism in the Eighteenth-Century England*, that the “eighteenth century constituted a bridge, not a hiatus, between the better-researched ‘No Popery’ troubles of the Stuart and Victorian eras.”¹²⁹

This anti-Catholicism was part and parcel of the very air most Britons breathed, reaching all the way to the throne. In fact, at the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century, the various monarchs of England and later of Great Britain¹³⁰ issued proclamations to subdue Catholicism and secure the government. On February 8, 1699, William III promulgated that all Catholic priests and Jesuits depart from England and not return unless they wanted to face the consequences of the law.¹³¹ Three days later the King issued another proclamation that enjoined all of his subjects in foreign Catholic seminaries to return home, prohibited any of his vassals to reside in such schools, and forbade any of his citizens to support those who attend such institutions, for

¹²⁸I have used the terms Catholicism, Roman Catholicism, and Papacy interchangeably.

¹²⁹Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England c. 1714–80: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 2. For an introduction to anti-Catholicism in the novel genre in the eighteenth century, see Carrie Butler Laughridge, “Anti-Catholicism in the Eighteenth Century Novel” (M.A. thesis, Wake Forest University, 2009). Laughridge analyzes three novels from the eighteenth century and states that her work is a discussion of the relationship between the novel genre and anti-Catholic sentiment.

¹³⁰On May 1, 1707, England and Scotland united to become Great Britain. See Gregg, *Queen Anne*, 239–40.

¹³¹William III, *By the King, a Proclamation. William R. Whereas We Have Been Informed, That Many Popish Priests and Jesuits Have Presumed to Come Into This Kingdom: And to Continue Therein Contrary to the Laws and Statutes of This Realm* (London: Charles Bill, and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb, 1699).

William did not want his subjects to be “educated in Romish superstition” which he deemed to be a “great detriment” to his kingdom.¹³² Following her brother-in-law William’s proclamation against Catholic recusants above sixteen years of age, which restricted them to travel no more than five miles from their abode,¹³³ Queen Anne issued a similar proclamation against the recusants and commanded Catholics living within ten miles of or in the cities of London and Westminster to leave their home within five days of the Proclamation.¹³⁴

Likewise, due to the riots in the various parts of Great Britain and impending invasion of James the Pretender, George I charged all “Papists and Reputed Papists” dwelling within ten miles of or in the cities of London and Westminster or borough of Southwark to depart within fourteen days,¹³⁵ and enacted a law to disarm Catholics and Nonjurors.¹³⁶

¹³²William III, *By the King, a Proclamation: Whereas by a Statute Made in the Twenty Seventh Year of the Reign of the Late Queen Elizabeth, It is... Enacted, That If any of the Subjects of This Kingdom... Shall Be of, or Brought up in any College of Jesuits or Seminary Erected or Ordained in any Parts Beyond the Seas* (London: Charles Bill, and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb, 1699).

¹³³William III, *By the King, a Proclamation. William R. Whereas His Majesty Hath Been Informed, That Great Numbers of Papists and Other Disaffected Persons: Who Disown His Majesties Government, Have Lately Resorted to, and Assembled in the Cities of London and Westminster, Contrary to the Known Laws of This Kingdom* (London: Charles Bill, and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb, 1699).

¹³⁴Anne, *By the Queen, a Proclamation. Anne R. Whereas We Have Received Certain Information, That the Person Who, During the Life of the Late King James the Second, Pretended to Be Prince of Wales.* (London: Charles Bill, and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb, 1707). For a similar injunction against Roman Catholics, see Anne, *By the Queen, a Proclamation. Anne R. We Being Informed, That the Streets and Passages Leading Through Our Cities of London and Westminster, and Suburbs Thereof, Have Been Filled of Late with Great Numbers of Loose, Idle, and Disorderly Persons* (London: Charles Bill, and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb, 1710).

¹³⁵George I, *By the King. A Proclamation, Commanding All Papists, and Reputed Papists to Depart from the Cities of London and Westminster, and from Within Ten Miles from the Same, and Confirming Them to Their Habitations [July 25, 1715]* (London: J. Baskett, 1715).

¹³⁶George I, *By the King. A Proclamation, Commanding All Papists, and Reputed Papists to Depart from the Cities of London and Westminster, and from Within Ten Miles from the Same, and Confirming Them to Their Habitations [July 25, 1715]*. For similar proclamation of George II, see George II, *By the King, a Proclamation, for Putting the Laws in Execution Against Papists and Nonjurors, and for Commanding All Papists, and Reputed Papists, to Depart from the Cities of London and Westminster, and from Within Ten Miles of the Same; and for Confining Papists, and Reputed Papists, to Their Habitations;*

With lingering memories from the Gunpowder Plot, the Popish Plot, the pro-Catholic policies of James II, and the Assassination Plot of William III in 1696, many in the Established Church cringed at the thought of the restoration of Roman Catholicism. Thomas Tenison (1636–1715), the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1694 to his death, republished his tract, *An Argument for Union, Taken from the True Interest of Those Dissenters in England, Who Profess, and Call Themselves, Protestants*,¹³⁷ which attempted to persuade Nonconformists to reunite with the Established Church because they both opposed the same enemy—Rome.¹³⁸ In the same year, Lewis Atterbury (1656–1731), a chaplain to Queen Anne, wrote a rebuttal in response to *A Modest and True Account of the Chief Points in Controversie Between the Roman Catholicks. And the Protestants*,¹³⁹ which was a rejoinder to Archbishop of Canterbury John Tillotson’s *Sermons* against Roman Catholicism. Atterbury informed his readers that not only was there a significant number of Catholics in the land, but he claimed they also generated a large amount of income to promote their religion, as much as 80,000 pounds per year.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, he urged his readers to act accordingly so that they did not become

and for Putting in Execution the Laws Against Riots and Rioters (London: Thomas Baskett and Robert Baskett, 1743).

¹³⁷Thomas Tenison, *An Argument for Union: Taken from the True Interest of Those Dissenters in England Who Profess and Call Themselves Protestants* (London: Thomas Basset, Benjamin Tooke, and Fincham Gardiner, 1683); Thomas Tenison, *An Argument for Union, Taken from the True Interest of Those Dissenters in England, Who Profess, and Call Themselves, Protestants* (London, 1705).

¹³⁸Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, 16. After the death of Queen Anne, the Archbishop admonished the members of the Anglican Church to support King George I and not James the Pretender. See Thomas Tenison, *A Declaration of the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops in and Near London: Testifying Their Abhorrence of the Present Rebellion; with an Exhortation to the Clergy and People Under Their Care, to Be Zealous in the Discharge of Their Duties to His Majesty King George* (London: John Baskett, 1715).

¹³⁹C. N., *A Modest and True Account of the Chief Points in Controversie Between the Roman Catholicks. And the Protestants: Together with Some Considerations Upon the Sermons of a Divine of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1705).

¹⁴⁰Lewis Atterbury, *An Answer to a Popish Book, Intituled, A True and Modest Account of the Chief Points in Controversie, Between the Roman Catholicks and the Protestants. Together with Some Considerations Upon the Sermons of a Divine of the Church of England* (London: W. Hawes, 1706), 9.

enslaved to the Pope.¹⁴¹ An anonymous writer, who appeared to be a member of the Church of England,¹⁴² reminded his readers that since the Reformation in England, their nation had never been immune from the schemes and stratagems of Rome to reintroduce its religion.¹⁴³ He complained that the English people are ignorant of the strength of the Papacy in their land,¹⁴⁴ bemoaned the fact that the number of priests and Jesuits “swarm all over the nation, especially in and about London,”¹⁴⁵ and lamented that the laws against the Papacy are not enforced.¹⁴⁶

In 1711, William Stephens (1690–1745), Rector of Sutton in Surrey, preached a sermon to commemorate the Irish Protestants’ deliverance from what he termed a “barbarous massacre” by the “bloody Papists.”¹⁴⁷ In his sermon, Stephens admonished the Irish Protestants living in London to remember the Massacre of 1641 and to resist the tyranny of Roman Catholicism. The following year Thomas Bray (1658–1730), an Anglican clergyman and founder of the *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* and the *Society for the Propagation of Gospel in Foreign Parts*, warned the people of Great Britain that Papists believed in and practiced supplanting governments, subjecting rulers, and subjugating people. Therefore, they must remember that the Papacy was still a real

¹⁴¹Atterbury, *Answer to a Popish Book*, 10.

¹⁴²I suggest that the author is a member of the Church of England because of a statement, such as “It is indeed wonder that they [Catholics] should grow so formidable in a *Protestant* Country and under the nose of a clergy so famous for learning and purity of worship, as are the ministers of the Church of England.” *The Present Danger of Popery in England* (London: J. How and B. Bragg, 1703), 10.

¹⁴³*Present Danger of Popery in England*, 1.

¹⁴⁴*Present Danger of Popery in England*, 4.

¹⁴⁵*Present Danger of Popery in England*, 8.

¹⁴⁶*Present Danger of Popery in England*, 22.

¹⁴⁷William Stephens, *A Sermon Against Popery, Preach’d to the Protestants of Ireland, Now Residing in London, at Their Anniversary Meeting on Octob. 23. 1711. In Commemoration of Their Deliverance from the Barbarous Massacre Committed by the Irish Papists, in the Year 1641. In the Parish-Church of St. Paul’s Covent-Garden* (London: A. Baldwin, 1712), 12.

threat to the nation.¹⁴⁸ Although a decade had passed since the Jacobite Rising of 1745, Henry Venn (1725–1797), Curate of Clapham, still believed that it was necessary to admonish his audience to arouse themselves from “that state of indifference to the multiplied attempts of Popery, to spread and increase herself.”¹⁴⁹ He told his hearers that his purpose in preaching was to “open the eyes of some of that deluded multitude, who alas by fair speeches and confident promises of Popery, have been seduced to join her confederacy.”¹⁵⁰

Not only did the Anglicans express anti-Catholic sentiment, but so did the Nonconformists. Matthew Henry (1662–1714), an English Presbyterian minister and bible commentator, preached a sermon to commemorate the foiled Gunpowder Plot of 1605. In the sermon, Henry pointed out that they rejoiced in the foiled plot because the plot’s failure preserved true religion—Protestantism—in their land and protected them from Papacy, which was strenuously attempting to reassert its presence by force. “It is the Preservation of our Religion, the Protestant Religion, own’d and profefs’d among us; ’tis the keeping out of Popery, which at the Reformation was driven out, and which our Popish Enemies both Home and Abroad have been very industrious to bring in, and to re-establish among us by Force and Violence.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸Thomas Bray, *Papal Usurpation and Persecution As It Has Been Exercis’d in Ancient and Modern Times with Respect Both to Princes & People; A Fair Warning to All Protestants, To Guard Themselves with the Utmost Caution Against the Encroachments & Invasions of Popery; As They Value Their Estates, Lives and Liberties, But Above All, As They Would Preserve Their Consciences Free from the Forest of All Tyrannies and Oppressions* (London: Joseph Downing, 1712).

¹⁴⁹H. Venn, *The Perfect Contrast: Or the Entire Opposition of Popery, to the Religion of Jesus the Son of God. A Sermon on James Iii. Xvii. Preached at Clapham on Sunday November 5, 1758* (London: E. Withers and J. Townsend, 1758), i.

¹⁵⁰Venn, *Perfect Contrast*, 17.

¹⁵¹Matthew Henry, *Popery a Spiritual Tyranny: Shew’d in a Sermon Preach’d on the Fifth of November, 1712*. (London: Em. Matthews, John Lawrence, R. Robinson, N. Cliff, and D. Jackson, 1712), 10.

The next year, John Gale, a Baptist minister, preached on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, and his thanksgiving sermon went through four editions in less than two months.¹⁵² Since some possessed an inadequate understanding of the teachings of Roman Catholicism, and even some now sympathized with Rome's adherents, Gale thought it necessary to remind his hearers that Catholicism was still a great danger to the nation.¹⁵³ Consequently, he recounted some of the doctrines and practices of Rome. He described the teachings of Catholicism as "monstrous opinions instead of things taught in the gospel,"¹⁵⁴ and their practices as idolatrous¹⁵⁵ and barbarous.¹⁵⁶ Gale warned his hearers not to be seduced by enticing words, but to be reassured that wherever the Papacy has prevailed, it will continue unchanged in its teachings and practices.¹⁵⁷

Following Matthew Henry and Gale's preaching of a sermon to commemorate the failed Gunpowder Plot, other Dissenting ministers preached sermons on November 5 in the 1730s that expressed anti-Catholic sentiment. John Brine (1703–65), a Particular Baptist minister preached a sermon entitled, "God the Defence and Glory of his Church."¹⁵⁸ In 1735 Samuel Bourn the Younger (1689–1754), a Presbyterian minister, delivered an address with the title, "Popery a Craft and Popish Priests the Chief Crafts-Men."¹⁵⁹ Joseph Stennett II (1692–1758), a Particular Baptist minister, also exhorted his

¹⁵²John Gale, *A Thanksgiving-Sermon Preach'd November 5. 1713*, 4th ed. (London: John Darby, 1713).

¹⁵³Gale, *Thanksgiving-Sermon Preach'd November 5. 1713*, 18.

¹⁵⁴Gale, *Thanksgiving-Sermon Preach'd November 5. 1713*, 19.

¹⁵⁵Gale, *Thanksgiving-Sermon Preach'd November 5. 1713*, 21.

¹⁵⁶Gale, *Thanksgiving-Sermon Preach'd November 5. 1713*, 22.

¹⁵⁷Gale, *Thanksgiving-Sermon Preach'd November 5. 1713*, 22.

¹⁵⁸John Brine, *God the Defence and Glory of His Church: A Sermon Preach'd at Devonshire-Square on the Fifth of November, to the Society Who Support the Lord's-Day Evening Lecture in That Place* (London: Aaron Ward, 1734).

¹⁵⁹Samuel Bourn, *Popery a Craft and Popish Priests the Chief Crafts-Men, a Sermon*

hearers in his sermon, “National Ingratitude Exemplified, in the Case of Gideon, and his Family; and Applied to the Present Time,” a sermon that went through five editions by the end of 1741.¹⁶⁰

Further, John Gill (1697–1771) wrote against and expressed concern with the growth of Roman Catholicism. In his preface to the *Cause of God and Truth*, after he had explained his approach to examine the subject, Gill noted that the increase in Catholics engendered no little measure of discomfort for the people: “At this juncture, we are greatly alarm’d with the growth of Popery in this nation.”¹⁶¹ Despite the space of almost fifteen years between his previous remark in the *Cause of God and Truth* and this statement, Gill commented in his sermon delivered at the Wednesday evening lecture on December 27, 1750, that the number of Roman Catholics in the nation had not decreased. Rather, he observed that there was a “very great increase of Popery” in the land, and added a little later that “popery itself is far from being on the decline, or losing ground.”¹⁶² Even at the end of his life, Gill still maintained concern for the growth of Catholicism. While rejecting the interpretation that the millennium and binding of Satan commenced at the Reformation, he reasoned that no one can believe that Satan has been bound or the millennium has been inaugurated, while there existed a “great decline of religion” or “increase of Popery.”¹⁶³

Deliver’d on the Fifth of November (London: R. Hett, 1735).

¹⁶⁰Joseph Stennett, *National Ingratitude Exemplified, in the Case of Gideon, and His Family; and Applied to the Present Times: A Sermon Preach’d in Little-Wild-Street November 5, 1740* (London: Aaron Ward, H. Whitridge, and A. Dodd, 1741).

¹⁶¹John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* (London: Aaron Ward, 1735–38), 1:vi.

¹⁶²John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 1:31.

¹⁶³John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 664.

Deism. For all the threat and dread that Catholicism aroused throughout the eighteenth century, there was an even more serious menace, one that struck at the foundation of orthodox Christianity—Deism. Deism not only pervaded the intellectual elite of England, but it also presented a pernicious challenge to orthodox Christianity.¹⁶⁴ According to John Orr, “No previous period in the history of Christianity had produced so extensive a literary attack upon that faith and its Scriptures and no other period produced a larger volume of apologetic literature than the first half of the eighteenth century. England became a debating society, and the subject of the debate was religion.”¹⁶⁵

Although the foundational principles of Deism emerged in Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s (1583–1648) famous work, *De Veritate* (1624), and were later zealously propagated through his disciple Charles Blount (1654–93), Deism did not provoke serious public discourse until John Toland (1670–1722)¹⁶⁶ capitalized on the lapse in the Licensing Act in 1695 and published *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696).¹⁶⁷ Leslie Stephen described the significance of *Christianity Not Mysterious* as “the signal-gun which brought on the general action, and, like most successful books, gave articulate expression to a widely diffused, but as yet latent, sentiment.”¹⁶⁸ Influenced by Socinian

¹⁶⁴For definitions of Deism, see John Orr, *English Deism: Its Roots and Its Fruits* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1934), 13; Diego Lucci, *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 17–23.

¹⁶⁵Orr, *English Deism*, 114.

¹⁶⁶For further study of John Toland and Deism, see Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696–1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 65–133.

¹⁶⁷Diego Lucci commented that “there is no doubt that John Toland was the major deist of the eighteenth century.” Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 65. Orr stated that *Christianity Not Mysterious* was Toland’s most important work, gaining him fame as a deist, and one of the most important Deistic books. Orr, *English Deism*, 116.

¹⁶⁸Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: P. Smith, 1949), 1:105.

and Arminian theories and Lockean epistemology,¹⁶⁹ Toland repudiated the belief that divine revelation contradicts or transcends reason, explaining that revelation is not the ground of belief but the “Mean of Information.”¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, since one should believe nothing that contradicts or transcends reason, he rejected any claim of mystery in religion that is above reason.¹⁷¹ In his response to *Christianity Not Mysterious*, Peter Browne judged Toland to be “the most inveterate Enemy to reveal’d religion that hath lately appear’d in print.”¹⁷²

When Toland published his *Fables of Aesop with the moral reflections of Mr. Badouin*, he dedicated the English translation to Anthony Collins (1676–1729), who would become a leading deist.¹⁷³ Collins promoted his deistic notions in his *Discourse of Free-Thinking* (1713), in which he contended that individuals should have liberty to publish their thoughts on religious questions, such as the nature and attributes of God, the truth, authority, and meaning of Scripture.¹⁷⁴ For such free inquiry, the *Discourse of Free-*

¹⁶⁹Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 68, 71; Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations*, 122–25.

¹⁷⁰John Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious: Or, A Treatise Shewing That There is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor Above It; and That No Christian Doctrine Can Be Properly Call’d a Mystery* (London, 1696), 37–38.

¹⁷¹“Thus, I have endeavour’d to show others, what I’m fully convinc’d of my self, that there is no MYSTERY in CHRISTIANITY or the most perfect religion.” Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious: Or, A Treatise Shewing That There is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor Above It; and That No Christian Doctrine Can Be Properly Call’d a Mystery*, 174. In his other works, Toland questioned the canon of Scripture in *Amyntor* (1699) and attacked what distinguished revealed religion from natural religion in *Nazarenus* (1718).

¹⁷²Peter Browne, *A Letter in Answer to a Book Entitled, Christianity not Mysterious: As Also to All Those Who Set up for Reason and Evidence in Opposition to Revelation and Mysteries* (London: Robert Clavell, 1697), 79. Further, Anglican bishops Francis Gastrell and Edward Stillingfleet both responded to Toland’s *Christianity Not Mysterious*.

¹⁷³James. O’Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 13. O’ Higgins describes the relationship between Toland and Collins as a close acquaintance. O’Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 13–15.

¹⁷⁴Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of Free-Thinking, Occasion’d by the Rise and Growth of a Sect Call’d Free-Thinkers* (London, 1713).

Thinking aroused great controversy, evoking over twenty responses.¹⁷⁵ Taking up “one of the themes of the *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, the suggestion of the unreliability of Scripture,”¹⁷⁶ Collins challenged the ground and reasons of Christianity in his *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* by disputing that the Messiah was predicted in the Old Testament, such predictions Collins claimed to be the only proof of Christianity.¹⁷⁷ He argued that if one interprets Old Testament prophecies in a literal manner, one will have to conclude that they are not fulfilled in the New Testament.¹⁷⁸ As a result of discrediting Scripture as well as his other claims in his *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Collins provoked over thirty responses,¹⁷⁹ and generated considerable alarm.¹⁸⁰

While Collins did not examine the subject of miracles in his previous works, commenting that he had “almost transcribed” his discourse on miracles in the *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*,¹⁸¹ Thomas Woolston (1670–1733) did address the subject in his six *Discourses on the Miracles of Our Saviour* (1727–29).¹⁸² Woolston denied the

¹⁷⁵Orr, *English Deism*, 134. Among the respondents to Collins, William Whiston believed it was right to respond to Collins because of the attack on the “great foundation of religion” and the “insinuations visibly tending to render the sacred books, both Jewish and Christian, contemptible and uncertain.” William Whiston, *Reflexions on an Anonymous Pamphlet, Entitled, a Discourse of Free Thinking* (London, 1713), 4.

¹⁷⁶O’Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 155.

¹⁷⁷Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of the Ground and Reasons of the Christian Religion. In Two Parts... To Which is Prefix’d an Apology for Free Debate and Liberty of Writing* (London, 1724).

¹⁷⁸Collins, *A Discourse of the Ground and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, 39–40.

¹⁷⁹In the preface to the *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*, Collins listed thirty five works to which he responded. O’Higgins commented that three of these were from Thomas Woolston, a supporter of Collins’s position. O’Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 174.

¹⁸⁰Adam Storey Farrar, *A Critical History of Free Thought in Reference to the Christian Religion* (London: John Murray, 1862), 190.

¹⁸¹Anthony Collins, *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered* (London, 1727), 439.

¹⁸²Thomas Woolston, *A Discourse on the Miracles of Our Saviour, in View of the Present Controversy Between Infidels and Apostates*. (London, 1727–29).

reality of miracles, claiming that if interpreted literally, it would lead to absurdity.¹⁸³ He insisted that even the Church Fathers understood that the miracles had to be interpreted figuratively.¹⁸⁴ Laced with irreverent humor and gross blasphemy, the *Discourses on Miracles* generated immense sales, as much as thirty thousand copies, if Voltaire is to be trusted.¹⁸⁵ As a result of his *Discourses on the Miracles*, Woolston was charged and found guilty of blasphemy, leading to a one year imprisonment and £100 fine.¹⁸⁶ Unable to pay the fine, Woolston died in prison in 1733.¹⁸⁷

Despite the imprisonment of Woolston in 1729, Matthew Tindal (1657–1733) published the following year his work entitled *Christianity as Old as the Creation*.¹⁸⁸ Tindal argued that God has implanted in all humans sufficient reason to discern their duty towards God and man, which the fundamentals of Christianity affirm, and therefore Christianity is as old as creation.¹⁸⁹ This work of Tindal’s became known as the “Deists Bible,” eliciting over one hundred and fifteen responses, sixty of which were substantial.¹⁹⁰ In the judgment of Daniel Waterland, one of the respondents, *Christianity*

¹⁸³Thomas Woolston, *A Discourse on the Miracles of Our Saviour: In View of the Present Controversy Between Infidels and Apostates* (London, 1727), 3, 19–58.

¹⁸⁴Woolston, *Discourse on the Miracles*, 19–58.

¹⁸⁵Farrar, *A Critical History of Free Thought in Reference to the Christian Religion*, 193. On the occasion of the death of Jonathan Swift remarked in one of his poems that Woolston’s tracts went through twelve editions and supposedly read “by ev’ry politician. The country-members, when in Town, to all their boroughs send them down; you never met a thing so smart; the courtiers have them all by heart; those maids of honour, who can read, are taught to use them for their creed.” Jonathan Swift, *The Poetical Works: Of Dr. Jonathan Swift... In Four Volumes. With the Life of the Author* (London: J. Bell, 1787), 3:52.

¹⁸⁶Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1:230–31.

¹⁸⁷Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1:231.

¹⁸⁸Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation: Or, the Gospel, a Republication of the Religion of Nature*, vol. 1 (London, 1730).

¹⁸⁹“I think too great a stress can’t be laid on *Natural Religion*; which, as I take it, differs not from *Reveal’d*, but in the manner of its being communicated: The One being the Internal, as the Other being the External Revelation of the same unchangeable will of a being, who is alike at all times infinitely wise and good.” Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 1:3.

as *Old as the Creation* was a “declamatory libel against *Reveal’d Religion*, under colour and pretence of setting up *Natural Religion* in its place.”¹⁹¹

Whereas subsequent Deists continued to publish their rational ideas, none of them contributed any original or new ideas. Thomas Chubb (1679–1747) argued in his *Discourse Concerning Reason, With Regard to Religion and Divine Revelation* (1731) that “reason is, or ought to be, a sufficient guide in matters of religion.”¹⁹² He contended that all divine revelation must agree to reason, and that “all obligations, arising from revelation, are originally founded in reason.”¹⁹³ Thomas Morgan (d. 1743) denied that New Testament Christianity has its roots in the Old Testament in *The Moral Philosopher, in a Dialogue between Philalethes, a Christian Deist, and Theophanes, a Christian Jew* (1737).¹⁹⁴ The last deist of any influence was Peter Annet (1693–1769). In his self-edited journal, *The Free Enquirer* (1761), Annet attacked the miracles performed in the Bible in general, but especially those in the account of the Exodus.¹⁹⁵ As a result, he was charged with blasphemy, to which Annet pled guilty and consequently was fined, mandated hard labor for a year, and imprisoned for one month.

¹⁹⁰Stephen Lalor, *Matthew Tindal, Freethinker: An Eighteenth-Century Assault on Religion* (London: Continuum, 2006), 2, 17.

¹⁹¹Daniel Waterland, *Scripture Vindicated: In Answer to a Book Intituled, Christianity as Old as the Creation* (London: W. Innys, 1730), 1.

¹⁹²Thomas Chubb, *A Discourse Concerning Reason, with Regard to Religion and Divine Revelation. Wherein is Shewn, That Reason Either is, or Else That It Ought to Be, a Sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion* (London: T. Cox, 1731), 1. Other works published by Chubb included, Thomas Chubb, *An Enquiry Into the Ground and Foundation of Religion*. (London: Thomas Cox, 1740); Thomas Chubb, *A Discourse on Miracles, Considered as Evidences to Prove the Divine Original of a Revelation* (London: T. Cox, 1741).

¹⁹³Chubb, *A Discourse Concerning Reason*, 29.

¹⁹⁴Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher. In a Dialogue Between Philalethes a Christian Deist, and Theophanes a Christian Jew*. (London, 1737). According to Jan van den Berg, the Moral Philosopher was “the chief landmark of Deist criticism on the Old Testament” and through this work Morgan’s name became renowned. Jan van der Berg, “English Deism and Germany: The Thomas Morgan Controversy,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 59 (January 2008): 49.

¹⁹⁵Peter Annett, *The Free Enquirer (1761)* (London: R. Carlile, 1826), 77–92.

Deism not only pervaded much of British society in the first half of the eighteenth century, but it even spread its pestilential teaching among Baptists. For this reason, Joseph Stennett II, preaching to a gathering of ministers and persons interested in encouraging prospective ministers, remarked about the “amazing progress which infidelity is daily making,” the root of which he explained to be Deism.¹⁹⁶ Stennett concluded his sermon, thus:

the most *grievous wounds* the gospel had *received*, have been *in the house of its pretended friends*. And, a little reflection will convince us, that the absurd, and blasphemous reasonings of the Deists did but little execution, comparatively, till a set of men arose, among our selves, who paved the way for that amazing success, which these sworn enemies of Christ Jesus have of late years obtained. It is, indeed, most shocking to consider, that some, under the character of christian ministers, instead of contending earnestly for the faith of Christ, are industriously sapping the fundamental principles of it.¹⁹⁷

Likewise, in his book defending particular redemption, John Brine acknowledged that Deism had at that time “greatly spread.”¹⁹⁸ Preaching on January 1, 1752, Gill explained that the reason “Deism has had such a spread among us of late years” was the relinquishing of one truth after another.¹⁹⁹ Even as late as 1774, Benjamin Wallin delivered a sermon and observed that “Deists, open and disguised, are numerous, and

¹⁹⁶Joseph Stennett, *The Christian Strife for the Faith of the Gospel: A Sermon Preach'd at the Revd Mr. Hill's Meeting-Place, in Thames-Street, the 9th of February, 1738. Before a Society of Ministers and Gentlemen Engaged in a Design for the Encouragement of Young Men in Their Studies for the Ministry, Whose Hearts God Has Inclined to That Sacred Work* (London: Aaron Ward, 1738), v.

¹⁹⁷Stennett, *Christian Strife for the Faith of the Gospel*, 78. The minister that Stennett seemed to have in mind was James Foster (1697–1753), a minister of Baptist congregation in Paul's Alley. Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 3:216–21. Foster's biographer, Caleb Fleming, recorded that Foster began a Lord's Day evening lecture in 1728 at Old Jewry and continued it for about twenty years. According to Fleming, Foster's popularity exceeded “any thing known among the Protestant Dissenters” so that persons of all ranks and position attended whether “wits, free-thinkers, or numbers of clergy.” What attracted such large crowds was the confluence of Foster's eloquence, logic, and morality. Caleb Fleming, *A Sermon Preached at Pinner's-Hall, on Occasion of the Death of the Late Reverend James Foster:... With Memoirs of His Life and Character* (London: J. Payne and R. Whitworth, 1753), 15–16. John Brine also opposed Foster in John Brine, *A Vindication of Some Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion: In Answer to the False Reasoning of Mr. James Foster, on Various Subjects* (London: Aaron Ward, 1746).

¹⁹⁸John Brine, *The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ* (London: Aaron Ward, 1743), v.

¹⁹⁹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:48.

daily increasing, insomuch, that in almost every promiscuous or occasional company we meet with a sceptic or scoffer at divine revelation.”²⁰⁰

Revivalism. While Deism was busy subverting the foundation of revelation and laying its cornerstone of reason and while anti-catholicism was arousing the passions of Protestants, many parts of England experienced a religious revival. Beginning in the 1730s, this revival was a constituent part of a larger transatlantic movement known as the eighteenth-century Evangelical revival. The eighteenth-century Evangelical revival, according to Michael Watts, was an “international and intercontinental phenomenon” that encompassed America, Germany, Wales, and England.²⁰¹

America was the first among the four places to experience revival. In the 1720s in the American colony of New Jersey, a series of mini-revivals ignited in Raritan Valley through the preaching of the Dutch Reformed minister Theodorus Frelinghuysen (1691–1747).²⁰² Frelinghuysen’s preaching emphasized conversion. It discriminated between hearers, and it demanded piety as evidence of a genuine work of regeneration. Several years later, George Whitefield (1714–70) acknowledged Frelinghuysen as the “beginner of the great work, which I trust the Lord is carrying on in these parts.”²⁰³ Impressed with the fruit of Frelinghuysen’s ministry and later adopting similar preaching emphases, Gilbert Tennent (1703–64), a Presbyterian minister in New Brunswick, not only awakened many of his auditors by his pointed and urgent preaching but also gained

²⁰⁰Benjamin Wallin, *The Popular Concern in the Choice of Representatives. A Sermon Delivered... October 9, 1774* (London, 1774), 30.

²⁰¹Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 394.

²⁰²Watts, *Dissenters*, 394; Joel R. Beeke, ed., *Forerunner of the Great Awakening: Sermons by Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen (1691–1747)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), xxiv.

²⁰³George Whitefield, *Journals*, new ed. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1960), 352.

many disciples to the Lord Jesus.²⁰⁴ One who was impressed with such pointed and urgent preaching of Tennent was George Whitefield. After hearing Tennent preach, Whitefield recorded in his journal that he had “never before heard such a searching sermon. . . . Hypocrites must either soon be converted or enraged at his preaching.”²⁰⁵ As a result of his preaching, Tennent became a leader in the revival and under his ministry there was “a very considerable revival of religion.”²⁰⁶ Besides Tennent, Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) became a prominent leader in this awakening through his preaching and publications. While preaching on *Justification by Faith Alone* at Northampton in 1734, Edwards credited this sermon and its subject to “the beginning of the late work of God in this place.”²⁰⁷ He recorded that in December of the same year “the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us.”²⁰⁸ His assessment of the events at that time was that “there was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world.” The following year in 1734, he commented that “the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy.”²⁰⁹ Edwards also defended the revivals, both historically and theologically, in his publications of *A Faithful Narrative*,²¹⁰

²⁰⁴Watts, *Dissenters*, 394; Eric Scott Maze, “The Evangelistic Contributions of Pastor Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen During the First Great Awakening” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006), 218–24. For biographical sketch of Gilbert Tennent, see Archibald Alexander, *The Log College: Biographical Sketches of William Tennent and Principal Alumni of the Log College, Together with an Account of the Revivals of Religion Under Their Ministry in the 18th Century* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Books, 1968), 14–67.

²⁰⁵Whitefield, *Journals*, 347–48.

²⁰⁶Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, vol. 4 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 156.

²⁰⁷Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734–1738*, vol. 19 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. M. X. Lesser (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 795. See also Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:19–21, 148.

²⁰⁸Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:149.

²⁰⁹Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:150–51.

*The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God,*²¹¹ and *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New-England.*²¹²

Meanwhile, as the clouds of revival began to form in the American colonies, which eventually led to the First Great Awakening, the Moravian revival began in Saxony, Germany under the leadership of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700–60). The Moravians were persecuted Protestants from Bohemia who had found refuge on the estate of Zinzendorf, and there they built a new settlement, which they called Herrnhut. As other persecuted Protestants found refuge at Herrnhut, quarrels eventually erupted between the Moravians and their Protestant brethren over doctrine. In 1727, Zinzendorf intervened and transformed the bickering Moravian community into a united fellowship of believers.²¹³ The capstone of their unity was experienced on August 13, as they worshipped together and experienced the descent of the Spirit upon their gathering.²¹⁴ At the end of August, these united believers consecrated themselves to pray every hour, which was reported to have continued uninterrupted for over a hundred years.²¹⁵ At the same time, children began to pray with such fervency and intensity that on August 29 boys and girls met in separate places, praying from ten at night until one in the morning.²¹⁶ After five years of a “unity of the brethren” and dedicated prayer, the

²¹⁰Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:144–211.

²¹¹Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:226–88.

²¹²Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:293–530.

²¹³J. E. Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Church*, 2nd ed. (London: Moravian Publication Office, 1909), 206.

²¹⁴Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 209.

²¹⁵Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 211. See also John Wesley’s comment in his journal that when he visited Herrnhut in 1738 that hourly intercession had continued from its inception. John Wesley, *Journals and Diaries I (1735–38)*, vol. 18 of *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Reginald W. Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 295.

²¹⁶W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Moravians commissioned their first missionary to St. Thomas in the West Indies in 1732. Afterwards, they commissioned missionaries to Greenland (1733), Dutch Guinea (1734), Dutch colonies of South Africa, Guinea, and Ceylon (1737), Constantinople (1740), Bucharest (1740), St. Petersburg (1740), and Persia (1747).²¹⁷ Although others had preached the gospel to pagans, acting on the belief that it was the duty of “Kings, Princes, and States,” to send missionaries, what distinguished the Moravian’s foreign missions was that it was the “first Protestant Church in Christendom” to send out “missionaries as authorised agents of the Church.”²¹⁸

During the same decade the Moravians commissioned their first missionaries, the Methodist revival commenced in Wales through the preaching of Howell Harris (1714–73) and Daniel Rowland (1713–90).²¹⁹ Both were converted independently in 1735.²²⁰ From the time of their conversions, Harris and Rowland engaged in itinerant preaching throughout Wales. By 1742, these two men with William Williams Pantycelyn (1717–91) had “set the whole of Wales aflame from Holyhead to Cardiff. . . . There was hardly a locality, however, rural and remote its position, where these evangelists had not been preaching.”²²¹ Harris and Rowland preached to “many thousands.”²²² Among those

Press, 1992), 127.

²¹⁷Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 234–45.

²¹⁸Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 247.

²¹⁹John Morgan Jones and William Morgan, *The Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales*, trans. John Aaron (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2008), 1:250. For additional information on the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in the eighteenth century, see David Ceri Jones, Boyd Stanley Schlenther, and Eryn Mant White, *The Elect Methodists: Calvinistic Methodism in England and Wales, 1735–1811* (Cardiff: University Of Wales Press, 2012).

²²⁰Geraint Tudur, *Howell Harris: From Conversion to Separation, 1735–1750* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 14–18; Edward Morgan, *The Life and Times of Howell Harris: The First Itinerant Preacher in Wales* (Denton, TX: Needs of the Times, 1998), 8–9; Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985), 31, 33–34.

²²¹Jones and Morgan, *Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales*, 1:250.

²²²Jones and Morgan, *Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales*, 1:252.

converted in the revival were some of no little reputation and influence.²²³ As result of the conversions, Harris established religious societies in 1736 for the new converts, which later became prevalent in the English Evangelical revival.²²⁴ By 1750, there were “433 religious societies in Wales and the borders.”²²⁵

Although the American, German, and Welsh revivals were independent, all three came into contact with the English Evangelical revival through the Oxford Methodists, George Whitefield and John (1703–91) and Charles Wesley (1707–88). Whitefield provided the link between the American, Welsh, and English revivals. Converted around Easter 1735, Whitefield began to preach on the new birth and justification by faith.²²⁶ He credited the publication of his sermon on the new birth to the awakening in London, Bristol, Gloucester, and Gloucestershire.²²⁷ As a result of his preaching, he began to attract large crowds in Gloucester, Bristol, Bath and London.²²⁸ Describing the scene in Bristol, Whitefield reported that

it was wonderful to see how the people hung upon the rails of the organ loft, climbed upon the leads of the church, and made the church itself so hot with their breath, that the steam would fall from the pillars like drops of rain. . . . Persons of all denominations flocked to hear. Persons of all ranks, not only publicly attended my ministry, but gave me private invitations to their houses.²²⁹

²²³Jones and Morgan, *Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales*, 1:252.

²²⁴Edward Morgan, *Life and Times of Howell Harris*, 17.

²²⁵Watts, *Dissenters*, 397.

²²⁶Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1970), 1:73, 134–35, 345; George Whitefield, *The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus: In Order to Salvation. A Sermon Preached in the Church of St. Mary Radcliffe, in Bristol* (London: C. Rivington, 1737); George Whitefield, *The Benefits of an Early Piety: A Sermon Preached at Bow-Church, London, Before the Religious Societies, at One of Their Quarterly Meetings, on Wednesday, September 28, 1737* (London: C. Rivington and James Hutton, 1737), 6–7; George Whitefield, *Of Justification by Christ: A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of Saint Antholin* (London: W. Bowyer, 1738). For a recent biography of Whitefield, see Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

²²⁷Whitefield, *Journals*, 86.

²²⁸Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:109–15.

²²⁹Whitefield, *Journals*, 84.

While still in England and only twenty-two years of age, Whitefield recorded his growing popularity: “Thousands and thousands came to hear. My sermons were everywhere called for. News came from time to time of the springing up and increase of the seed sown in Bristol, Gloucester, and elsewhere.”²³⁰

Beginning in 1738, Whitefield made his first of seven trips to America. On his second trip in 1739, he preached for Gilbert Tennent in New Brunswick to a crowd estimated to be “seven or eight thousand.”²³¹ Among those attending the preaching was Frelinghuysen.²³² The following year in October he preached for Jonathan Edwards. Writing to a minister in Boston and describing the effects of Whitefield’s sermons, Edwards reported that “the congregation was extraordinarily melted by every sermon; almost the whole assembly being in tears for a great part of sermon time.”²³³ As a result of his second visit to America, Whitefield’s preaching fanned the flame of revival.

After Whitefield returned from Georgia on his first visit to America in 1738, he wrote an introductory letter in December to Howell Harris, a letter that initiated the connection between the Welsh and English revival. The letter to Harris encouraged him in his labors and expressed a desire to form a spiritual friendship.²³⁴ According to Dallimore, “Harris became one of Whitefield’s closest friends and most valued co-labourers.”²³⁵ Through the influence of Harris,²³⁶ Whitefield took the momentous step to

²³⁰Whitefield, *Journals*, 90–91.

²³¹Whitefield, *Journals*, 413.

²³²Whitefield, *Journals*, 352.

²³³Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, vol. 16 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 116.

²³⁴Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1980), 2:233–34.

²³⁵Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:235.

²³⁶Dallimore has credited Harris as “the pioneer of Methodist field-preaching, the originator of its itinerant evangelism and the first to form a number of Societies and link them together in a permanent

begin open-air preaching, to which Whitefield then introduced John and Charles Wesley.²³⁷

Almost one year before John and Charles Wesley embarked upon open-air preaching, they both experienced conversions.²³⁸ Their conversions came through the influence of the Moravians and thus linked the German and English revivals. While traveling to Georgia in 1736 and still trusting to his “own works” and “own righteousness,” John Wesley met twenty-six Moravians who attempted to show him “a more excellent way” of salvation.²³⁹ Nevertheless, John continued in his own words to remain “ignorant of the righteousness of Christ,”²⁴⁰ in “abject state of bondage to sin,”²⁴¹ and never himself “converted to God.”²⁴² But his spiritual condition changed when he returned to England in 1738 and received help regarding justifying faith in Christ from Peter Böhler, a Moravian missionary.²⁴³ John met Böhler who had just arrived from Germany for the first time on February 7 and helped to provide him with accommodations in London.²⁴⁴ Through his conversations with Böhler, he noted in his journal on March 5 that he became convinced that he was devoid of saving faith.²⁴⁵ On

organization. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:246, 249.

²³⁷Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:249, 271–81, 283, 371.

²³⁸For biographies on John Wesley, see Stephen Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003); Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists*, 3 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870). For a biography of Charles Wesley, see John R. Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007).

²³⁹John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:246.

²⁴⁰John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:246.

²⁴¹John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:247.

²⁴²John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:214.

²⁴³John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:247.

²⁴⁴John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:223–24.

May 24, 1738, he reluctantly attended a Moravian society meeting at Aldersgate Street. While someone was reading Luther's *Preface to Romans* and "describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ," he wrote, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins . . . and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."²⁴⁶

Around the same time that John underwent his conversion, Charles Wesley also experienced his conversion through the influence of the Moravians. Shortly after Böhler arrived in London, Charles began teaching him English.²⁴⁷ When Charles became extremely ill and filled with pain, Böhler asked him for the basis of his hope for salvation, to which Charles replied, "because I have used my best endeavours to serve God."²⁴⁸ Böhler "shook his head, and said no more."²⁴⁹ Charles also received help through the Moravian John Bray with whom he moved in with and committed to stay until he came to saving faith.²⁵⁰ He then received further light concerning justification while hearing a reading of Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*.²⁵¹ On May 21, three days before John's conversion, Charles recorded in his journal his conversion: "I now found myself at peace with God and rejoice in the hope of loving Christ. . . . I saw that by faith I stood. . . . I

²⁴⁵John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:228.

²⁴⁶John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:249–50 (emphasis original). Not all scholars agree that John Wesley was converted at this time. Some believe that John experienced an assurance of faith at Aldersgate.

Within a month of his conversion, John visited Herrnhut to meet with Zinzendorf and other Moravians so that he would be established in the faith. John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 18:254.

²⁴⁷Charles Wesley, *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley, M.A.*, ed. S.T. Kimbrough and Kenneth G.C. Newport (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2007–8), 1:97. In his diary on Wednesday, April 19, Charles referred to Böhler as "that man of God." Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 99.

²⁴⁸Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 1:97.

²⁴⁹Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 1:244.

²⁵⁰Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 1:101–2.

²⁵¹Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 1:103–4.

went to bed still sensible of my own weakness (I humbly hope to be more and more so), yet confident of Christ's protection."²⁵² One year after their conversions, John and Charles began to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation in the open air. John's preaching attracted large crowds in Moorfields of "six or seven thousand,"²⁵³ in Kensington "fifteen thousand,"²⁵⁴ and in Bowling Green "three thousand."²⁵⁵ Charles preached in Moorfields and estimated there were "ten thousand,"²⁵⁶ at Bowling Green "four thousand,"²⁵⁷ and at Rose Green "five thousand."²⁵⁸

While Whitefield and the Wesleys travelled throughout Britain proclaiming the gospel and kindling the English revival, the response of the Particular Baptists was mixed. Many did not support the English revival. Several reasons can be suggested. First, some were very troubled by the Arminian influence in the revival and the possible effects of this system of theology. Brine, for example, suggested that Arminian theology, one strain of which the Wesleys propagated, would lead to Socinianism and then to Deism, both of which were considered serious problems in England at the time.²⁵⁹ At the time Roman Catholicism was greatly increasing in England, Gill considered Arminianism as "the very life and soul of Popery."²⁶⁰ Then, an anonymous author accused Gill and others

²⁵²Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 1:108.

²⁵³John Wesley, *Journals and Diaries II (1738–43)*, vol. 19 of *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Reginald W. Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 71. Charles estimated that John preached to a crowd of ten thousand. Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 1:178.

²⁵⁴John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 19:71.

²⁵⁵John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 19:81.

²⁵⁶Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 180.

²⁵⁷Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 192.

²⁵⁸Charles Wesley, *Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley*, 192.

²⁵⁹Brine, *Vindication of Some Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 404–5.

²⁶⁰Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 1:vii. See also an assessment of Gill's relation to the

of failing to distinguish between “[Calvinistic] Methodists and [Wesleyan] Methodists.” The author pleaded that Gill and others not let their opposition to Arminianism negate their support of the English Calvinistic Methodists as Whitefield, Thomas Adams and Herbert Jenkins.²⁶¹ Second, some Particular Baptists objected to the language of offering the grace of God or offering the gospel, which was expressed by some preachers in the revival. Gill, for example, asserted that the apostles did not tender “the saving grace of God to all men, without exception; whereas they tender’d it to none but preached the gospel to all without exception, without any distinction of persons who came to hear it.”²⁶² Meanwhile, other Particular Baptists supported and benefited from the revival. For instance, John Fawcett (1740–1817) and Robert Robinson (1735–90) were both converted through the ministry of Whitefield.²⁶³ Andrew Gifford, Jr. (1700–84) enjoyed listening to Whitefield’s preaching and later published some of his sermons.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, an anonymous writer reminded Gill and others who did not support the English Calvinistic Methodists that they cannot deny that these men “have many seals of their despised ministry in your own churches.”²⁶⁵ Then, the Seward brothers, Henry,

Evangelical Revival by Tom J. Nettles, “John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening,” in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 131–70; Tom J. Nettles, “John Gill (1697–1771),” in *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2005), 228–40.

²⁶¹A.B., *Unity Among Christian Ministers and People. Recommended in a Letter to Mr. John Gill* (London, 1746), 4–5.

²⁶²Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 1:252. Gill was also concerned that “Arminians frequently argue[d] from an universal offer of the gospel to an universal redemption.” Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 1:252. See also Brine, *Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ*, 88–94. Although Gill objected to Richard Davis’s use of the phrase “offering of Christ and grace,” he did commend him not only for his evangelistic preaching, which “succeeded to the conversion of many and to the spreading of Gospel-light in several parts,” but also for his “affectionate concern and zeal for gaining upon souls, and encouraging them to come to Christ.” Richard Davis, *Hymns Composed on Several Subjects* (London: J. Ward, 1748), iv–v.

²⁶³Raymond Brown, *English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 79–81. See also W. T. Whitley, “The Influence of Whitfield on Baptists,” *Baptist Quarterly* 5 (January 1930): 30–36.

²⁶⁴Raymond Brown, *English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, 80.

William, and Benjamin, either were converted by one of the Methodist preachers or supported their evangelistic efforts. When ministers prohibited Whitefield from preaching in their churches, Henry invited Whitefield to preach in his yard.²⁶⁶ William joined Whitefield on one of his preaching tours in February 1739 and was martyred the following year while preaching in the open air at Hay in South Wales.²⁶⁷ Benjamin was converted through the preaching of Charles Wesley.²⁶⁸

Life and Works

Early Years (1697–1719)

When John Gill was born on November 23, o.s. 1697 in Kettering, Northamptonshire,²⁶⁹ the town had already existed for over 700 years.²⁷⁰ Elevated about 250 feet above sea level, Kettering is located fifty miles to the east of Birmingham and seventy miles north of London.²⁷¹ After passing through the main eighteenth-century

²⁶⁵A.B, *Unity Among Christian Ministers and People*, 7.

²⁶⁶Whitley, “Influence of Whitfield on Baptists,” 30–31.

²⁶⁷Whitley, “Influence of Whitfield on Baptists,” 30, 34.

²⁶⁸Whitley, “Influence of Whitfield on Baptists,” 30.

²⁶⁹*A Summary of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Late Reverend and Learned John Gill, D. D.* (London: George Keith, 1773), ix. This summary was prefaced to the first volume of Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*. Other biographical information on the life of Gill can be found in the following books or articles: C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1876), 37–47; Seymour J. Price, “Sidelights from an Old Minute Book,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 5 (1930–31): 86–96; B.R. White, “John Gill in London, 1719–1729: A Biographical Fragment,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 22 (1967–68): 72–91; Olin C. Robison, “The Legacy of John Gill,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 24 (1971–72): 111–25; John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D. D.* (London: J. Bennett, 1838; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1992); George M. Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Durham, England: Go Publications, 1995); Robert Oliver, “John Gill (1769–1771): His Life and Ministry,” in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 7–50; Timothy George, “John Gill,” in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 11–33; Nettles, “John Gill (1697–1771)”); Michael A. G. Haykin, “Remembering Baptist Heroes,” in *Ministry by His Grace and for His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles*, ed. and Nathan A. Finn Thomas K. Ascol (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2011), 17–37.

²⁷⁰R. L. Greenall, *A History of Kettering* (Chichester, West Sussex: Phillimore, 2003), 5.

²⁷¹John Morton, *The Natural History of Northampton-Shire* (London: R. Knaplock and R.

entrance to the town on the “western side of a small hill,”²⁷² and walking through and surveying the scenery and setting, the first thing that would strike anyone was the absence of any significant buildings except for the Kettering Parish Church building.²⁷³ With a soaring spire and majestic tower, the church’s building would have easily captured one’s attention. Whereas the building proper appeared diminutive, the interior of the church, however, was spacious.²⁷⁴

In the mid to late seventeenth century, through the introduction and settlement of a Mr. Jordan, Kettering began to manufacture wool so that John Morton (1670–1726), rector of Oxendon, described it as a “place of great trade and very full of people.”²⁷⁵ Most of the town’s wool work consisted of “Shaloons, Serges, and Tammies,” the former of the three attaining notoriety for the town.²⁷⁶ In fact, an anonymous writer who identified himself as a “Lover of his Country and the Constitution of Great-Britain” stated that Kettering had rivalled Sudbury, Farnham, and Newbury for making shaloons, sending to London up to 1000 pieces per week.²⁷⁷

Into this industrious town of Kettering that manufactured wool, John Gill was born to Edward and Elizabeth Gill neé Walker. Regretfully, existing records provide very little information about Gill’s parents except for some minor details about their living

Wilkin, 1712), 26; Greenall, *History of Kettering*, 4.

²⁷²Morton, *Natural History of Northampton-Shire*, 26.

²⁷³Morton, *Natural History of Northampton-Shire*, 26.

²⁷⁴F. W. Bull, *A Sketch of the History of the Town of Kettering Together with Some Account of Its Worthies* (Kettering: Northamptonshire Printing, 1891), 71.

²⁷⁵Morton, *Natural History of Northampton-Shire*, 26.

²⁷⁶Morton, *Natural History of Northampton-Shire*, 26.

²⁷⁷Lover of His Country and the Constitution of Great Britain, *A Short Essay Upon Trade in General, but More Enlarged on That Branch Relating to the Woollen Manufactures of Great Britain and Ireland; Wherein is Detected the Scandalous Exaggerations and Calculations of Mess. Webber, London, and the Draper* (London: J. Huggonson, 1741), 39.

conditions and religious character. His parents lived in neither wealth nor dearth, enjoyed neither opulence nor experienced indigence. What provisions the family did possess, Edward met through his work in the wool industry, where his son later joined him.²⁷⁸ Being devoted Christians, Edward and Elizabeth attained the reputation of being godly and God-fearing. Edward later became a deacon of the Baptist church in Kettering and received the encomium of being “eminent for his grace, piety, and holy conversation.”²⁷⁹

Prior to joining the Baptist church at Kettering in 1696, Edward was a member of the Dissenting church in Kettering, which consisted of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, but when William Wallis (d. 1715?), an elder who baptized persons by immersion, and other Baptists were made uncomfortable because of their views concerning baptism, Wallis, Edward Gill, and a few others separated and established a Baptist church at Kettering.²⁸⁰ During this same period, Edward met and married Elizabeth who gave birth a year later to their son John. While Elizabeth was pregnant, Edward had a premonition that they would have a son who would be an eminent Baptist minister.²⁸¹ On the day that John was born, Edward informed a man named Chambers, a woodsman who was unloading some firewood, that he had a son and at that same time a stranger passed by whom they had never seen before or afterwards said, “Yes, and he will be a Scholar too, and all the world cannot hinder it.”²⁸²

²⁷⁸Rippon, *Brief Memoir*, 6.

²⁷⁹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, ix.

²⁸⁰Bull documented that the Independent Church recorded in its Church Book on October 29, 1696 that “Mr. W^m Wallis formerly a Ruling Elder in this Church taking upon Him to be an Administrat^r of Baptisme to some of y^e Members of this Church, agst whom it was prov’d in a Church Assembly y^t He had no Right and power so to do, desir’d his Dismission, wh^{ch} was granted Him & accordingly He was dismissed frō being an Elder & Member in this Church of Christ. Samuell Brigstock, Sarah Billing, John Wyman, & Mary Wyman, Anthony Graves & Jane his wife, All of them being Anabaptists & deserting y^e Ministry & Cōmunion of the church, in Adherence to W^m Wallis, the Church declared They were no more under its Care & watch, but had removed themselves by their own careless relinquishing y^e Church.” Bull, *A Sketch of the History of the Town of Kettering*, 105. If this list is complete and accurate, then it appears that Edward Gill did not depart at first, but he did eventually leave.

²⁸¹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, x.

From an early age, John Gill exhibited a great aptitude for learning so that his parents enrolled him in grammar school at an early age. While at the Kettering Grammar School,²⁸³ Gill mastered several of the chief Latin classics, including Virgil at the age of nine,²⁸⁴ and had gained considerable proficiency in Greek so that he acquired an early reputation of being a youth of learning and thus drew the attention of some neighboring ministers.²⁸⁵ Gill, however, did not complete grammar school. When the headmaster of the school insisted that all children—including children of Dissenting parents—attend a midweek service in the parish church, Gill’s parents removed him from the grammar school. Although several friends attempted to help further Gill’s education, they were unsuccessful. Even some Baptist ministers and other Dissenting ministers attempted to assist by applying for funds in London for Gill to attend seminary, but they were also unsuccessful because the seminary said that Gill was too young.²⁸⁶ This initial setback,

²⁸²*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, x. According to the first biographer, the woodsman was a man of sober and upright character who testified at different times to the words of the stranger. *Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, x.

²⁸³According to Greenall, the Kettering Free Grammar School was established in 1577 by a grant from Queen Elizabeth I to instruct young boys in “good learning and fear of God.” Greenall, *History of Kettering*, 29. See also Bull for additional details about the school. Bull, *A Sketch of the History of the Town of Kettering*, 114–20.

²⁸⁴Rippon, *Brief Memoir*, 111. When Gill was challenged about his learning, he replied that he had read the classics, including Virgil by the age of nine. If anyone read Gill’s *Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song*, which was originally published in 1728, he would discover that Gill cited Virgil’s three major works over 25 times. See John Gill, *Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song, Commonly Called Canticles* (London, 1854; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2007), 35, 40, 44, 62, 64, 69, 72, 76, 81, 85, 86, 88, 92, 100, 128, 135, 219, 223, 250, 251, 261, 266, 267, 304, 305, 324. Similar evidence could be adduced for Ovid, Horace, Cicero, and Aristotle to justify Gill’s claim that he had read and knew the major Latin and Greek classics.

²⁸⁵See M. L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain, 1500–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 34–60 for the probable content and method of instruction at the grammar schools during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

²⁸⁶The Dissenting Academy in London that denied Gill was probably under the tutelage of Isaac Chauncey (1632–1712) who was succeeded by Thomas Ridgley (1667–1734). According to Irene Parker, students entered the academy, generally between the ages of 15–17, which was the same age of those entering university. Irene Parker, *Dissenting Academies in England: Their Rise and Progress and Their Place Among the Educational Systems of the Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 51, 141.

however, did not deter Gill from improving his store of knowledge. In fact, he not only maintained his knowledge of Greek and Latin, but he improved them both by reading books in those languages, especially Latin theological works.²⁸⁷ Meanwhile, in the course of time, *suo Marte*, he studied “Logic, Rhetoric, Moral and Natural Philosophy”²⁸⁸ and learnt Hebrew through self-study using Buxtorf’s Grammar and Lexicon so that he was later able to read his Hebrew Bible with “great ease and pleasure.”²⁸⁹

Around the age of twelve, Gill heard a sermon by William Wallis, the pastor of the Baptist church in Kettering, from Genesis 3:9. From that moment, the Spirit of God began to apply to Gill the same question that God had asked of Adam, “Where art thou?” Shortly afterwards, feeling the depravity of his nature, the heinousness of his sin, and the judgement to come, Gill repented of his sins toward God and placed his faith in Christ’s blood and righteousness. Although Gill was convinced that he was genuinely converted at that time, he did not immediately confess his hope in Christ. He waited until he was nineteen years of age to profess Christ publicly because he was concerned about his youthful age, the seriousness of making a profession, and, primarily as he matured and grew, he perceived that the members of the church wanted to make him a minister who could assist their pastor.²⁹⁰ On November 1, 1716, Gill declared to the church how God had dealt with him in mercy and kindness to save him. He then was baptized in a river by immersion on the same day by his pastor Thomas Wallis, the son of William Wallis, while the people sang a hymn that Gill composed for the occasion:

Was Christ baptiz’d to sanctify
This ordinance he gave?
And did his sacred body lie
Within the liquid grave?

²⁸⁷*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xi.

²⁸⁸*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xi.

²⁸⁹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xi.

²⁹⁰*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xii.

Did Jesus condescend so low
To leave us an example?
And shan't we by this pattern go;
This heavenly rule so ample?

What rich and what amazing grace!
What love beyond degree!
That we the heavenly road should trace
and should baptized be.

That we should follow Christ the Lamb,
In owning his commands;
For what we do, He did the same,
Tho' done with purer hands.

And does this offer to my faith,
How Christ for me did die
And how he in the grave was laid,
And rose to justify?

Then how should this engage my heart
To live to Christ that dy'd;
And with my cursed sins to part,
Which pierc'd his precious side?²⁹¹

The following Lord's Day on November 4, he was admitted into membership and partook of the Lord's Supper. Later that evening, while attending a prayer meeting in a private house with some members of his church and other Christians, he read and expounded some passages from Isaiah 53, which so impressed some in attendance that they commented, "Friend, we take this as a beginning of the exercise of your ministerial gift, which we are persuaded the Lord has bestowed upon you."²⁹² Gill was then requested to preach the following Sunday evening before the same group, which he did. He preached from 1 Corinthians 2:2 "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." It was not very long before the church acknowledged his ministerial gifts and called him to the work of the ministry.

After speaking with some friends in London and desiring to continue his studies, Gill decided to move to High-Ferrers in order to live with John Davis, a man of

²⁹¹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xii-xiii.

²⁹²*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xiii.

learning and the new pastor of the church in Higham. Gill soon learnt that his friends' design was for him to assist Davis with his work. While ministering at the church in Higham, Gill met Elizabeth Negus, a woman of "great piety and good sense" and member of the new church.²⁹³ He married her in 1718. Although Gill had intended to pursue his studies under Davis, he came to believe that God's main design in his providential leading to High-Ferrers was his meeting and marriage to Elizabeth, to whom he was married for forty-six years. Together, they had many children, but only three children survived infancy: Elizabeth who died at the age of thirteen, for whom Gill preached her funeral sermon; John who was a goldsmith; and Mary who married George Keith, a bookseller.²⁹⁴

Gill returned with his wife to Kettering and, while ministering there, his ministry began to produce fruit so that his first biographer stated that "he had been blessed, not only to the comfort, but to the conversion of many,"²⁹⁵ of which one of these converts was John Brine.²⁹⁶ Not too long after he had resettled in Kettering, Gill received and accepted a call to be the pastor of the prominent Horselydown²⁹⁷ Church in Southwark, London which had suddenly lost their pastor Benjamin Stinton (1676–1718), successor and son-in-law to Benjamin Keach (d. 1704). Although Gill was approved to be the pastor on September 13, 1719 by a significant majority of members, he was not ordained until March 22, 1720, due to opposition from a small but powerful group.

²⁹³*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xiv.

²⁹⁴*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xiv.

²⁹⁵*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xiv.

²⁹⁶Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1.591–92n, marked by a single asterisk.

²⁹⁷The name of the meeting house where Gill ministered was spelt Horsly-down by the first biographer of Gill and Rippon, but it was spelt Horselydown by Joseph Ivimey in *A History of the English Baptists*, 3:409, 433.

Middle Years (1720–1746)

From the beginning of his ministry in London, Gill’s preaching resulted in many new believers, as his first biographer recorded, “God was with him, and blessed his ministry to the conversion of many souls, so that large additions were made to the church, year after year, for a considerable time.”²⁹⁸ Having developed the habit of arduous and assiduous study from his youth and convinced of the importance and advantage of Rabbinic study through John Skepp (1675–1721), Gill began to devour Hebraic and Rabbinic literature. He read “the Targums, the Misnah, the Talmuds, and Rabbot, and their ancient commentaries, the book of Zohar and whatever else, of this kind, he could meet with.”²⁹⁹ When Skepp died in 1721, Gill’s purchased Skepp’s Hebrew and rabbinical library, which proved a highly significant help to his study.³⁰⁰

In 1724, Gill began a lengthy exposition of the *Song of the Solomon* and continued until he had preached 122 sermons. That same year, he published his first work, a funeral sermon on the death of John Smith, who was one of the church’s deacons, from Romans 5:20–21,³⁰¹ and the following year he published a sermon on Deuteronomy 33:8, the *Urim and Thummim Found with Christ*.³⁰² About this time, Gill and his wife gave birth to their daughter Elizabeth.³⁰³ In reply to the Independent minister Matthias

²⁹⁸*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xv. For additions, see Minute Book, “An Account of the Proceedings of the Church Meeting Upon Horselydown from the Decease of their late Pastor, the Rev’d Mr. Benjamin Stinton” (Metropolitan Tabernacle, 1719).

²⁹⁹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxiii. In the preface to his *Exposition of the New Testament*, Gill commented on his laborious reading of the ancient Jewish writings and the method he adopted in his reading. John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments, Vol. 7 Matthew to John* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 1989), v.

³⁰⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, xxiii.

³⁰¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:333–51.

³⁰²*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xv.

³⁰³Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:404. Gill recorded the date of his daughter’s birthday as March 14, 1725–26.

Maurice's (1684–1738) *The Manner of Baptizing with Water, Cleared Up from the Word of God and Right Reason*, Gill's rejoinder was *The Ancient Mode of Baptism by Immersion*.³⁰⁴ Maurice further replied the following year with another pamphlet, to which Gill retorted in the same year with *A Defense of the Ancient Mode*.³⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Maurice had also sent some of his pamphlets to America, and the Baptists there, having heard of Gill's response, requested that Gill send his rejoinders. After preaching through the entire book of the *Song of Solomon*, Gill's auditors entreated him to publish his sermons. Gill consented because he wanted to vindicate the book's authority and canonicity from the attacks of the Deists and other opponents.³⁰⁶ As a result of the publication of the *Song of Solomon*, Gill gained some notoriety and esteem among British Christians.³⁰⁷ Indeed, James Hervey (1714–58), the evangelical Anglican, lauded this work in his *Theron and Aspasio*, comparing it to the beauty and loveliness of the Garden of Eden.³⁰⁸

When someone commented that no Calvinist could write anything profitable in response to Anthony Collins's *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*,³⁰⁹ some friends of Gill approached him and requested that he respond. Consequently, he began a sermon series on the prophecies of the Messiah, examining and establishing that the prophecies

³⁰⁴Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:196–237.

³⁰⁵Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:238–59.

³⁰⁶*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xvi.

³⁰⁷*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xvii.

³⁰⁸Hervey wrote, “It has such a copious vein of sanctified invention running through it, and is interspersed with such a variety of delicate and brilliant images, as cannot but highly entertain a curious mind. It presents us also with such rich and charming displays of the glory of Christ's person, the freeness of his grace to sinners, and the tenderness of his love to the church, as cannot but administer the most exquisite delight to the believing soul. Considered in both these views, I think the work resembles the paradisiacal garden described by Milton, in which ‘Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue Appeared, with gay enamell'd colors mix'd.’” James Hervey, *Theron and Aspasio* (London: John and James Rivington, 1755), 125.

³⁰⁹Collins, *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*.

were literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and then extracting from these sermons, he published a response to Collins entitled *The Prophecies of the Old Testament*.³¹⁰

In 1729 Gill began a series of lectures on Wednesdays at Great Eastcheap, when several persons both from within and without the Particular Baptist denomination persuaded him to commence a weekly lectureship. Gill continued his weekly lectures until 1756, when he resigned in order to devote more time to complete his other writing projects. In time, these lectures became the bases of Gill's works: *Justification*,³¹¹ *The Trinity*,³¹² *The Cause of God and Truth*,³¹³ and several commentaries on books of the Old and New Testaments.

The year after Gill began his Great Eastcheap Lectures, several persons from the Independent denomination approached him and eight other ministers in order to begin a short lectureship that defended the cardinal doctrines of the faith.³¹⁴ This additional lectureship, which became known as the Lime Street lectures, commenced on November 12, 1730 and continued weekly until April 8, 1731.³¹⁵ Gill preached two messages on the resurrection of the dead, and along with the other ministers, these lectures were published in 1732. Before the publication, Gill and several of the ministers had agreed to meet and

³¹⁰John Gill, *The Prophecies of the Old Testament, Respecting the Messiah, Consider'd; and Prov'd to Be Literally Fulfill'd in Jesus. Containing an Answer to the Objections of the Author of The Scheme of Literal Prophecy*. (London: Aaron Ward, 1728).

³¹¹John Gill, *The Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, Stated and Maintained: Being the Substance of Several Sermons Preached at the Wednesday's Evening Lecture Near Cripplegate* (London, 1730).

³¹²John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731).

³¹³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*.

³¹⁴The other ministers that participated were as follows: Robert Bragge, Abraham Taylor, John Sladen, Peter Goodwin, John Hurrion, Samuel Wilson, and Thomas Hall.

³¹⁵For the importance of the Lime Street lectures, see Peter Toon, "The Lime Street Lectures (1730–31) and Their Significance," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 40 (1968): 42–48.

review each other's sermons in order to improve one another's work. Since Abraham Taylor (fl. 1726–40) had made some comments that Gill believed were inaccurate and highly offensive to some godly persons, Gill had intended to speak with Taylor at their meeting.³¹⁶ When Gill, Taylor, and others met, Gill was delighted to see that Taylor had removed the inaccurate and offensive comments. But when Taylor's work was published, Gill was surprised to discover that not only were these offensive comments in print, but they were also intensified. Therefore, Gill felt compelled to reply to Taylor, which he did in a letter entitled *God's Everlasting Love, Eternal Union* (1732).³¹⁷ Before publishing a response to Taylor, some friends of Taylor suggested to Gill that he reconsider responding because he would lose the financial support and respect of Taylor's friends. Gill replied, "Do not tell me of losing. . . . I have nothing in comparison to gospel-truths. I am not afraid to be poor."³¹⁸ As a result of *God's Everlasting Love*³¹⁹ and Gill's treatise on Justification, Taylor accused Gill of being an Antinomian. In fact, Taylor published an *Address to Young Students*, advising his students to avoid everything tending to antinomianism, and pointedly directed comments at Gill and some of his expressions concerning good works.³²⁰ Consequently, Gill replied with a little treatise entitled, *The Necessity of Good Works to Salvation*.³²¹

³¹⁶For a helpful analysis of Abraham Taylor, see Alan P. F. Sell, "Abraham Taylor (Fl. 1721–1740): A Volatile Theological Meteor," in *Hinterland Theology: A Stimulus to Theological Construction* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008), 41–70.

³¹⁷John Gill, *The Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love to His Elect, and Their Eternal Union with Christ: Together with Some Other Truths, Stated and Defended. In a Letter to Mr. Abraham Taylor* (London: A. Ward and H. Whitridge, 1732).

³¹⁸Augustus Toplady, *The Works of Augustus Toplady, B.A., Late Vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon* (London: J. Chidley, 1837), 512.

³¹⁹Gill, *Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love*.

³²⁰Abraham Taylor, *An Address to Young Students in Divinity, by Way of Caution Against Some Paradoxes, Which Lead to Doctrinal Antinomianism* (London: John Oswald, 1739).

³²¹John Gill, *The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation Considered: Occasion'd by Some Reflections and Misrepresentations of Mr. (Alias Dr.) Abraham Taylor* (London: A. Ward, 1739).

A year before the Lime Street lectures, Gill published his *Treatise on the Trinity* because of the encroaching Sabellianism among the Baptists. The following year, he preached a sermon on prayer to a group of young men who met to pray regularly at Horselydown.³²² Then on December 25, 1733 Gill preached a sermon on Psalm singing to the same group. Both of these sermons were published together in 1734.

Around 1734, Daniel Whitby's (1638–1726) work on the *Five Points of Calvinism* was republished, and some considered it a masterpiece and irrefutable.³²³ Some friends of Gill approached him and asked that he reply to the work. After reading Whitby's work, Gill decided to answer and therefore began to preach a series of sermons at Great Eastcheap on the key passages that not only Arminians used to support their teaching, but also the principal texts that Calvinists used to confirm their doctrine. Gill extracted from these sermons and published the first part of his work on the *Cause of God and Truth* in 1735 and the second in 1736. The third and fourth parts were published in 1737 and 1738 respectively.

While preaching and publishing a response to Whitby in 1736, Gill replied to Job Burt's³²⁴ work, *Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme Examined by the Word of God*,³²⁵ which contended against God's everlasting love, eternal union, and justification, in a pamphlet *Truth Defended*. Between 1737–39, Gill then published two refutations of some pamphlets on baptism written by a Presbyterian minister, Samuel Bourn, the younger, (1689–1754). At the end of 1737, Gill preached an annual sermon at

³²²John Gill, *A Discourse on Prayer, from 1 Corinthians 14:15. Preached December 25, 1732. To a Society of Young Men, Who Carry on an Exercise of Prayer on Lord's Day Mornings, at a Meeting-House on Horsly-Down, Southwark*. (London: Aaron Ward and H. Whitridge, 1733).

³²³Daniel Whitby, *A Discourse Concerning I. the True Import of the Words Election and Reprobation; And the Things Signified by Them in the Holy Scripture... V. the Perseverance or Defectibility of the Saints.*, 2nd ed. (London: Aaron Ward and Richard Hett, 1735); Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 1:iii.

³²⁴No information is available concerning the birth or death of this person.

³²⁵*Some Doctrines in the Superlapsarian Scheme Impartially Examined by the Word of God* (London: J. Wilson, 1736).

the Great Eastcheap on December 28 with the intent to vindicate the charge that the doctrines of Calvinism lead to ungodly living. This sermon, *The Doctrine of Grace Cleared from the Charge of Licentiousness*, was published the following year; meanwhile, during the same year in his work, *The Moral Nature and Fitness of Things Considered*,³²⁶ Gill also contended against a sermon preached before the Societies for the Reformation of Manners by Samuel Chandler (1693–1766).³²⁷

On May 30, 1738, the same year of the publication of the final part of *The Cause of God and Truth*, Gill's twelve year old "dear child" and daughter, Elizabeth, died. Her suffering was great and attended with much pain.³²⁸ Gill preached his daughter's funeral sermon from 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 and was so moved with emotion at the end of his sermon that he said, "My affections will not permit me to give you an account of the ground and reason of this hope, this faith, this confidence [i.e. that she fell asleep in Jesus] . . . I find I must break at once."³²⁹

Mature Years (1746–1771)

After engaging in several polemical matters, Gill shifted his focus. He began to devote his time, talents, and thought to the publication of a commentary on the New Testament. During the years 1746–48, the Baptist pastor published his three folio volumes: *Exposition on the New Testament*. This was a major accomplishment. No

³²⁶John Gill, *The Moral Nature and Fitness of Things Considered. Occasioned by Some Passages in the Reverend Mr. Samuel Chandler's Sermon, Lately Preached to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners* (London: Aaron Ward, 1738).

³²⁷Samuel Chandler, *The Necessary and Immutable Difference Between Moral Good and Evil, Asserted and Explained, in a Sermon Preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, at Salters Hall, September the 25th. 1738* (London: John Oswald, 1738). Gill objected to some statements of Chandler that represented the nature and fitness of things as if it is deified, for Gill argued that anything said to be independent of God's will, eternally existing, the rule of his action, and supreme ruler over all creatures must be deity.

³²⁸Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:407.

³²⁹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:403.

Baptist had ever published a commentary on every verse of the New Testament. Permeating his commentary with pertinent insights from a myriad of Rabbinical literature, Gill demonstrated his erudition to the learned world and validated the proverb *labor omnia vincit*. In the preface to the first volume of his *Exposition of the New Testament*, Gill represented his labor as “arduous work.”³³⁰ He did not, however, forget to lay the crown of his achievements upon the head of his God: “I do, in the most sincere and grateful manner, give thanks to God for that measure of health and strength of body; and for all the gifts and graces of his spirit afforded me, by which I have been enabled to go through this arduous work thus far.”³³¹ In consequence of his “excellent commentary on the New Testament”³³² along with his other labors that displayed his “knowledge of the Scripture, of the Oriental languages, and of Jewish antiquities,”³³³ the Marischal College in the University of Aberdeen conferred upon this autodidact the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Alarmed at the increasing number of Baptists in Boston, some paedobaptist ministers solicited Jonathan Dickinson (1688–1747) of Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, to write in order to curb the growth of anti-paedobaptists. After the Baptists in America saw the success of Dickinson’s pamphlet, *A Brief Illustration and Confirmation of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism*,³³⁴ they sent the pamphlet to Dr. Gill and requested that he reply to Dickinson. Gill responded to Dickinson by publishing *The Divine Right of Infant*

³³⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:xix.

³³¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:xix.

³³²*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxiv. Professor Pollock, Professor of Divinity at University of Aberdeen, commended Gill for the display of learning in his “excellent commentary on the New Testament.”

³³³*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxiii.

³³⁴Jonathan Dickinson, *A Brief Illustration and Confirmation of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism; in a Plain and Familiar Dialogue Between a Minister and One of His Parishioners*. (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1746).

Baptism Examined and Disproved (1749).³³⁵ Peter Clark (1692–1768), a minister in Salem, New England, replied to the Doctor’s pamphlet in *A Defence of the Divine Right of Infant-baptism* (1752). The Doctor answered Clark in a letter to a friend in Boston, giving his friend permission to do with it as he thought best. Gill the Baptist apologist, however, did not republish that letter in Britain, though he was solicited to do so, for he reasoned that the controversy was overseas, where he preferred it to remain.³³⁶ Meanwhile, Gill was drawn to address another pamphlet on infant baptism, though he indicated he did so with reluctance.³³⁷ When Samuel Wilson (d. 1750), a Baptist minister, who had intended to answer the pamphlet, *The Baptism of Infants a Reasonable Service*, died, and due to the fact that certain persons claimed that this pamphlet was irrefutable, Gill decided to address the subject once more in *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition in Favor of Infant-Baptism Considered* (1751). Two years later, Gill replied to an anonymous writer who argued for the antiquity of infant baptism by publishing *Antipaedobaptism: or Infant-Sprinkling an Innovation* (1753).³³⁸ Despite Gill’s publication of over ten tracts and treatises on baptism, Augustus Toplady (1740–78),

³³⁵John Gill, *The Divine Right of Infant Baptism, Examined and Disproved: Being an Answer to a Pamphlet, Entitled, A Brief Illustration and Confirmation of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism, Printed at Boston in New England, 1746* (London: J. Ward, J. Robinson, and G. Keith, 1749).

³³⁶John Gill, *A Reply to Mr. Clark’s Defence of the Divine Right of Infant-Baptism: In a Letter to a Friend at Boston, in New-England* (Boston: Phillip Freeman, 1754).

³³⁷John Gill, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, in Favour of Infant-Baptism, with Others, Advanced in a Late Pamphlet, Called The Baptism of Infants a Reasonable Service, &c. Consider’d;... To Which Are Added the Dissenters Reasons for Separating from the Church of England* (London: G. Keith and J. Robinson, 1751), 1. Gill wrote, “It is with reluctance I enter again into the controversy about baptism; not from any consciousness either of the badness or weakness of the cause I am engaged in; but partly on account of other work upon my hands, which I chose not to be interrupted in; and partly because I think there has been enough written already, to bring this controversy to an issue. . . . If persons are content to search the scriptures, and form their judgment of this matter by them, there has been enough published on both sides of the question to determine themselves by; and we are willing things should rest here: but this is our care; if we reply to what is written against us, then we are litigious persons, and lovers of controversy; though we only rise up in our own vindication, for which surely we are not to be blamed; and if we make no reply, then what is written is unanswerable by us, and we are triumphed over.

³³⁸*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxiv.

Gill's intimate friend, commented that the Doctor never suggested, much less discussed, the subject of baptism with him. Toplady wrote, "Though he [Gill] wrote much concerning the particular principle by which his denomination is distinguished; yet it was for the most part, in his own defense. And I can repeat it, to his honour, that, intimate with him as I was, I never so much as once, heard him drop a single hint, in all our conversations, directly or indirectly, concerning the principle of baptism."³³⁹

In the middle of the baptismal controversy, the Anglican evangelist John Wesley (1703–91) published a brief treatise entitled, *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*. In this treatise, Wesley asserted that on the authority of Scripture a "saint may fall away; that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself, may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly."³⁴⁰ Gill read, rejected, and refuted Wesley proposition by proposition in his work entitled *The Doctrine of the Saints Final Perseverance, Asserted and Vindicated*.³⁴¹ Not only did the Doctor contend against all eight of Wesley's propositions, but he also presented ten reasons to confirm the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. Wesley then shifted the debate to the doctrine of predestination by publishing *Predestination Calmly Considered* (1752), a work that also provoked a response and rebuttal from the pen of Gill: *The*

³³⁹Erasmus Middleton, *Evangelical Biography, or, An Historical Account of the Lives and Deaths of the Most Eminent and Evangelical Authors or Preachers* (London: W. Baynes, 1816), 4:458–59n.

³⁴⁰John Wesley, *Serious Thoughts Upon the Perseverance of the Saints* (London, 1751), 4. Wesley concluded his treatise with the following declaration: "If the Scriptures are true, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual, invisible Church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches;' those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and of the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly." John Wesley, *Serious Thoughts Upon the Perseverance of the Saints*, 24.

³⁴¹John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Saints Final Perseverance, Asserted and Vindicated: In Answer to a Late Pamphlet, Called, Serious Thoughts, on That Subject* (London: G. Keith and J. Robinson, 1752).

Doctrine of Predestination Stated, and Set in the Scripture-Light (1752).³⁴² James Hervey appreciated Gill's response to Wesley on the perseverance of the saints and commended it to a friend.³⁴³ Likewise, Augustus Toplady perused Gill's tract on predestination and pronounced it to be "excellent and nervous."³⁴⁴

Besides disputing with Wesley, the Doctor remained busy preaching at funerals during the years 1749–55. On January 1, 1749, he preached at the funeral of Edward Ludlow, a member of his church. When Ludlow became ill, Gill visited him and inquired about his spiritual state and condition.³⁴⁵ On October 14, 1750, Dr. Gill preached the funeral sermon of one of his colleagues and friends in ministry—Samuel Wilson.³⁴⁶ Three years later, he delivered the funeral address of Benjamin Seward of Worchester, a man who was a member of another Particular Baptist congregation and who was acquainted with the Doctor, but was not well known to Gill.³⁴⁷ The next year on October

³⁴²John Wesley, *Predestination Calmly Considered* (London: W.B., T. Trye, and R. Akenhead, 1752); John Gill, *The Doctrine of Predestination Stated, and Set in the Scripture-Light: In Opposition to Mr. Wesley's Predestination Calmly Consider'd. With a Reply to the Exceptions of the Said Writer to The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints*, 2nd ed. (London: G. Keith, J. Robinson, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Akenhead, and Mr. Taylor, 1752).

³⁴³James Hervey, *A Collection of the Letters of the Late Reverend James Hervey* (London: Charles Rivington, 1760), 2:138. Writing to a friend, Hervey commented, "Dr. Gill shall tell you my sentiments, in relation to Wesley on the *Perseverance of the Saints*. Both their pamphlets on this subject I send you; whether his replies and interpretations in the first part are sound and satisfactory, judge you; the considerations in the latter part I think, are full of weight, rich with consolation, and worthy of a place in our memories and in our hearts. May our meditation fix them in the one, and the Spirit of our God implant them in the other!"

³⁴⁴Toplady, *The Works of Augustus Toplady, B.A., Late Vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon*, 4. By nervous, Toplady meant reasoning that is strong or vigorous.

³⁴⁵John Gill, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Mr. Edward Ludlow, Who Departed This Life December 28th, 1748. Preached January 1st* (London: J. Ward and J. Robinson, 1749), 26.

³⁴⁶John Gill, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Revd. Mr. Samuel Wilson, Who Departed This Life October 6, in the Forty-Eighth Year of His Age, Preached October 14, 1750* (London: G. Keith and J. Robinson, 1750).

³⁴⁷John Gill, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Benjamin Seward Esq. Who Departed This Life March 30th, Having Enter'd the Forty-Ninth Year of His Age. Preached, April 8th, 1753* (London: G. Keith and J. Robinson, 1753).

13, 1754, Gill preached from Job 33:24 at the funeral of John Davenport, a member and deacon at Horsly-down.³⁴⁸ During these span of years, Gill also published a second edition of his *Treatise on the Trinity* in 1752.³⁴⁹

During this same period of constant writing and continual preaching, the Doctor's health deteriorated due to incessant care for his frail wife. Excruciating and unceasing pain racked her body so that she required a constant attendant.³⁵⁰ At first, her husband ministered to her and nursed her. But when the Doctor's mortal frame began to break due to constant and long interruption to his sleep, he was compelled to seek assistance.³⁵¹ Consequently, around 1755, Gill received the help of his niece, Anne Smith, who moved into the home in order to relieve the Doctor and care for his beloved wife. Smith's work required her not only to be a personal attendant who slept in the same room as Mrs. Gill, but she also had to feed Mrs. Gill small portions hourly throughout the day and night.³⁵² After three years of such exhausting labor, Smith's health became so impaired that she had to resign and was replaced by her sister who herself died before Mrs. Gill.³⁵³

Smith reported that Gill, his children, and son-in-law lived in adjoining homes so that the entire family enjoyed daily meals together.³⁵⁴ She commented on the concord

³⁴⁸John Gill, *Christ, the Ransom Found. A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Mr. John Davenport, Who Departed This Life, October 4th, Aged Forty-Eight. Preached October 13, 1754* (London: G. Keith and J. Robinson, 1754).

³⁴⁹John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise*, 2nd ed. (London: G. Keith, 1752).

³⁵⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:578.

³⁵¹Thomas Quin, "Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill," *The Baptist Magazine* 21 (1829): 148.

³⁵²Quin, "Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill," 148–49.

³⁵³Quin, "Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill," 148–50.

³⁵⁴Quin, "Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill," 149.

and benevolence witnessed among the family, calling their relationship a “pattern of domestic felicity.”³⁵⁵ Smith revealed that the Doctor was upstairs in his massive library from four or five in the summer and later in the winter.³⁵⁶ And when he descended from his library, he would lead the family in worship and repeat the same in the evening. Each morning and evening, he exhorted his family to cling to Christ, and sometimes he “addressed himself to his servants particularly.”³⁵⁷

Before the Doctor departed to the chapel on the Lord’s Day, he invariably visited his wife, expressed his affection, and when weeping, he comforted her with the words “The Lord is everywhere, my dear.”³⁵⁸ At this time, Smith stated that the chapel was “generally much crowded” with persons from all ranks, many of whom arrived in their carriages.³⁵⁹

In 1756, Gill relinquished his Wednesday evening Lecturers in order to focus his time and energy on the production of his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, an exposition that he began to publish in 1757. Meanwhile, due to the deteriorated condition

³⁵⁵Quin, “Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill,” 149.

³⁵⁶Quin, “Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill,” 149. Smith mentioned that she later worked for a noble man, which gave her the opportunity to visit different mansions, yet she had never seen any library that rivalled Gill’s. She stated that Gill’s library was located at the top of the house, occupying several rooms with books of all sizes. For an idea of the library of Dr. Gill, see John Gill, *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late Reverend and Learned John Gill, D.D. Deceased. Comprehending a Fine Collection of Biblical and Oriental Literature; Which Will Be Sold by Auction* (London, 1772).

³⁵⁷Quin, “Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill,” 150.

³⁵⁸Quin, “Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill,” 150.

³⁵⁹Quin, “Anecdotes of the Late Venerable Dr. Gill,” 150. According to Joseph Ivimey, under the ministry of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), the Horselydown church building accommodated almost one thousand people. Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 3:410. Moreover, before Joseph Hussey (1691–1726) moved to London, the church in Cambridge where he ministered was recorded to have “an audience of upwards of a thousand, and a church of upwards of 150 members” *Church Book: St. Andrews Street Baptist Church, Cambridge, 1720–1832*, English Baptist Records (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1991), 10. It is not too much of a stretch to suggest that if the building Gill occupied held almost one thousand people and that it was very crowded, that attendance at church may be anywhere between five hundred to one thousand people, despite the membership in 1757 consisting of 141 persons. Goat Yard/Carter Lane Church Book 1719–1808, Metropolitan Tabernacle.

of the Horsly-down building and imminent expiration of the lease, the members voted to construct a new building in Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark in 1757.³⁶⁰ From 1757–58, Gill published his *Exposition of the Prophets, both the Larger and Smaller* in two volumes and then issued his four volume *Exposition of the Old Testament*, which consisted of his commentary from Genesis to Song of Solomon, from 1763–66.³⁶¹

During these arduous labors of publishing his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, Gill's dear wife of 46 years died in 1764. Evidently, so touched with the loss of the apple of his eye, Gill did not appear in public after his wife's death until he preached her funeral sermon.³⁶² He chose to preach from Hebrews 11:16 "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." At the end of the sermon, Gill had intended to deliver a brief summary of his wife's life, but he was apparently so overwhelmed with emotion that he could not deliver it and instead, being found among his writings, it was published with his *Collections of Sermons and Tracts*.

Sometime in 1765, Isaac Backus (1724–1806), who had begun correspondence with Gill in 1761³⁶³ and continued it until Gill's death,³⁶⁴ wrote to the Doctor in order to introduce and recommend James Manning (1738–91), first President of the College of

³⁶⁰On March 17, 1757, Robert Hall (1728–1801) gave a generous gift to Dr Gill's new meeting at Carter Lane. See Richard Hall, *The Journal of a Georgian Gentleman*, ed. Mike Rendell (Sussex: Book Guild, 2011), 87. Hall sat under the ministry of the Doctor, attending two sermons, at least, from 1745. He did not receive believer's baptism and testify to his conversion until 1763. Hall, *The Journal of a Georgian Gentleman*, 42, 86–87. Gill is said to have had a significant influence in Hall's formative years. Hall, *The Journal of a Georgian Gentleman*, 43.

³⁶¹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxv-xxvi.

³⁶²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:566.

³⁶³Isaac Backus, *The Diary of Isaac Backus. Vol. 1, 1741–1764*, ed. William G. McLoughlin (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1979), 522.

³⁶⁴Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus, A.M.* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1859), 152.

Rhode Island and later Brown University.³⁶⁵ Backus mentioned that since the college had few books,³⁶⁶ they desired to obtain additional books and would appreciate it if the Doctor spoke with his son-in-law, George Keith. After his death and through his executors, Gill donated a set of his entire works and fifty-two folio volumes of the Fathers.³⁶⁷ Writing to John Ryland on November 12, 1772, Manning stated that Gill's gift of books was "by far the greatest donation our little library has yet had."³⁶⁸ In addition to his generous gift to the library, Gill was among the initial subscribers to the College of Rhode Island.³⁶⁹ Gill also contributed to the establishment of the College of Rhode Island in an indirect manner. When the Baptist Church in Philadelphia sought a pastor for their church, they sent a letter to Gill on behalf of the board of ministers in London.³⁷⁰ The Doctor, as Chairman of the Particular Baptist Fund, recommended Morgan Edwards.³⁷¹ Edwards accepted the call and later became the driving impulse for the establishment of Rhode Island College,³⁷² which Edwards considered "the greatest service he has done or

³⁶⁵Reuben Aldridge Guild, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning, and the Early History of Brown University* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), 71; Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus, A.M.*, 152–54.

³⁶⁶The library at the College of Rhode Island was meager at best in quantity, and even worse in theological quality. On February 21, 1772, while writing to Thomas Llewelyn, President Manning mentioned that the library contained approximately two hundred volumes, which not of choice, since they were books that people could afford to part with. Reuben Aldridge Guild, *History of Brown University, with Illustrative Documents* (Providence, RI, 1867), 65.

³⁶⁷Guild, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning*, 200.

³⁶⁸Guild, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning*, 200. Manning also subscribed to six sets of Gill's initial publication of the *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (1769–70) and six sets of his *Sermons*. See subscribers list in John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or, a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures. In Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1769); Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, v.

³⁶⁹Guild, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning*, 91; Guild, *History of Brown University*, 158. According to the order of names in England, Gill appeared to be first person to contribute to the College of Rhode Island.

³⁷⁰Thomas R. McKibbens and Kenneth L. Smith, *The Life and Works of Morgan Edwards* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 13.

³⁷¹McKibbens and Smith, *Life and Works of Morgan Edwards*, 13.

hopes to do for the honor of the Baptist interest.”³⁷³

Despite his increasing age, Gill continued to produce several works. In 1767, Gill published his *Dissertation on the Antiquities of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents*.³⁷⁴ The same year, the Doctor made some further additions and published a third edition of his *Exposition of the Song of Solomon*.³⁷⁵ The following year Gill published his *Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship*,³⁷⁶ a most impressive work in which he examines those who denied the eternal Sonship of Christ and those who affirmed it from the first century up to the time of the Reformation.

In 1769, Gill published his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, and the next year he published his *Body of Practical Divinity*, both of these works were the substance of his preaching to his congregation.³⁷⁷ John Martin (1741–1820) who enjoyed listening to Gill whenever the opportunity presented itself and who later became a Baptist minister attended the last sermon Gill preached from his series on a body of practical divinity.

³⁷²McKibbens and Smith, *Life and Works of Morgan Edwards*, 189.

³⁷³Morgan Edwards, *Materials Towards a History of the American Baptists: In XII Volumes* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1792), 1:48.

³⁷⁴John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew-Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents* (London: G. Keith, 1767). In this work, Gill rebutted the charge that the Jews corrupted the Hebrew text and defended the divine origin of the vowel points and accents. Although a reviewer in the *Critical Review* is unpersuaded by Gill’s argument on the divine origin of the vowel points, he acknowledged that the Doctor had examined his subject with “great industry, sagacity, and learning.” A Society of Gentleman, *The Critical Review: Or, Annals of Literature* (London: A. Hamilton, 1767), 23:1. The reviewer also acknowledged the profit he received from reading Gill’s work, for it not only presented the dispute in a lucid manner, but it also expressed that Gill had displayed his argument and its evidence in a clear manner. A Society of Gentleman, *The Critical Review: Or, Annals of Literature*, 1.

³⁷⁵John Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song Commonly Called Canticles*, 3rd ed. (London: George Keith, 1768).

³⁷⁶Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:534–64.

³⁷⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*; John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity: Or, a System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures*. (London: George Keith, 1770). Subscriptions for these two volumes included the following persons: Isaac Backus; John Gano (1727–1804), six sets; Hugh Evans (1712–81), six sets; Caleb Evans (1737–91), six sets; James Manning, six sets; and Samuel Stillman (1737–1807), twenty four sets.

Martin recalled the Doctor's final exhortation to his hearers as he closed his sermon to approximate the following words:

Thus, have I, by the grace of God, gone through a body of doctrinal, and practical divinity in the pulpit; in doing which, I have not shunned to declare to you all, according to my ability, the whole counsel of God. I am free from the blood of you all. I say, I am free from the blood of you all! God grant that none of the sermons which I have preached in the course of this work, may rise up against you another day! God grant that it may not be so! Amen.³⁷⁸

Now, in his seventies, the Doctor's health continued to decline. Nevertheless, he continued to preach and had hoped to finish Luke 1, especially the Song of Zacharias and Song of Simeon, but the Lord of all had other plans in mind, for Gill preached his final sermon from Luke 1:78 "By the remission of their sin through the tender mercy of God." Despite his increased weakness, diminished appetite, and agonizing pain at the time, his first biographer commented that he "always appeared calm, serene, and cheerful. His faith was steady, and his hope firm, to the last."³⁷⁹ In fact, when a relative inquired about him, the dying servant of God replied,

I depend wholly and alone upon the free sovereign, eternal, and unchangeable and everlasting love of God; the firm and everlasting covenant of grace, and my interest in the persons of the Trinity; for my whole salvation: and not upon any righteousness of my own, nor any thing in me, or done by me under the influences of the holy [*sic*] Spirit; nor upon any services of mine, which I have been assisted to perform for the good of the church, but my interest in the persons of the Trinity. . . . These are no new things with me; but what I have been long acquainted with; what I can live and die by. And this you may tell to any of my friends. I apprehend I shall not be long here.³⁸⁰

A little before his death the Doctor recorded some dying thoughts based on

³⁷⁸John Martin, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of the Rev John Martin* (London: J. Stockdale, 1797), 70. Martin heard Whitefield and others preach, but none pleased him as much as Gill. Among his reasons were that Gill's "discourses were more evangelical, better studied, and argued, and, I thought, much more consistent, than those which I heard at the Tabernacle, and in some other crowded places of worship; and they furnished me with more materials for subsequent reflection than any sermons that I heard in London. I might indeed add, except a few, which I heard from the Rev. John Brine; but though his sermons were judicious, his delivery was not all engaging." Martin, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of the Rev John Martin*, 44.

³⁷⁹*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxxii.

³⁸⁰*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxxii.

Matthew 24:4. In these unfinished thoughts, the Doctor considered what it means to be prepared for death and eternity. He described death for the believer as “going to their father’s and Christ’s father’s house, where there are many mansions provided, and where they shall enjoy the kingdom it is their father’s good pleasure to give, and where they shall have his presence for evermore.”³⁸¹ He then added the chief reason for saints to look forward to death: “*It is in order to be with Christ, which is infinitely preferable to being in this world,* and where they shall be for ever with him and behold his glory.”³⁸²

On October 14, 1771, Gill departed to his Father’s house to dwell with Christ. The last words this bold defender of the ever blessed Trinity uttered were “O my Father, my Father.”³⁸³

³⁸¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:590.

³⁸²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:590.

³⁸³*Summary of Life, Writings, and Character of John Gill*, xxxiii.

CHAPTER 3

THE TRINITARIAN CRISIS OF THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Trinitarian Crisis: The First Phase (1688–1711)

At the beginning of his reign as King of England, William III coveted unity among his Protestant subjects. Although he pursued unity among his subjects, and accomplished some measure of it through the Act of Toleration, little did the king realize that an anonymous tract published the year before his accession would instigate a major doctrinal controversy in England. This controversy would eventually erupt into an internecine feud among Protestants over the doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarians would wrangle with trinitarians, while their common adversary exploited their fissure and ridiculed both.¹ When the controversy blazed so intensely that it threatened the peace of the Anglican Church and purity of the Christian faith, William directed his archbishops and bishops to enjoin all clergy to comply with the trinitarian doctrine enshrined in the creeds and Thirty-Nine Articles, to eschew using any new terms in explaining this mystery of the Christian faith, and to maintain civility in all public discourse.² Two years later, in order to secure peace and curb the trinitarian crisis, William approved the Blasphemy Act (1697), which punished anyone who had professed Christianity but later

¹Edward Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity: With an Answer to the Late Socinian Objections Against It from Scripture, Antiquity and Reason, and a Preface Concerning the Different Explications of the Trinity, and the Tendency of the Present Socinian Controversie* (London: Henry Mortlock, 1697), iv, 3.

²William III, *Directions to Our Arch-Bishops and Bishops, for the Preserving of Unity in the Church, and the Purity of the Christian Faith, Concerning the Holy Trinity* (London: Charles Bill, 1695).

espoused polytheism or denied the Trinity.³ As a result of the resurgence of Unitarianism, which was sparked by the seemingly innocuous and anonymous publication of the *Brief History of the Unitarians*, a work that revived the teachings of John Biddle (1615–62), the Father of English Unitarianism, the last decade of the seventeenth century inaugurated a trinitarian crisis.⁴ This chapter will now examine two phases of the trinitarian crisis, leading up to the time when Gill commenced his series of lectures on the Trinity.

Stephen Nye: The Unitarian Apologist for the Doctrine of God

After Biddle died in 1662 and the Clarendon Code had begun to squelch Dissenters, Socinianism in England, for the most part, was quiescent.⁵ Although some Socinians continued to meet, correspond, and preach,⁶ they did not inflame the Socinian controversy ignited through the writings of Biddle,⁷ especially concerning the deity of Christ and the Spirit. Consequently, the controversy engendered little response from

³An Act for the More Effectual Suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness, 1697, 9 Will. sess. 3, c. 35.

⁴For a list of the principal works on the trinitarian crisis in the last decade of the seventeenth century, see John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England, from the Reformation to the End of Last Century, a Contribution to the History of Theology* (London: Strahan & Co., 1870–73), 2:273–78.

⁵Writing in 1697, Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, commented that since about 1669 the Socinian controversy “seems to be laid asleep among us” and would have continued until now if not for the Socinian publications. Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1.

⁶H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 217, 250–316.

⁷John Biddle, *XII Arguments Drawn Out of the Scripture: Wherein the Commonly-Received Opinion Touching the Deity of the Holy Spirit is Clearly and Fully Refuted: To Which is Prefixed a Letter Tending to the Same Purpose, Written to a Member of the Parliament* (London, 1647); John Biddle, *A Confession of Faith Touching the Holy Trinity, According to the Scripture* (London, 1648); John Biddle, *The Apostolical and True Opinion Concerning the Holy Trinity, Revived and Asserted: Partly by Twelve Arguments Levied Against the Traditional and False Opinion About the Godhead of the Holy Spirit: Partly by a Confession of Faith Touching the Three Persons*. (London, 1653); John Biddle, *A Twofold Catechism: The One Simply Called A Scripture-Catechism; the Other, A Brief Scripture-Catechism for Children* (London: Rich. Moone, 1654).

trinitarians over the next twenty-five years.⁸ But things changed the year before the accession of William III, when Stephen Nye (1648–1719), Rector of Little Hornead in Hertfordshire, with the financial support of Thomas Firmin (1632–97),⁹ published *A Brief History of the Unitarians, Called Also Socinians*.¹⁰ Shortly afterwards, the *Brief History* became a “celebrated book”¹¹ that was distributed freely in 1689;¹² two years later, Nye published a second edition of the *Brief History*.¹³

The title of the *Brief History* belies its true content. It is not a history of the Unitarian sect, but a thoughtful apology of the Unitarian’s doctrine of God. Composed of four letters addressed to a friend, who is probably Firmin,¹⁴ Nye asserted that Unitarians believe that the God of the Bible is “only one Person, not three,” and that one person who is God Almighty is the Father alone and not any other person.¹⁵ For this reason, he continued, they reject the full deity of the Son and deny the full divinity of the Spirit. For

⁸There were responses to Socinianism over the doctrine of Christ from John Tombes and Thomas Manton. John Tombes, *Emmanuel, or, God-Man: A Treatise Wherein the Doctrine of the First Nicene and Chalcedon Councils, Concerning the Two Natures in Christ, is Asserted Against the Lately Vented Socinian Doctrine* (London: F. Smith, 1669); Thomas Manton, *Christ’s Eternal Existence, and the Dignity of His Person Asserted and Proved: In Opposition to the Doctrine of the Socinians: In Several Sermons on Col. I, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 Verses* (London, 1685). An author identified as R. H. published a plea to accept Socinians. R. H., *The Protestants Plea for a Socinian: Justifying His Doctrine from Being Opposite to Scripture or Church Authority, and Him from Being Guilty of Heresie, or Schism: In Five Conferences* (London: Henry Hills, 1686).

⁹H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England*, 294.

¹⁰Stephen Nye, *A Brief History of the Unitarians, Called Also Socinians: In Four Letters Written to a Friend*, (n.p., 1687). According to McLachlan, this was the first time the term Unitarian had been used in a title of a work. H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England*, 320–21.

¹¹Charles Leslie, *The Socinian Controversy Discuss’d: Wherein the Chief of the Socinian Tracts (Publish’d of Late Years Here) Are Consider’d* (London: G. Strahan, 1708), xxxvii.

¹²Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, xxxvii.

¹³Stephen Nye, *A Brief History of the Unitarians, Called Also Socinians: In Four Letters Written to a Friend*, 2nd ed. (n.p., 1691).

¹⁴E. M. Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945–52), 2:219.

¹⁵Nye, *Brief History of the Unitarians*, 3–4.

them, the Son is a creature of God, a messenger, prophet, Son, but not God, and the Spirit is the “power and inspiration of God” but not God.¹⁶

In the first letter, Nye presented eleven reasons to reject the full deity of the Son and then five reasons to repudiate the full divinity of the Spirit. During his examination and refutation of the deity of the Son and the Spirit, Nye responded to several of the commonly cited biblical texts that trinitarians used to support their doctrine. He concluded his first letter by rejecting the plurality in unity of the divine essence, declaring that to believe in the Trinity is “absurd, and contrary both to reason and *to it self*, and therefore not only false, but *impossible*” (emphasis original).¹⁷ In the second letter, Nye examined several Old Testament passages supporting the trinitarian doctrine, and then considered the Gospels and the book of Acts in the third letter. Nye concluded his work by examining the epistles and the book of Revelation.

From the publication of the *Brief History* until the end of the seventeenth century, Nye demonstrated his apologetic zeal to defend the Unitarian’s doctrine of God by his numerous publications. He published several tracts arguing for the Unitarian’s position,¹⁸ answered his opponents rejoinders,¹⁹ republished several of Biddle’s works,²⁰

¹⁶Nye, *Brief History of the Unitarians*, 4, 16.

¹⁷Nye, *Brief History of the Unitarians*, 24.

¹⁸Stephen Nye, *The Trinitarian Scheme of Religion, Concerning Almighty God and Mankind: Considered Both Before and After the (Pretended) Fall: With Notes Thereupon, Which Notes Contain Also the Unitarian Scheme* (London, 1692).

¹⁹Stephen Nye, *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: In a Letter*, 2nd ed. (London, 1691); Stephen Nye, *A Letter of Resolution Concerning the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation* (London, 1691); Stephen Nye, *Observations on the Four Letters of Dr. John Wallis Concerning the Trinity and the Creed of Athanasius* (London, 1691); Stephen Nye, *An Accurate Examination of the Principal Texts Usually Alledged for the Divinity of Our Saviour: And for the Satisfaction by Him Made to the Justice of God, for the Sins of Men: Occasioned by a Book of Mr. L. Milbourn, Called Mysteries (in Religion) Vindicated* (London, 1692); Stephen Nye, *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity: By Dr. Wallis, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. S---Th, Dr. Cudworth, and Mr. Hooker*, in *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (London, 1693); Stephen Nye, *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity: Occasioned by Four Sermons Preached by His Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury: A Sermon Preached by the Lord-Bishop of Worchester: A Discourse by the Lord-Bishop of Salisbury* (London, 1694); Stephen Nye, *The Exceptions of Mr.*

and authored a biography of Firmin.²¹ Notwithstanding his many published works, which buttressed his status as champion of Unitarianism, it was Nye's *Brief History* that ignited the first phase of the trinitarian crisis and established him as a Unitarian apologist.

Arthur Bury: The Simple Gospel of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles

Meanwhile, as Nye was championing a Unitarian view of God and imbuing the atmosphere with Socinianism, Arthur Bury (1624–1714) anonymously published *The Naked Gospel*, arguing for a return to the simplicity of the gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles preached. This simple gospel consisted of no more than two fundamental doctrines: repentance and faith, which can even be narrowed to one—faith.²² Although he contended that one must believe in Christ in order to receive the promise of eternal life, Bury also maintained that one can reject creedal formulation concerning the person of Christ and still enter into the kingdom of heaven.²³ He explained that as long as

Edwards in His Causes of Atheism Against the Reasonableness of Christianity, as Deliver'd in the Scriptures, Examin'd and Found Unreasonable, Unscriptural, and Injurious: Also It's Clearly Proved by Many Testimonies of Holy Scripture, That the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Only God and Father of Christians (London, 1695).

²⁰*The Faith of One God: Who is Only the Father, and of One Mediator Between God and Men, Who is Only the Man Christ Jesus, and of One Holy Spirit, the Gift (and Sent) of God, Asserted and Defended in Several Tracts Contained in This Volume* (London, 1691); John Biddle, *The Apostolical and True Opinion Concerning the Holy Trinity, Revived and Asserted: Partly by Twelve Arguments Levied Against the Traditional and False Opinion About the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. Partly by a Confession of Faith Touching the Three Persons. Both Which Having Been Formerly Set Forth, Were Much Altered and Augmented, with Explications of Scripture, and with Reasons: And Finally, with Testimonies of the Fathers, and of Others. All Reprinted, Anno 1653. And Now Again with the Life of the Author Prefixed* (London, 1691); John Biddle, *A Confession of Faith Touching the Holy Trinity, According to the Scripture* (London, 1691).

²¹Stephen Nye, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin, Late Citizen of London* (London: A. Baldwin, 1698); Stephen Nye, *An Account of Mr. Firmin's Religion, and of the Present State of the Unitarian Controversy* (London, 1698).

²²Arthur Bury, *The Naked Gospel: Discovering I. What Was the Gospel Which Our Lord and His Apostles Preached, II. What Additions and Alterations Latter Ages Have Made in It, III. What Advantages and Damages Have Thereupon Ensued* (London, 1690), 7.

²³Bury, *Naked Gospel*, 30.

an individual believes Christ will bring him to heaven, though he be wrong about the person of Christ, that individual will still “certainly attain eternal life.”²⁴ Bury blamed the teachers in the early church for corrupting the simple gospel by their inquiry into and disputation over the person of Christ and for imposing their creedal formulation upon all disciples and thus hindered the prosperity and advancement of Christianity.²⁵ Furthermore, he ridiculed the historical events surrounding the early councils’ understanding of the divinity of Christ, mockingly stating that this fundamental doctrine was “from first to last advanced by gross partiality of the most guilty kind, and at last imposed by a Novice Emperour, upon implicit faith in two bishops.”²⁶ Despite the central message of the *Naked Gospel* to return to the simplicity of the gospel so that Christianity may prosper, Bury’s attack on the early church’s councils, particularly Nicea, and the creeds, his rejection of the Trinity, and denial of the Lord Jesus Christ as fully God was perceived to propagate Socinianism and thus provoked a response.

On August 19, 1690, the Convocation of the University of Oxford assembled, and condemned *The Naked Gospel* and also decreed that the book should be burnt for its “impious and heretical propositions.”²⁷ In the same year after the decree of Oxford, an

²⁴Bury, *Naked Gospel*, 40.

²⁵Bury, *Naked Gospel*, 29–31.

²⁶Bury, *Naked Gospel*, 38.

²⁷University of Oxford, *Judicium & Decretum Universitatis Oxoniensis Latum in Convocatione Habita August 19, Anno Dom. 1690, Contra Propositiones Quasdam Impias & Haereticas, Excriptas & Citatas Ex Libello Quodam Infami Haud Ita Pridem Intra Dictam Academiam Perfide Tyis Mandato, Ac Divulgato, Cui Titulis Est, The Naked Gospel: Quae Praecipua Fidei Nostrae Mysteria in Ecclesia Catholica, Acspeciatim Anglicana, Semper Retenta & Conservata, Impugnant Ac Labafactant* (Oxford: Tho. Bennet, 1690); James Parkinson, *The Fire’s Continued at Oxford, or, The Decree of the Convocation for Burning the Naked Gospel, Considered in a Letter to a Person of Honour*. (London? 1690). Thomas Long has republished the judgement and decree of the University of Oxford, translating the Latin into English. Thomas Long, *An Answer to a Socinian Treatise Call’d, The Naked Gospel* (London: Freeman Collins, 1691), 3–4. John Redwood has provided additional background concerning the drama surrounding Bury, James Colmeary, and Jonathan Trelawny, Bishop of Exeter. John Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England, 1660–1750*, New ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 156–58.

anonymous author published *An Historical Vindication of the Naked Gospel: Recommended to the University of Oxford* in which the *Naked Gospel* was defended.²⁸ The anonymous author blamed the corruptions of the original gospel on the ceremonies and philosophy of the Pagans and credited Plato as the originator of the Trinity under the three principles of Being, Reason, and Spirit.²⁹

Bury, stung by his censure, published a second edition, in which he confessed that he would have been more circumspect in his previous edition, if he had known what he privately circulated would have been publicly disseminated.³⁰ In the second edition, Bury mentioned that he had expunged or modified comments that depreciated the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, though he insisted he would not alter the most objectionable matter found in his conclusion concerning charity.³¹ Further, he confessed that he did not knowingly reject any of the Anglican Church's Articles, and if he did reject any articles unknowingly, he assured his readers that he would recant such statements.³² Disturbed by the first and unconvinced by the second edition of Bury's *Naked Gospel*, Thomas Long (1621–1707) wrote against the *Naked Gospel*, pronouncing the book to be not a "*Scandalum Magnatum . . .* but a crime *Laesae Majestatis*, an overt attempt to overthrow the Crown and Kingdom of our Blessed Saviour."³³ Long warned his readers that the *Naked Gospel* condemned subscription to creeds, mocked the Council

²⁸[Jean Le Clerc?], *An Historical Vindication of The Naked Gospel: Recommended to the University of Oxford* (London, 1690). John Marshall suggested that Locke discussed Bury's work with James Tyrrell who then sent a copy of the *Naked Gospel* to Le Clerc who then commended the work in *Bibliothèque Universelle*. John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion, and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 389.

²⁹[Le Clerc?], *Historical Vindication of The Naked Gospel*, 7–9.

³⁰Arthur Bury, *Naked Gospel*, 2nd ed. (London: Nathanael Ranew, 1691), To the reader, ii.

³¹Bury, *Naked Gospel*, To the Reader, iii-vi.

³²Bury, *Naked Gospel*, To the Reader, vii.

³³Long, *Answer to a Socinian Treatise*, Epistle Dedicatory, i.

of Nicea and ridiculed the Athanasian Creed, and promoted the doctrines of Socinianism, not by open declaration but through crafty insinuations.³⁴ Unaware of Long's response at the time of writing and zealous for the honor of Jesus Christ, William Nicolls (1655–1727) published *An Answer to an Heretical Book Called the Naked Gospel*, refuting the notion that the doctrine of the Trinity has hindered the progress of Christianity while aiding Islam.³⁵ He repudiated the suggestion that the doctrine of the Trinity is contrary to the simplicity of the gospel and argued that belief in the Trinity does not require an unlearned person to comprehend all of the intricacies in dispute.³⁶

**William Sherlock: Three Infinite Minds
United by Mutual Consciousness
in One Divine Essence**

Provoked by the reading of *The Brief History of the Unitarians* as well as *The Brief Notes on the Athanasian Creed* and zealous to defend the honor of Christ, William Sherlock (1641?–1707), Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, countered Nye's argument by publishing *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God*.³⁷ Sherlock undertook to vindicate the "Great and

³⁴Long, *Answer to a Socinian Treatise*, Preface, iii-iv, 158.

³⁵William Nicholls, *An Answer to an Heretical Book Called The Naked Gospel: Which Was Condemned and Ordered to Be Publicly Burnt by the Convocation of the University of Oxford, Aug. 19. 1690. With Some Reflections on Dr. Bury's New Edition of That Book. To Which is Added a Short History of Socinianism* (London: Walter Kettilby, 1691).

³⁶Nicholls, *Answer to an Heretical Book Called The Naked Gospel*, An Answer to Preface, viii-x.

³⁷William Sherlock, *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God: Occasioned by the Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius, and the Brief History of the Unitarians, or Socinians, and Containing an Answer to Both*. (London: W. Rogers, 1690). At least two other persons responded the same year: J. Savage who considered Nye to be either a deist or atheist. J. Savage Gent, *An Answer to an Anonimous Pamphleteer, Who Impugns the Doctrine Contain'd in St. Athanasius His Creed* (London: B. E., 1690), 3, 5. The other was Isaac Marlow, Baptist layman and London jeweller who disputed with Benjamin Keach over the hymn-singing controversy in the late seventeenth century. Marlow indicated in his preface that he addressed his work to deal with the foundation of Socinian's objection to the Trinity. Isaac Marlow, *A Treatise of the Holy Trinunity [Sic]: In Two Parts. The First, Asserting the Deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, in the Unity of Essence with God the Father. The Second, in Defence of the Former, Containeth Answers to the Chiefest Objections*

Fundamental Mysteries” of Christianity—the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation—from the “pretended absurdities and contradictions” of atheists and heretics so that anyone could conceive of these truths as “possible and intelligible.”³⁸ Assured that he had established the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation as not being contrary to reason, he then endeavored to demonstrate that these two doctrines are the teaching of the Scriptures, testimony of the early church, and defensible from the Socinian apologist.³⁹ After expounding the nature of a contradiction, Sherlock briefly analyzed and defended the content of the Athanasian Creed concerning the Trinity in Unity and the Incarnation, and then vindicated the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Following his examination of the early Church Fathers and the Scholastics, Sherlock refuted the major arguments presented in the *Brief History*. While refuting the major arguments in the *Brief History*, the dean focused on the first letter’s arguments against the full deity of the Son and full divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Although Sherlock emphasized throughout his work the unity of the divine essence,⁴⁰ stated each person is equal with respect to their nature while maintaining subordination in relation to order,⁴¹ his explanation that the three persons are united in one undivided essence by mutual consciousness⁴² and his suggestion that the three persons are three infinite minds⁴³ or three infinite beings⁴⁴ provoked sharp criticism from

Made Against This Doctrine (London: Richard Baldwin, 1690). Nye thought that Marlow was responding to his two works. Stephen Nye, *The Acts of Great Athanasius, with Notes, by Way of Illustration; on His Creed: And Observations on the Learned Vindication of the Trinity by Dr. William Sherlock* (London, 1690), 20–21.

³⁸Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, Preface, i.

³⁹Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, Preface, i-ii.

⁴⁰Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 13, 14, 46–47, 68.

⁴¹Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 18.

⁴²Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 57–58, 67–68, 83, 87, 136.

⁴³ Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 50–51, 66–67, 73, 75, 84.

trinitarians and anti-trinitarians.⁴⁵

In Sherlock's reasoning, finite created spirits have self-consciousness. By self-consciousness, he meant finite creatures were aware of their own thoughts and passions, but not those of any other spirit. If, however, it was possible that three created spirits were aware of their own and the others self-consciousness, then Sherlock believed that they would be numerically one. For Sherlock, it is this self-consciousness that unites a spirit.⁴⁶ In an effort to explain how three persons can be numerically one essence, Sherlock conjectured that if we can assume there are "Three Infinite Minds and Persons, thus conscious of whatever is in each other, as they are of themselves, they can be but One numerical God."⁴⁷ He then proceeded to support his conjecture by asserting that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "Three Infinite Minds, really distinct from each other."⁴⁸ These "Three Infinite Minds or Persons," according to Sherlock, "are One God." Aware that some would consider his notion of mutual consciousness as novel, Sherlock contended that the substance of mutual consciousness can be found in the Ancient Fathers, especially in Augustine. While the Fathers did not use the exact same terminology, yet he claimed they meant the same thing by περιχώρησις.⁴⁹ Despite his best explanations and reasoning, Sherlock roused controversy with his novel concept of

⁴⁴Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 66.

⁴⁵Sherlock's work on the Trinity unsettled the views of Thomas Emlin (1663–1741), Irish Presbyterian divine, eventually leading him to abandon his trinitarian convictions and be deposed from office. Thomas Emlin, *A Collection of Tracts, Relating to the Deity, Worship, and Satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ... to Which is Prefix'd, A True Narrative of the Proceedings of the Dissenting Ministers of Dublin Against the Author, and of His Prosecution and Suffering* &C. (London: James Knapton, John Sprint, and John Osborn, 1719), xiv, xix.

⁴⁶Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 48–49.

⁴⁷Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 50.

⁴⁸Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 50.

⁴⁹Sherlock, *Vindication of the Trinity*, 100–28.

consciousness, a concept that would eventually lead to the rupture of the “fragile unity of the trinitarian party.”⁵⁰

One of the first works to reply to Sherlock was an anonymous work entitled, *A Vindication of the Unitarians, Against a Late Reverend Author on the Trinity*.⁵¹ H. John McLachlan has attributed this work to William Freke (1662–1744).⁵² Freke, an Arian, considered both Arians and Socinians to be united in a common battle for the truth of the doctrine of God. After rebuking Sherlock for his boastful attitude and uncharitable speech, Freke set out the teaching of the trinitarians and Arians and then stated three principles and made two observations.⁵³ He then disputed with Sherlock using reason, Scripture, and tradition, contending that the latter’s arguments are unconvincing or fallacious.

Nye controverted Sherlock’s *Vindication of the Trinity* with several writings over the next few years. Initially, Nye appended an answer to Sherlock in the *Brief Notes*⁵⁴ and followed this response with a more lengthy treatment in *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock's Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity*.⁵⁵ In the latter work, Nye asserted that the Dean relied too much on philosophy and too little on Scripture. He disagreed with Sherlock over the interpretation of John 10:30, 38, a key text used by

⁵⁰Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 110.

⁵¹[William Freke?], *A Vindication of the Unitarians, Against a Late Reverend Author on the Trinity* (London? 1690).

⁵²H. McLachlan, *The Story of a Nonconformist Library* (Manchester: University Press, 1923), 64. Freke was a mystical writer and barrister who at some point embraced Arianism. In 1709, he renounced Arianism and proclaimed himself as a “great Elijah” and “secretary to the Lord of hosts.” *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. “Freke, William”.

⁵³[Freke?], *Vindication of the Unitarians*, 5–6.

⁵⁴Nye, *Acts of Great Athanasius*, 17–31. The *Acts of Great Athansius* and the *Brief Notes on St. Athanasius’s Creed* were included in the first collection of Tracts published in 1691.

⁵⁵Nye, *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Vindication*.

Sherlock to demonstrate the essential unity of the Father and the Son. Nye insisted that Jesus did not mean to convey an essential unity of nature with the Father, when he said, “I and the Father are one,” but a “moral and relative unity.”⁵⁶ Convinced that when Scripture called Jesus God or Son of God, Nye argued that it meant the Father has sanctified him, and that meaning, he believed, was plain and obvious.⁵⁷ Since Jesus’ words in John 10:30, according to Nye, clearly mean that the Father has sanctified the Son, he determined that this plain meaning should govern how one should interpret all the other Scripture passages that designate Christ as God or Son of God. “Therefore, I would have the author to know that since this passage [i.e. John 10:30–38] contains in a most clear and exact way, the true foundation upon which is grounded the title of *Son of God*, which Christ ascribes to himself; I may lawfully make use of it to explain any other passage, wherein Christ is stiled *God*, or *Son of God*” (emphasis original).⁵⁸ Furthermore, Nye chided Sherlock for using Cartesian philosophy in his discussion of self and mutual consciousness.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the same year that Nye initially replied to Sherlock’s *Vindication of the Trinity*, an anonymous author issued a detailed and thorough rebuttal to Sherlock entitled *A Defence of the Brief History of the Unitarians, Against Dr. Sherlock’s Answer in His Vindication of the Holy Trinity*.⁶⁰ The anonymous author argued that he cannot believe the doctrine of the Trinity because it contradicts reason, disagrees with Scripture, and dissents with tradition.⁶¹ He replied to all eleven of Sherlock’s responses to the *Brief*

⁵⁶Nye, *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Vindication*, 4.

⁵⁷Nye, *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Vindication*, 4.

⁵⁸Nye, *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Vindication*, 6.

⁵⁹Nye, *Some Thoughts Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Vindication*, 8.

⁶⁰[Peter Allix], *A Defence of the Brief History of the Unitarians, Against Dr. Sherlock’s Answer in His Vindication of the Holy Trinity* (London, 1691).

⁶¹[Allix], *Defence of the Brief History*, 4–5.

History's arguments for the deity of the Son and five arguments for the deity of the Holy Spirit. In his arguments against the deity of the Son, the unknown writer devoted considerable effort to refute the trinitarian understanding of Colossians 1:15–18 because the passage was considered important to the trinitarian's argument.⁶² Concluding his *Defence of the Brief History*, the author rebutted four charges against the Socinianism. One of the important observations made by the author was the logical outworking of Sherlock's three infinite minds. He reasoned that if Sherlock insisted that the three persons are three infinite minds, three infinite beings, then he cannot avoid espousing tritheism.⁶³

While other authors opposed Sherlock, one writer identified himself as Melancholy Stander-by and who was probably Edward Wetenhall, lamented in 1691 that such controversy had taken place over the doctrine of the Trinity. He pleaded for forbearance and peace, arguing that the controversy at present was “most unreasonable,” “most dangerous,” and “most unseasonable.”⁶⁴

Robert South: Three Infinite Minds Necessarily Infers Three Gods

The most trenchant and mordant critique of Dean Sherlock's *Vindication of the Trinity* appeared in the anonymous publication *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book, Entitled A Vindication of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity*.⁶⁵ The author of

⁶²[Allix], *Defence of the Brief History*, 13–17.

⁶³[Allix], *Defence of the Brief History*, 5.

⁶⁴[Edward Wetenhall?], *An Earnest and Compassionate Suit for Forbearance to the Late Learned Writers of Some Controversies at Present* (London: Nath. Ranew, 1691). Sherlock responded to this with *An Apology for Writing Against Socinians, in Defence of the Doctrines of the Holy Trinity and Incarnation: In Answer to a Late Earnest and Compassionate Suit for Forbearance to the Learned Writers of Some Controversies at Present* (London: Will. Rogers, 1693). This work was responded to by Edward Wetenhall, *The Antapology of the Melancholy Stander-by: In Answer to the Dean of St. Paul's Late Book, Falsly Stiled, "An Apology for Writing Against the Socinians," Etc.* (1693).

⁶⁵Robert South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book, Entitled A Vindication of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity, &c.: Together with a More Necessary Vindication of That Sacred and*

Animadversions has been recognized to be Robert South (1634–1716), Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. South railed against the Dean, pilloried his writings, and demolished Sherlock’s arguments in his *Vindication of the Trinity* and *Apology for Writing Against Socinians*⁶⁶ so that one writer remarked that “the Dean’s hypothesis was to be dissected, and the operator [South] did not spare the knife.”⁶⁷

South assailed Sherlock’s work, not merely because he wanted to defend the Trinity, but there was something more—personal animus. Sherlock and South had communicated in at least six letters regarding the lawfulness of taking oaths.⁶⁸ Originally, Sherlock had communicated to South that he would not take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, but then he changed his mind and took the oath.⁶⁹ Despite Sherlock’s effort to persuade South, the latter abjured his oath to William and Mary. Consequently, South felt betrayed when Sherlock took the oath and capitalized upon the opportunity to repay his friend with unsparing rancor.⁷⁰

In the preface to *Animadversions*, South accused Sherlock of betrayal for his two books: *A Discourse Concerning the Knowledge of Jesus Christ* (1674) and *Vindication of the Trinity*.⁷¹ South said that he had felt compelled to reply after three

Prime Article of the Christian Faith from His New Notions, and False Explications of It, 2nd ed. (London: Randal Taylor, 1693). See also Gerard Reedy, *Robert South, (1634–1716): An Introduction to His Life and Sermons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 137–42.

⁶⁶Sherlock, *Apology for Writing Against Socinians*.

⁶⁷Robert Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography, or, Sketches of the Lives and Writings of Distinguished Antitrinitarians* (London: E.T. Whitfield, 1850), 1:258.

⁶⁸W. M. T. Dodds, “Robert South and William Sherlock: Some Unpublished Letters,” *The Modern Language Review* 39, no. 3 (1944): 215.

⁶⁹Dodds, “Robert South and William Sherlock: Some Unpublished Letters,” 215–17, 222.

⁷⁰One writer commented that non-juror divines considered Sherlock as a “backslider and an apostate.” Robert South, *Tritheism Charged Upon Dr. Sherlock’s New Notion of the Trinity and the Charge Made Good: In an Answer to the Defense of the Said Notion Against the Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock’s Book, Entitled, A Vindication of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity* (London: John Whitlock, 1695), 2.

years of silence by the Church of England.⁷² He charged Sherlock with teaching a novel idea of three infinite minds that by necessary inference espoused three Gods.⁷³ He was incensed that Sherlock would assert that to teach any other notion than three infinite minds is heretical and nonsense.⁷⁴ Convinced that if Sherlock had advanced his notion of three persons are three infinite minds by mutual consciousness in the early church, South believed that Sherlock's writings would have been condemned.⁷⁵ Therefore, South declared that his purpose in writing was to show that the doctrine of the Trinity propounded by Sherlock was a theological novelty in the Church of England.⁷⁶

At the heart of the controversy between the two divines within the Church of England was whether self consciousness is the "formal reason of personality" and whether mutual consciousness unites the three persons in one essence. Prior to the examination of the central issue between the two, South defined his key terms: being, substance, mode of being, essence, existence, nature, form, subsistence, and personality.⁷⁷ He then accused Sherlock of laying aside established terms about the divine nature and persons, such as essence, substance, subsistence, nature, because they allegedly produced wrong ideas in the minds of persons.⁷⁸ Therefore, Sherlock advocated that the traditional trinitarian vocabulary should be replaced with more suitable terms. South, however, disagreed with Sherlock's alternative vocabulary (truth, wisdom, goodness, and power),

⁷¹South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, i-ii.

⁷²South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, ii.

⁷³South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, ii.

⁷⁴South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, ii.

⁷⁵South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, v.

⁷⁶Sherlock, *Apology for Writing Against Socinians*, xix.

⁷⁷South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 30-37.

⁷⁸South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 28.

arguing that such words present no less challenge than the established terms.⁷⁹ In fact, South contended that the established terms better express and explain deity than Sherlock's alternatives.⁸⁰ South concluded the chapter by presenting other reasons that produced difficulties in conceiving of the deity and divine persons: (1) the spirituality of the divine nature, (2) infinity of the divine nature, and (3) uniqueness of any example to the Trinity in Unity.⁸¹

Moreover, South rejected Sherlock's notion that self-consciousness is what constitutes a person in finite persons. He argued that since self-consciousness must presuppose personality, the former cannot be the reason for the latter.⁸² Further, if self-consciousness is the "formal reason of personality," and the human nature of Christ is aware of its own thoughts, reasoning, and affection, then it follows that the human nature of Christ is a person, but that is not true.⁸³ For if that is true, then both the human nature of Christ and divine nature had distinct self-consciousnesses, which leads to the idea of there being two persons, which is the error of Nestorius. The human nature of Christ is not a person. There is only one person in Christ not two. Therefore, self-consciousness cannot be the formal reason of personality. South also remarked that Sherlock's borrowed his notion of self-consciousness from Decartes.⁸⁴

South refuted the idea that self-consciousness is the "formal reason of personality" in the three divine persons⁸⁵ and denied that mutual consciousness is what

⁷⁹South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 47–49.

⁸⁰South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 49–54.

⁸¹South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 54–56.

⁸²South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 71.

⁸³South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 72.

⁸⁴South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 88.

⁸⁵South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 91.

unites the three persons in one essence.⁸⁶ South considered omniscience as a more suitable explanation than mutual consciousness for the intimate, comprehensive, infinite knowledge of each divine person to himself and the others. “Every Person in the Trinity, by one and the same act of omniscience, knows all the internal acts, motions, and relations proper both to himself and to the other two persons besides.”⁸⁷

Further, South denied the assertion that the three persons of the Godhead are equivalent to “Three distinct Infinite Minds or Three distinct Infinite Spirits.”⁸⁸ Therefore, he accused Sherlock of espousing by inference tritheism, though the former believed the latter did it out of ignorance.⁸⁹ South argued that “three distinct infinite minds” are “three distinct infinite absolute beings, natures, or substances,” which is “three Gods.”⁹⁰ South denied that the notion of self-consciousness can be found in the writings of the Fathers and medieval theologians and then expounded the doctrine of the Trinity that had been received in the councils, creeds, Fathers, medieval theologians, and others.

In a private letter to a friend, Gilbert Burnet remarked that he hoped Sherlock would not reply to South, fearing that Sherlock would provoke a “bloody warre . . . to the no small diversion of the profane and of the Socinians.”⁹¹ Sherlock, however, did reply to South by publishing *A Defence of Dr. Sherlock's Notion of a Trinity in Unity*⁹² and in the

⁸⁶South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 106–13.

⁸⁷South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 112.

⁸⁸South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 119.

⁸⁹South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 119.

⁹⁰South, *Animadversions Upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, 121–22.

⁹¹Cited in Dodds, “Robert South and William Sherlock: Some Unpublished Letters,” 215.

⁹²William Sherlock, *A Defence of Dr. Sherlock's Notion of a Trinity in Unity: In Answer to the Animadversions Upon His Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity. With a Post-Script Relating to the Calm Discourse of a Trinity in the Godhead* (London: W. Rogers, 1694).

postscript also replied to the Dissenting Minister John Howe's *A Calm and Sober Enquiry Concerning the Possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead*.⁹³ South then responded to Sherlock's *Defence of Dr. Sherlock's Notion of a Trinity in Unity* by charging him with Tritheism in his work, *Tritheism Charged Upon Dr. Sherlock's New Notion of the Trinity and the Charge Made Good*.⁹⁴

John Wallis: The Possibility of “Three Somewhats” being One God

Two years before South pilloried Sherlock in print, and eight days before the University of Oxford prepared to convene and burn the *Naked Gospel*, John Wallis (1616–1703), Professor of Geometry at Oxford and former non-voting scribe at the Westminster Assembly,⁹⁵ wrote the first of his eight letters, arguing for the possibility that three persons may be one, three in one regard and one in another.⁹⁶ In the *Brief History*, Nye had protested the possibility that three persons may be one God because he believed it was inconsistent, impossible, and illogical.⁹⁷ Perceiving that Nye's protest was

⁹³John Howe, *A Calm and Sober Enquiry Concerning the Possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1694).

⁹⁴South, *Tritheism Charged Upon Dr. Sherlock's New Notion*. On November 25, 1695 Sherlock's notion of three distinct infinite minds or spirits and three individual substances were deemed “false, impious, and heretical” by a Decree of the University of Oxford. University of Oxford, *An Account of the Decree of the University of Oxford, Against Some Heretical Tenets: At a Meeting of Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and the Heads of Colledges and Halls, in the University of Oxford, the 25th of November, 1695* (London: J. Whitlock, 1695).

⁹⁵Wallis became a non-voting scribe in 1643 and remained until 1649. Chad Van Dixhoorn, ed., *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643–1653* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1:142–43.

⁹⁶For others who discerned the possibility that three persons may be one God was the major objection of the Socinians, see Howe, *A Calm and Sober Enquiry Concerning the Possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead*, 1. For chronology and analysis of Wallis's letters, see Jason Michael Rampelt, “Three Persons in One Man: John Wallis on the Trinity,” (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2002), 42–66, 68–107.

⁹⁷Nye, *Brief History of the Unitarians*, 24.

the “Socinians [*sic*] great objection” to the doctrine of the Trinity,⁹⁸ Wallis argued one main point throughout his letters: that it is not contradictory or inconsistent to natural reason to affirm that “*three Somewhats (which we call Persons) may be One God.*”⁹⁹

To support his point that something may be three in one regard and one in another and therefore it is reasonable to affirm three persons and one God, Wallis considered analogies from the material and immaterial realm. From the material realm, he used the analogy of a cube. He pointed out that the cube has dimensions of length, breadth, and height.¹⁰⁰ Each dimension, he remarked, is distinct from one other, and yet they are united as one cube.¹⁰¹ He then theorized that if each of the three dimensions of the cube were infinite, remaining distinct from each other, there would still be one cube, though it be infinite.¹⁰² He reminded his reader that infinite dimensions of a cube must be equal to one another, for otherwise there would be no cube, and that there can be no more or less than three dimensions, if it were to be a cube.¹⁰³ Therefore, Wallis reasoned from his analogy of a cube that it is possible for something in the material realm to be three in one respect and one in another. Furthermore, from the immaterial realm, he considered the analogy of a spiritual being, for example, a human soul with knowledge and power to act. He explained that while being, knowledge, and action are distinct, they still exist in

⁹⁸John Wallis, *An Explication and Vindication of the Athanasian Creed: In a Third Letter, Pursuant of Two Former, Concerning the Sacred Trinity: Together with a Postscript, in Answer to Another Letter* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1691), 38.

⁹⁹John Wallis, *A Fourth Letter Concerning the Sacred Trinity: In Reply to What is Entitled An Answer to Dr. Wallis's Three Letters* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1691), 14. For repeated statements concerning the central point argued in his letters, see John Wallis, *A Sixth Letter, Concerning the Sacred Trinity: In Answer to a Book Entitled, Observations on the Four Letters* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1691), 1; Wallis, *Fourth Letter*, 8–9, 16, 18–20.

¹⁰⁰John Wallis, *The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, Briefly Explained in a Letter to a Friend* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1690), 11–15.

¹⁰¹Wallis, *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: First Letter*, 11–15.

¹⁰²Wallis, *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: First Letter*, 12.

¹⁰³Wallis, *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: First Letter*, 12–13.

one and the same human soul.¹⁰⁴ Notwithstanding the use of various analogies to support his claim that three may be one, Wallis did acknowledge that no analogy was sufficient to express the distinction of persons and unity of essence.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, Wallis's letters provoked responses, especially concerning his cube analogy.

The first to reply to Wallis and detect some problems with his cube analogy was a person identified as W.J., a person generally supportive of the professor's first letter. W.J. observed that while each person of the Godhead is called God, the same is not true of each dimension of the cube, for each dimension of a cube is not called a cube and, therefore, he noted there is a significant problem with the comparison.¹⁰⁶ This was followed with a response from Nye in *Doctor Wallis's Letter Touching the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity*.¹⁰⁷ After expressing disappointment that Wallis blackened the eye of Socinians by suggesting that they rejected the plain meaning of Scripture in order to exalt reason, Nye remarked that his opponent mentioned only two texts and then lampooned Wallis's cube analogy.¹⁰⁸ An anonymous author, who is probably William Freke,¹⁰⁹ then answered the first three letters, asserting that the tri-personality of God is a denial of the

¹⁰⁴Wallis, *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: First Letter*, 15–18.

¹⁰⁵Wallis, *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: First Letter*, 18.

¹⁰⁶John Wallis, *A Second Letter Concerning the Holy Trinity: Pursuant to the Former from the Same Hand: Occasioned by a Letter There Inserted from One Unknown* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1691), 5.

¹⁰⁷Stephen Nye, *Doctor Wallis's Letter Touching the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: Answer'd by His Friend* (London, 1691). Nye's *Letter* was included in the *First Collection of Tracts* published by Thomas Firmin under the title of *The Faith of One God*.

¹⁰⁸Nye, *Doctor Wallis's Letter Touching the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity*, 2, 4, 8.

¹⁰⁹Rampelt suggested three reasons to believe that the *Observations of the Four Letters of Dr. John Wallis* was written by Freke rather than Nye. Two of Rampelt's reasons appear more convincing: (1) Reference is made to a previous letter to Wallis in *William Freke, The Arrian's [sic] Vindication of Himself, Against Dr. Wallis's Fourth Letter on the Trinity* ([London?], 1691), 1; and (2) *Observations of the Four Letters of Dr. John Wallis* is omitted in Firmin's *First Collection of Tracts*, an unusual omission given the other works of Nye were included in the *First Collection of Tracts*. See Rampelt, "Three Persons in One Man," 48.

first commandment.¹¹⁰ Freke also rejected the various analogies, especially the cube analogy and represented Wallis as a tritheist.¹¹¹ Both Freke and Nye then replied to Wallis's fourth letter. The former accused Wallis of sophistry and artifice.¹¹² The latter, after conceding Wallis's main point of the possibility that three may be one, evaluated the cube analogy, ridiculed it, and suggested that Wallis was a Sabellian or Socinian.¹¹³

Edward Stillingfleet: Plea for Unity Among the Trinitarian Party

By 1695, the trinitarian crisis reached its nadir. Sherlock and South had brawled in print against one another. Nye had pitted Sherlock, South, and Wallis against one another and then called Sherlock a tritheist, South a Socinian, and Wallis a Sabellian.¹¹⁴ Firmin had broadcasted anti-trinitarianism throughout the land by publishing a few collections of tracts.¹¹⁵ With temerity, Freke sent his anti-trinitarian tract, *A Dialogue by Way of Question and Answer Concerning the Deity*, to both houses of Parliament, which aroused an uproar that led to the burning of Freke's work.¹¹⁶ To

¹¹⁰[William Freke], *An Answer to Dr. Wallis's Three Letters Concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity* ([London?], 1691), 2–3.

¹¹¹[Freke], *An Answer to Dr. Wallis's Three Letters*, 4–8.

¹¹²William Freke, *Arrian's [sic] Vindication of Himself*.

¹¹³Nye, *Observations on the Four Letters of Dr. John Wallis*, 4, 10.

¹¹⁴Nye, *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity: By Dr. Wallis, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. S---Th, Dr. Cudworth, and Mr. Hooker*, 32.

¹¹⁵*The Faith of One God*. This first collection consisted of nine tracts. *A Second Collection of Tracts: Proving the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only True God: And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Him Whom the Father Sanctified and Sent, Raised from the Dead and Exalted: And Disproving the Doctrine of Three Almighty and Equal Persons, Spirits, Modes, Subsistences, or Somewhats in God, and of the Incarnation. Of Which Tracts, the Following Pages Give the Titles* (London, 1692–93). The second collection contained ten tracts.

¹¹⁶House of Commons Journal, December 11, 1693, vol. 11, p. 27, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=38918> (accessed May 15, 2014); House of Lords Journal, January 3, 1694, vol. 15, p. 332, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11977> (accessed May 15, 2014); William Freke, *A Dialogue by Way of Question and Answer Concerning the Deity All the Responses Being Taken Verbatim Out of the Scriptures* ([London?], 1693).

preserve peace and unity in the Church of England, William III directed the archbishops and bishops to curb the schism among the clergy.¹¹⁷ Among the bishops that received directives from the king was the learned Edward Stillingfleet (1635–99), Bishop of Worcester.¹¹⁸ Almost two years after he received directions from the king, Stillingfleet felt compelled to publish a work entitled, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, in which he not only defended the orthodox doctrine of Trinity, but he also entreated the trinitarian party to unite.

While Stillingfleet expressed three primary purposes for publishing his *Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, he stated that the main purpose of his preface was to unite the trinitarian party.¹¹⁹ To persuade trinitarians to unite, Stillingfleet argued that they all agreed in the substance of the doctrine. First, he declared that they all affirmed there are three distinct persons who are one God.¹²⁰ Second, they all agreed this one God is undivided in his essence.¹²¹ Third, they all accepted that the divine essence is “communicated from the Father to the Son, and from both to the holy Spirit” so that they cannot be accused of Sabellianism.¹²² Since trinitarians all agreed on these

¹¹⁷William III, *Directions to Our Arch-Bishops and Bishops*.

¹¹⁸Stillingfleet’s learned capabilities were attested to by two of his opponents: Nye and Locke. Nye acknowledged that Stillingfleet possessed all the gifts “for which an adversary may be either feared, or revered. He understands perfectly the Doctrine of the Church; and the points in question.” Nye, *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 4. Likewise, John Locke confessed Stillingfleet to be a “great Authority in the Learned world.” John Locke, *Mr. Locke’s Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester’s Answer to His Letter: Concerning Some Passages Relating to Mr. Locke’s Essay of Humane Understanding, in a Late Discourse of His Lordships, in Vindication of the Trinity* (London: A. and J. Churchill and Edw. Castle, 1697), 3.

¹¹⁹Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, vi-vii. The three primary purposes of the Stillingfleet’s *Vindication* was (1) to reaffirm that the teaching of the Athanasian Creed is not contradictory, (2) to show that the doctrine of the Established Church is consistent with the early church, and (3) to demonstrate that there is no logical reason to reject the doctrine of the Trinity.

¹²⁰Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, xxvi.

¹²¹Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, xxvi.

¹²²Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, xxvi.

three points, Stillingfleet exhorted the trinitarians not only to refrain from introducing novel terms but also to adhere to theological words accepted by the universal church and expressed in the creeds.¹²³ Further, because all trinitarians agreed how the three persons are united in one divine nature is incomprehensible, he admonished all persons to relent from disputes of things above reason and instead defend what is clearly revealed in Scripture.¹²⁴

Whereas Stillingfleet's main purpose in his preface was to unite the trinitarian party, he thought it also necessary to blow the trumpet and warn of the dangerous consequences of John Locke's (1632–1704) "way of ideas."¹²⁵ Although Locke did not intend his notion of ideas to be applied to theology as John Toland had done in *Christianity Not Mystrious*, Stillingfleet believed that Locke's ideas subverted the doctrine of the Trinity. He explained that Locke insisted that the foundation of all knowledge that people possess is from "simple ideas" received by sensation or reflection.¹²⁶ Therefore, on this foundation of knowledge, Stillingfleet reasoned that it is impossible to have a notion of any substance, even a spiritual substance, since it cannot be received by sensation or reflection. Due to the intellectual stature of Stillingfleet, Locke replied with a 227-page letter in January 1697, to which Stillingfleet replied in April of the same year.¹²⁷ Locke then followed up with another letter, which Stillingfleet

¹²³Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, xxxi.

¹²⁴Stillingfleet, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, xlv.

¹²⁵For a more thorough examination of Stillingfleet and Locke, see Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century*, 143–62.

¹²⁶Edward Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Answer to Mr. Locke's Letter: Concerning Some Passages Relating to His Essay of Humane Understanding, Mention'd in the Late Discourse in Vindication of the Trinity. With a Postscript in Answer to Some Reflections Made on That Treatise in a Late Socinian Pamphlet* (London: Henry Mortlock, 1697), 19–20.

¹²⁷John Locke, *A Letter to the Right Reverend Edward L^d Bishop of Worcester* (London: A. and J. Churchill and E. Castle, 1697); Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Answer to Mr. Locke's Letter: Concerning Some Passages Relating to His Essay of Humane Understanding, Mention'd in the Late Discourse in Vindication of the Trinity. With a Postscript in Answer to Some Reflections Made on That*

answered and shortly thereafter the bishop of Worcester exited from the dispute.¹²⁸ Locke replied once more with a 452-page letter.¹²⁹

Towards the end of the last decade in the seventeenth century and throughout the first decade of the eighteenth century, the trinitarian controversy in many ways abated.¹³⁰ While it cannot be denied that the presses continued to publish trinitarian and non-trinitarian tracts, the controversy, however, did not intensify. Several factors contributed to the abatement of the controversy. First, the death of Firmin on December 20, 1697, was a significant loss to the Socinian party, for as Gilbert Burnet commented, “Firmin’s death put a stop to the printing and spreading of Socinian books.”¹³¹ Consequently, with no financial support from Firmin, Nye significantly reduced his publications. During the first ten years of the controversy, Nye published ten works, but after the death of Firmin, he published less than five over the next ten years.¹³² Nye even counseled Unitarians to cease their disputing, which may have diminished further anti-

Treatise in a Late Socinian Pamphlet.

¹²⁸Locke, *Mr. Locke’s Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester’s Answer to His Letter: Concerning Some Passages Relating to Mr. Locke’s Essay of Humane Understanding, in a Late Discourse of His Lordships, in Vindication of the Trinity*; Edward Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester’s Answer to Mr. Locke’s Second Letter; Wherein His Notion of Ideas is Prov’d to Be Inconsistent with Itself and with the Articles of the Christian Faith*. (London: Henry Mortlock, 1698).

¹²⁹John Locke, *Mr. Locke’s Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester’s Answer to His Second Letter: Wherein, Besides Other Incident Matters* (London: A. and J. Churchill and C. Castle, 1699).

¹³⁰Earl Wilbur acknowledged in his work that by 1697 the Trinitarian controversy “had pretty well subsided,” Wilbur, *History of Unitarianism*, 2:236.

¹³¹Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1823), 4:382.

¹³²The works on the Trinity that are attributed and published by Nye after the death of Firmin are as follows: Stephen Nye, *The Grounds and Occasions of the Controversy Concerning the Unity of God &c.: The Methods by Which It Has Been Managed, and the Means to Compose It* (London: E. Whitlock, 1698); Stephen Nye, *The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the Manner of Our Saviour’s Divinity; as They Are Held in the Catholic Church, and the Church of England* (London: Andrew Bell, 1701); Stephen Nye, *Institutions, Concerning the Holy Trinity, and the Manner of Our Saviour’s Divinity* (London: J. Nutt, 1703).

trinitarian tracts.¹³³ Second, two months after the death of Firmin, the House of Commons entreated William III to enact legislation to quash any publications that denied the Trinity or any other fundamental tenets of the Christian faith. Third, when Thomas Aikenhead (1678?–97) was executed for blasphemy in Scotland, news of such action would have probably deterred Socinians from publishing anti-trinitarian literature, especially when the Blasphemy Act in England was enacted the following year.

The first phase of the trinitarian crisis erupted with Nye’s publication of the *Brief History* and was inflamed by the internal division among the trinitarians in the Established Church. Nye exploited such divisions, but after the death of Firmin, the controversy subsided until Samuel Clarke inaugurated the second phase of the controversy.

The Trinitarian Crisis: The Second Phase (1712–1729)

While the first phase of the trinitarian crisis was sparked and fueled predominantly by the Socinians Nye and Firmin, the second phase of the trinitarian crisis was revived and inflamed primarily by Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), who was branded as an “Arian.” Writing in 1712, John Edwards (1637–1716), the English Calvinist divine, commented on the renewal of the trinitarian controversy:

It is now about twenty years since the disputes concerning the *Trinity* were started among us, occasion’d by some Foreign and English *Socinians* who called themselves *Unitarians*. Several of our Divines opposed the attempts of these Men. . . . But now our Elephants are turn’d against our selves: Some of our own Body are gone over to the Enemy, and thereby the State of the Religious War is wretchedly alter’d. Mr. Whiston and Dr. Clarke, have reviv’d those Heretical Opinions.¹³⁴

Despite the contribution of William Whiston (1667–1752) to the second phase of the

¹³³Nye, *Grounds and Occasions of the Controversy*, 53.

¹³⁴John Edwards, *Some Animadversions on Dr. Clark’s Scripture-Doctrine, (as He Stiles It) of the Trinity* (London: For the author, 1712), 3.

trinitarian controversy, Clarke had much more influence upon the ensuing controversy over the next two decades.

Samuel Clarke: New Scheme

Shortly before Clarke published his influential work on the Trinity, Whiston, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge, was deposed from his chair in 1710 for his Arian views. The following year, Whiston confirmed his Arian views by publishing *Primitive Christianity Revived*.¹³⁵ Clarke, Rector of St. James, Westminster, then published *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1712, which earned him the title of an Arian by his opponents.¹³⁶ Clarke arranged his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* into three parts. In the first part, he claimed to have evaluated every New Testament passage—1,251 passages in all—that addressed the doctrine of the Trinity. In the second part, Clarke deduced fifty-five propositions from the 1,251 passages and then illustrated these propositions with the writings from the early Church Fathers, claiming their support for his new scheme. He concluded the final part of his work by examining the Church's liturgy, in which he claimed support for his view of the Trinity, and afterwards addressed some of the principal Scripture passages that appeared to contradict his teaching.

Although many opponents branded Clarke's teaching as Arianism, he denied it.¹³⁷ He remarked that Arianism, as well as tritheism, Sabellianism, and Socinianism, had

¹³⁵William Whiston, *Primitive Christianity Revived*, vol. 4 (London: Privately published, 1711).

¹³⁶Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: James Knapton, 1712). Pfizenmaier has argued that Clarke should not be viewed as an Arian but someone that maintained a *homoiousion* position akin to the early church and consequently should not be viewed as a heretic. Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997).

¹³⁷Edwards, *Some Animadversions on Dr. Clark's Scripture-Doctrine*, 27, 31, 42; Francis Gastrell, *Remarks Upon Dr. Clark's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: W. B., 1714), 3; Daniel Waterland, *A Vindication of Christ's Divinity: Being a Defense of Some Queries Relating to Dr. Clarke's Scheme of the H. Trinity, in Answer to a Clergyman in the Country* (Cambridge: Corn. Crownfield,

led “to the great disparagement of Christianity, puzzled the plain and practical doctrine of Scripture, with endless speculative disputes.”¹³⁸ Furthermore, he believed that he denied the two fundamental historical tenets of Arius, by condemning those that say the Son was “made out of nothing,” and those that maintain “there was a time when the Son was not.”¹³⁹ Since Clarke believed he was not an Arian, what then did he teach that led to such charges? Clarke taught that the Father alone is supreme and self-existent.¹⁴⁰ He denied the Son is self-existent because he “derives his being or essence and all his attributes from the Father.”¹⁴¹ Clarke did not expound on the meaning of the Son’s derivation from the Father, commenting that the Scriptures are silent, but he did reject those that say the Son was “*made out of nothing*,” and those that affirm the Son is “the *self-existent substance*” (emphasis original).¹⁴² Acknowledging the Son is a real person that pre-existed with the Father,¹⁴³ Clarke nevertheless affirmed the Son to be subordinate to the Father in essence.¹⁴⁴ While Clarke admitted that Scripture sometimes designates the Son as God, he denied that it is due to his metaphysical nature or essence but due to his divine power and authority derived from the Father, which is incomprehensible.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Clarke asserted that the Spirit is not self-existent but “derives his being from

1719), 212–13.

¹³⁸Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, xxvii.

¹³⁹Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 270–71, 276–79.

¹⁴⁰Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 243.

¹⁴¹Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 270. Clarke also believed that to affirm the Son’s self-existence destroyed the unity of God and thus led to polytheism. Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 86.

¹⁴²Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 276–79.

¹⁴³Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 279, 287.

¹⁴⁴Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 296.

¹⁴⁵Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 86, 296.

the Father (by the Son)”¹⁴⁶ and is subordinate to the Father and to the Son.¹⁴⁷ He insisted that the term God in Scripture is never used to denote more than one person.¹⁴⁸ According to Clarke, the term God always referred either to the Father or to the Son, but never to both. Therefore, it should be no surprise, given Clarke’s view of the Son, that he denied the Son received worship in his own person because of his nature as being fully God.¹⁴⁹ He wrote, “Honor is due not to the abstract metaphysical nature, essence, or substance but to the Person intelligent, and as having dignity, power, authority, and goodness.”¹⁵⁰ He commented that the Son received worship after his session at the right hand of the Father because of his mediatorial work.¹⁵¹

In the same year Clarke published his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, rebuttals streamed from the press.¹⁵² The number of rebuttals were voluminous and only a few therefore will be selected.¹⁵³ An anonymous author published *An Essay Towards an Impartial Account of the Holy Trinity and the Deity of our Saviour as Contained in the Old Testament*, in which he challenged Clarke’s omission of Old Testament texts.¹⁵⁴ John

¹⁴⁶Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 289.

¹⁴⁷Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 349–52.

¹⁴⁸Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 304.

¹⁴⁹Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 367.

¹⁵⁰Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 373.

¹⁵¹Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 368.

¹⁵²For a fine summary of the various responses to Clarke, see Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy*, 179–96.

¹⁵³For principal works, see [Thomas Herne?], *An Account of All the Considerable Books and Pamphlets That Have Been Wrote on Either Side in the Controversy Concerning the Trinity, Since the Year MDCCXII. In Which is Also Contained an Account of the Pamphlets Writ This Last Year on Each Side by the Dissenters, to the End of the Year, MDCCXIX* (London: James Knapton, 1720).

¹⁵⁴*An Essay Towards an Impartial Account of the Holy Trinity and the Deity of Our Saviour as Contained in the Old Testament. In Which Are Some Remarks on the Scripture Account Lately Publish’d by Dr. Clark* (London: H. Clements, 1712).

Edwards complained in his *Some Animadversions on Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine* that Clarke misquoted the Fathers, twisted the Scriptures, and mangled human reason.¹⁵⁵ Edwards followed up his initial *Animadversions* to Clarke with *A Supplement to the Animadversions* and *Some Brief Critical Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Last Papers*.¹⁵⁶ James Knight (1672–1735) involved himself in the controversy by anonymously publishing the *True Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Eucharist, and the Satisfaction Made for Us by Our Lord Jesus Christ*, a work which Edward Wells (1667–1727) deemed a sufficient response to Clarke.¹⁵⁷ Despite the several rebuttals, which Clarke judged as from “unintelligible writers,” it was Wells that provoked the first response from the rector of St. James.¹⁵⁸ But the most formidable response to Clarke came from the pen of Daniel Waterland, whose response will be examined below. Before Clarke duelled with Waterland, however, he had to answer the Lower House of Convocation.

On June 2, 1714, the Lower House of Convocation of the Church of England complained to the Upper House concerning Clarke's views espoused in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*. The Lower House asserted that Clarke's book contained propositions that contradicted the doctrine of their church, troubled the mind of worshippers, and misrepresented the teachings of the Book of Common Prayer and Thirty-nine Articles.¹⁵⁹ They implored the Upper House to render judgment in order to

¹⁵⁵Edwards, *Some Animadversions on Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine*.

¹⁵⁶John Edwards, *A Supplement to the Animadversions on Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity. With a Defence of the Liturgy of Our Church Against Dr. Clarke's Misrepresentations of Several Passages in It*. (London, 1713); John Edwards, *Some Brief Critical Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Last Papers, Which Are His Reply to Mr. Nelson, and an Anonymous Writer, and the Author of Some Considerations* (London: Ferdinando Burleigh, 1714).

¹⁵⁷Edward Wells, *Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Introduction to His Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (Oxford: Anthony Peisley, 1713), ii.

¹⁵⁸Samuel Clarke, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr Wells, Rector of Cotesbach in Leicestershire. In Answer to His Remarks, &C* (London: James Knapton, 1714), 3.

¹⁵⁹*An Apology for Dr. Clarke. Containing an Account of the Late Proceedings in Convocation Upon His Writings Concerning the Trinity. Being a Collection of Several Original Papers, Some of Which*

prevent further harm and remove their reproach.¹⁶⁰ Convinced after reading Clarke's explanation against the charges and satisfied by his promise not to publish or preach on the subject, the Upper House acquitted Clarke of any fault.¹⁶¹ The Lower House, however, disagreed and declared by resolution that the Bishops had failed to render a just verdict.¹⁶²

Salter's Hall Debate: Subscription or Non-Subscription

Whereas the first phase of the trinitarian crisis primarily vexed the Established Church,¹⁶³ after the publication of Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, Dissenters became embroiled in the crisis by dividing over subscription to a trinitarian confession. This division over subscription primarily originated because of James Peirce (1674?–1726), a Presbyterian minister in Exeter. Twelve months after Clarke published his work, Peirce had purchased and read the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*.¹⁶⁴ Although he

Never Before Published (London: E. Burleigh, 1714), 10. For specific passages later delivered to the Upper House, see *Apology for Dr. Clarke*, 18–23.

¹⁶⁰*Apology for Dr. Clarke*, 12.

¹⁶¹*Apology for Dr. Clarke*, 63. In response to an anonymous writer, Clarke denied that he should be called an Arian, for he said that he rejected the two teachings of Arians that the "Son of God was created, made out of nothing, just before the beginning of this world" *Apology for Dr. Clarke*, 54.

¹⁶²*Apology for Dr. Clarke*, 64.

¹⁶³During the 1690s, General Baptists divided over the unorthodox Christological views of Matthew Caffyn (1628–1715). Although the churches of the Western Association attempted to broach Caffyn's Christology, they were silenced. As a result, General Baptists who opposed Caffyn separated and became known as the General Association and those who supported Caffyn became known as the General Assembly. Raymond Brown, *English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 21–22. See also Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists* (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2001), 3:280–85, 4:332–33, 337; Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1811–30), 1:548–54, 2:504–05, 510. In the *Baptist History and Heritage* journal, Merrill Hawkins Jr. has challenged the prevailing view among Baptist surveys that the acceptance or tolerance of Caffyn's views led to a conflict and eventual decline among General Baptists. Merrill Hawkins, Jr., "Assumptions or Conclusions: The Treatment of Early General Baptist Doctrinal Conflict by Selected Surveys of Baptist History," *Baptist History and Heritage* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 64–77.

¹⁶⁴James Peirce, *The Western Inquisition: Or, A Relation of the Controversy, Which Has Been Lately Among the Dissenters in the West of England* (London: John Clark, 1720), 8. For a detailed account

differed with Clarke on some points, Peirce became convinced that he “must depart with some beloved opinions.”¹⁶⁵ By this he meant that he could not agree that the Trinity in Unity was a fundamental article of the Christian faith.¹⁶⁶ A few years later, when some students at Joseph Hallet’s academy in Exeter began to dispute over the deity of Christ and spread their notions,¹⁶⁷ and rumor spread that three Presbyterian ministers held heterodox views of the divinity of Christ, three friends of Peirce requested at the end of May 1717 that he combat these notions by avowing the full deity of Christ.¹⁶⁸ The following Lord’s Day, Peirce complied with the request. But his preaching provoked only angst, when he spoke so rapidly about the unity of the Godhead that no one was able to record his words.¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Pierce aggravated the concerns of the people in Exeter, when he and Joseph Hallet (1656–1722) supported the ordination of Hubert Stogdon (1692–1728), a student at Hallet’s Academy and a known anti-trinitarian who had altered his views on the Trinity after reading Clarke’s *Scripture Doctrine*.¹⁷⁰

In November 1718, Peirce and other ministers were asked to declare their views on the Trinity in order to prevent the spreading errors. They were given the option

of the Salters’ Hall controversy, see Roger Thomas, “The Non-Subscription Controversy Amongst Dissenters in 1719: The Salters’ Hall Debate,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 4 (1953): 162–86; Charles Scott Sealy, “Church Authority and Non-Subscription Controversies in Early 18th Century Presbyterianism” (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2010), 36–65.

For an account of the events and pamphlets issued at Exeter, see Allan Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650–1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962), 74–95, 235–37.

¹⁶⁵Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 8.

¹⁶⁶Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 9. While living in Cambridge, Peirce was acquainted with Whiston and corresponded with him about the Trinity. Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 6–7.

¹⁶⁷Josiah Eveleigh, *An Account of the Reasons Why Many Citizens of Exon Have Withdrawn from the Ministry of Mr. Jos. Hallet and Mr. James Peirce. Being an Answer to Mr. Peirce’s State of the Case* (Exon: Jos. Bliss, 1719), 4. Brockett mentioned that Clarke’s *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* was read at Hallett’s Academy soon after its publication. Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter*, 78.

¹⁶⁸Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 4.

¹⁶⁹Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 4.

¹⁷⁰Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 13, 45; Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 4.

to state their views either “in words of the First Article of the Church of England; or in the words of the sixth Answer in the Assemblies Catechism” or in their own words.¹⁷¹ Peirce objected.¹⁷² He then affirmed the subordination of the Son, rejected the first article of the Thirty-nine Articles, and denied the sixth answer in the Westminster Shorter Catechism.¹⁷³

As a result of Peirce’s unwillingness to declare his views on the Trinity, the citizens of Exeter solicited advice from some eminent ministers in London. These eminent ministers advised that the citizens select some neighboring ministers, who were more familiar with their situation, to help resolve their differences.¹⁷⁴ Consequently, seven neighboring ministers were selected who met and drew up three resolutions for the citizens.¹⁷⁵ But before the seven neighboring ministers met again and offered their advice on February 9, they received communication from London that there was a “plan for peace proposed by some considerable gentlemen at London to the Committee of the three Denominations.”¹⁷⁶

The ministers from the three denominations—Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists (General and Particular)—met, deliberated, and prepared advice for Exeter on February 19 and 24, 1719, and in the latter meeting, the ministers divided over whether to include a subscription in the advice.¹⁷⁷ Fifty-seven opposed subscription; fifty-three favored it.¹⁷⁸ Those who opposed subscription believed that “no

¹⁷¹Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 6.

¹⁷²Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 6.

¹⁷³Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 6.

¹⁷⁴Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 7.

¹⁷⁵To see the three resolutions, see Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 171.

¹⁷⁶Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 172.

¹⁷⁷Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 6.

human compositions, or interpretations of the doctrine of the Trinity, should be made a part of those articles of advices.”¹⁷⁹ When some of the non-subscribers complained that their opposition to the declaration was interpreted as a denial of the Trinity, those in favor of subscription attempted to renew the discussion with the non-subscribers on March 3.¹⁸⁰ The subscribing ministers then thought it best to declare their own convictions regarding the Trinity prior to the consideration of and separate from the advice to Exeter.¹⁸¹ Therefore, the subscribing ministers invited anyone interested in subscribing either to the first article of the Church of England or fifth and sixth answers in the Westminster Shorter Catechism to proceed upstairs into the gallery and sign the subscription. According to Daniel Wilcox, sixty ministers proceeded upstairs while fifty remained downstairs.¹⁸² In other words, the subscribers now outnumbered the non-subscribers so that the initial majority became the minority. Meanwhile, the remaining non-subscribers believed their subscribing brothers actions were out of order and therefore adjourned their meeting until March 10. At the March 10 meeting, the non-subscribers concluded their advice to Exeter and sent their eight recommendations signed by seventy-three ministers with a letter dated March 17.¹⁸³ In this letter, the non-subscribing ministers declared that

¹⁷⁸Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 6.

¹⁷⁹John Shute Barrington, *An Account of the Late Proceedings of the Dissenting Ministers at Salters-Hall: Occasioned by the Differences Amongst Their Brethren in the Country: With Some Thoughts Concerning the Imposition of Humane Forms for Articles of Faith: In a Letter to the Revd. Dr. Gale* (London: J. Roberts, 1719), 10.

¹⁸⁰Daniel Wilcox, *The Noble Stand: Or, A Just Vindication of Those Brave Spirits Who in the Late Memorable Actions at Salters-Hall Distinguished Themselves, and Got So Much Honour in Appearing for That Important Principle of Religious Liberty* (London: R. Cruttenden, 1719), 6.

¹⁸¹Wilcox, *Noble Stand*, 6.

¹⁸²Wilcox, *Noble Stand*, 8–9.

¹⁸³*An Authentick Account of Several Things Done and Agreed Upon by the Dissenting Ministers Lately Assembled at Salters-Hall* (London: John Clark, 1719), 5–12. Accompanying the letter to Exeter, the non-subscribers presented twelve reasons why they did not subscribe at the meeting on March 3, 1719. See *Authentick Account*, 17–32.

they “utterly disown the *Arian* doctrine, and sincerely believe the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and the proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . but are far from condemning any who appear to be with us in the Main, tho’ they should chuse not to declare themselves in other than Scripture Terms or not in Ours.”¹⁸⁴ At the same time, the subscribing ministers sent their advice to Exeter with their Declaration of Faith in the Trinity, signed by seventy-eight persons.¹⁸⁵ Although the subscribing ministers declared their faith in their advice, they did not recommend any test or confession of faith for the ministers in Exeter.¹⁸⁶ Rather, they left the people of Exeter to their own discretion how to satisfy themselves regarding the orthodoxy of their ministers.¹⁸⁷

Prior to receiving the advice from London, the committee of thirteen in Exeter who managed the financial affairs of the Presbyterian congregations in Exeter requested that their ministers state their view concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in either four ways.¹⁸⁸ Peirce and Hallet refused to comply.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, the trustees of the Presbyterian meeting houses ejected Peirce and Hallet.¹⁹⁰ In response to their ejection, Pierce and Hallet met the following Sunday in a private house and preached to an estimated 300 people.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁴*Authentick Account*, 15–16.

¹⁸⁵*A True Relation of Some Proceedings at Salters-Hall: By Those Ministers Who Sign’d the First Article of the Church of England, and the Answers to the Fifth and Sixth Questions in the Assemblies Shorter Catechism, March 3, 1719* (London: John Clark, 1719), 6–10.

¹⁸⁶Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 8.

¹⁸⁷*True Relation of Some Proceedings at Salters-Hall*, 12–17; Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 8.

¹⁸⁸Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 8.

¹⁸⁹Eveleigh, *Account of the Reasons*, 8.

¹⁹⁰James Peirce, *The Case of the Ministers Ejected at Exon* (Exeter: Andrew Brice, 1719), 7.

¹⁹¹Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter*, 93.

Even though the seventy-three non-subscribers denied Arianism and affirmed their belief in the Trinity, time proved that the subscribers had justified reason to fear. For many Presbyterian and General Baptists congregations, non-subscription became the broad road to Unitarianism.¹⁹² But for the majority of Congregationalists and Particular Baptist congregations, subscription became the narrow road to trinitarianism.¹⁹³

Daniel Waterland: The Son is Either Created or Uncreated

In the same year the Dissenters divided over a trinitarian subscription at Salters' Hall, Daniel Waterland (1683–1740), an English theologian, published *A Vindication of Christ's Divinity*, in which he replied to thirty-one 'Queries' from John Jackson (1686–1763) concerning Clarke's scheme on the Trinity.¹⁹⁴ Although he responded formally to Jackson's *Collection of Queries*, Waterland maintained in the background Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine*. Among the thirty-one queries, Waterland discerned that the fundamental point at controversy was whether the Son was essentially God or a creature.

For Waterland, there was no *via media* between being essentially God or a creature. Either the Son is truly and properly God or he is a creature. Waterland reminded Jackson that the Scriptures "every where carefully keep up the distinction between Creator and Creature; and never confound both in one."¹⁹⁵ Summing up the main issue

¹⁹²Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 376.

¹⁹³Watts, *Dissenters*, 376.

¹⁹⁴Waterland, *Vindication of Christ's Divinity*. For original queries, see John Jackson, *A Collection of Queries: Wherein the Most Material Objections from Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity Which Have as Yet Been Alledged Against Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Defenses of It Are Proposed and Answered* (London: James Knapton, 1716). For relationship of John Jackson and Clarke, see J. P. Ferguson, *Dr. Samuel Clarke: An Eighteenth Century Heretic* (Kington, UK: Roundwood Press, 1976), 120–36.

¹⁹⁵Waterland, *Vindication of Christ's Divinity*, 197.

between him and Jackson, Waterland stated it to be whether the Son as the Creator and Redeemer, “be a Creature, or no.”¹⁹⁶ Although Jackson attempted to find a middle position between being essentially God or being a creature, Waterland exposed it as futile¹⁹⁷ and then insisted that Jackson acknowledge the “Son to be of the same *undivided* Substance with the Father; or else declare him *a Creature*.”¹⁹⁸ Further, Waterland rejected Jackson’s effort to posit a middle position between the consubstantiality of the Son while maintaining that the Son was not a creature. Waterland replied, “Let it be said then plainly, and without disguise, that the Son of God is either *Consubstantial* with God the Father, or else a *Creature*. There is no medium, neither can there be any; consistent with Scripture, and with the truth and reason of things.”¹⁹⁹

Believing that not only Jackson denied the consubstantiality of the Son but so too did Clarke, Waterland argued that Clarke must also acknowledge the Son to be a creature. Even though Clarke condemned those who said that the Son was made out of nothing, Waterland maintained that Clarke by implication taught the Son was a creature. By rejecting that the Son was made out of nothing, Waterland explained that Clarke followed some of the ancient Arians who also rejected the charge the Son was a creature by the Orthodox. Waterland pointed out that Arians were willing to affirm that the Son was “not a creature like other Creatures which are created mediately by the Λόγος.”²⁰⁰ Further, Waterland underscored that some Arians rejected the Son was made out of nothing,²⁰¹ and noted that some Arians even condemned those that said there was a time

¹⁹⁶Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 203.

¹⁹⁷Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 208.

¹⁹⁸Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 209.

¹⁹⁹Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 211.

²⁰⁰Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 219.

²⁰¹Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 219.

when the Son was not.²⁰² But what united all Arians, according to Waterland, was that they disavowed the consubstantiality of the Son. They divided, however, over explicit affirmation of the eternity of Son, and dropped or disguised belief in other principles, such as there was a time when the Son was not or was made out of nothing.²⁰³ Since Clarke denied the Son was consubstantial with the Father, Waterland believed Clarke was an Arian, despite his disavowal. “In truth and reality, every Man that disowns the Consubstantiality, rightly understood, is as much as an Arian, as Euonomius, or Aetius, or any of the Antient Arians were; or even as Arius himself, excepting only some few particulars, which were not his standing and settled Opinions.”²⁰⁴

In an anonymous publication entitled *The Modest Plea*,²⁰⁵ Clarke rejected Waterland’s query that if the Son was the creator of all things, he must be uncreated and therefore cannot be made of nothing. Clarke denied the Son was the creator of all things absolutely.²⁰⁶ He contended that the Father alone was the creator of all things; the Son, however, was the agent by whom the Father made all things.²⁰⁷ Rejecting the Son was made “out of nothing,” Clarke affirmed that the Son was “from the Father’s substance.”²⁰⁸ When asked how the Son derived his being “from the Father’s substance,” he replied that it cannot be explained, since the Scriptures do not reveal such metaphysics of the Son’s substance.²⁰⁹ To Waterland’s claim that there is no middle position between

²⁰²Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 220.

²⁰³Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 222.

²⁰⁴Waterland, *Vindication of Christ’s Divinity*, 224.

²⁰⁵Samuel Clarke, *The Modest Plea, &c. Continued. Or, a Brief and Distinct Answer to Dr Waterland’s Queries, Relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: James Knapton, 1720).

²⁰⁶Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 23.

²⁰⁷Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 23.

²⁰⁸Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 23.

²⁰⁹Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 23.

being made out of nothing and being out of something (i.e. out of the Father's substance), Clarke agreed there is no middle position.²¹⁰ Clarke then distinguished that being made out of nothing and being made out of Father's substance is different from being self-existent.²¹¹ In distinguishing between being made out of nothing (i.e. creature), being made from the Father's substance (the Son) and self-existence (the Father alone), Clarke thus claimed a middle position between creator and creature: being made out of the Father's substance.²¹² For this reason, Clarke claimed that it is "evident, a Person who is *not a Creature*, may yet not be the '*the One Supreme Being*.'"²¹³ Further, Clarke rejected Waterland's contention that he denied the consubstantiality of the Son and thus by inference made the Son to be a creature. Clarke answered that the term consubstantiality has multiple meanings. He believed that the meaning of consubstantiality intended by the Council of Nicea was that the Son derived his being "in some ineffable manner from the substance of the Father."²¹⁴

Waterland published a supplement to his *Vindication of Christ's Divinity* and answered Clarke's *Modest Plea* in the preface of his *Eight Sermons*.²¹⁵ In the second and third sermon, Waterland argued that the Scriptures and the early church taught the Son was "strictly and properly efficient cause and creator of all things."²¹⁶ By consequence, as creator of all things, the Son is truly and properly divine.²¹⁷ In the preface to his *Eight*

²¹⁰Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 24.

²¹¹Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 24.

²¹²Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 24–25.

²¹³Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 20.

²¹⁴Clarke, *Modest Plea*, 27.

²¹⁵Daniel Waterland, *Eight Sermons Preached at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in Defense of the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (Cambridge: Corn Crownfield, 1720).

²¹⁶Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, 45.

²¹⁷Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, 41–113.

Sermons, Waterland reminded Clarke that there were only three positions in the debate: Athanasian, Arian, or Sabellian, and only one of them is true.²¹⁸ Since Clarke believed the Son is a real distinct person and denied the full deity of the Son, Waterland deemed Clarke to be an Arian.²¹⁹ Waterland declared that there are only three ways to view the Son: either the Son is (1) man alone, (2) “more than man, yet a precarious dependent being,” which is really to say that he is a creature, and thus Arianism, or (3) he is fully and truly God, necessarily-existing and uncreated.²²⁰ Waterland contended that Clarke advocated that Christ is a precarious dependent being. In espousing Christ as a precarious dependent being, Waterland insisted that Clarke departed from the early Church Fathers who asserted the Son’s “necessary-existence.”²²¹ To Waterland, for Clarke to affirm the Son as a precarious dependent being was equivalent to deny the Son’s necessary existence, or to affirm the Son of God to be a creature. Waterland charged Clarke with failing to answer plainly and clearly whether the Son is infinite or finite or his existence is dependent or independent on anyone.²²² If Clarke believed in the consubstantiality of the Son as taught by pre-Nicene theologians and the Council of Nicea, Waterland requested that Clarke plainly acknowledge it and abide by it.²²³

Conclusion

Clarke and his supporters continued to exchange writings with Waterland, but the death of Clarke in 1729 marked the close of the second phase of the trinitarian crisis. Although the second phase of the trinitarian crisis came to an end, the issues raised did

²¹⁸Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, iii.

²¹⁹Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, ix.

²²⁰Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, ix-x.

²²¹Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, xx.

²²²Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, xii.

²²³Waterland, *Eight Sermons*, xv.

not dissipate or disappear but continued to embroil the Established Church and the Dissenters. During the same year that Clarke died, John Gill began his lectureship at Great Eastcheap and shortly afterwards began his lectures on the Trinity, which culminated in his publication of a *Treatise on the Trinity* (1731).

CHAPTER 4

JOHN GILL: PATRISTIC SCHOLAR

Gill as a Patristic Scholar

In his book, *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century*, Norman Sykes has asserted that the followers of Samuel Clarke and Richard Watson showed a “disdain of patristic theology,” and then Sykes added that the “contempt of theologians for patristic studies was typical of the general temper of their age towards the heritage of the past.”¹ Similarly, in the Introduction to their book, *Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, John Creed and John Smith claimed that “the great theological writers of the eighteenth century were not deeply interested in patristic learning, as the divines of the seventeenth century had been.”² L.W. Barnard acknowledged that there was some measure of truth in the judgment of Sykes and by implication Creed and Smith, but he also highlighted Joseph Bingham (1668–1723),³ John Potter (c. 1674–1747),⁴ and Daniel Waterland (1683–1740) as three exceptions who were “among the most learned men of the age and all were eminent in Patristics.”⁵ Barnard had in view the state of

¹Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century: The Birkbeck Lectures in Ecclesiastical History Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1931–3* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1962), 423. Richard Watson (1737–1816) was Bishop of Llandaff.

²John Martin Creed Smith and John Sandwith Boys, *Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century, Illustrated from Writers of the Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), xxii. Creed and Smith also acknowledged Daniel Waterland as an exception.

³Joseph Bingham was author of the *Origenes Ecclesiasticae*.

⁴John Potter was archbishop of Canterbury (1737–47) and editor of a two volume Greek and Latin edition of Clement of Alexandria published in 1715.

⁵L.W. Barnard, “Patristic Study in England in the Early Eighteenth Century,” in *Studia Patristica* (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989), 211.

Patristic studies among the Anglican divines, but if he had wanted to add another learned man of the eighteenth century whose writings evince vast reading and eminent knowledge of the Fathers, he could have mentioned John Gill.

Over the last several decades, scholars have published various works in which they have examined the magisterial Reformers, post-Reformed divines, and other ministers' use of the Fathers. Anthony Lane has written an excellent methodological treatment and detailed study of *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*.⁶ In the work *Testimonia Patrum*, Peter Fraenkel has investigated the function of Patristics in the theology of Philip Melanchthon.⁷ E. P. Meijering has published a work, entitled *Melanchthon and Patristic Thought*, in which he analyzed Melanchthon's use of the Fathers concerning the doctrines of Christ and grace, the Trinity, and the creation.⁸ Following Meijering, H. Ashley Hall has published a detailed study of *Philip Melanchthon and the Cappadocians: A Reception of Greek Patristic Sources in the Sixteenth Century*.⁹ Ann-Stephane Schäfer has examined how the Fathers functioned among the Puritans in England and, especially, New England.¹⁰ Furthermore, several authors have written very helpful chapters in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*.¹¹ Arthur Meyers has studied John Wesley as a Patristic scholar and church

⁶Anthony N.S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999).

⁷Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum; the Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon* (Geneva: E. Droz, 1961).

⁸E. P. Meijering, *Melanchthon and Patristic Thought: The Doctrines of Christ and Grace, the Trinity and the Creation* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).

⁹H. Ashley Hall, *Philip Melanchthon and the Cappadocians: A Reception of Greek Patristic Sources in the Sixteenth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

¹⁰Ann-Stephane Schäfer, *Auctoritas Patrum?: The Reception of the Church Fathers in Puritanism*, Mainzer Studien Zur Amerikanistik, vol. 58 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012).

¹¹Manfred Schulze, "Martin Luther and the Church Fathers," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 573–626; Irena Backus, "Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer and the Church Fathers," in *The Reception of*

historian.¹² Among Baptists, Michael Smith has looked at seventeenth-century Baptist use of Patristic writings in his dissertation “The Early English Baptists and the Church Fathers.”¹³ Thus, although scholars have examined various divines’ use of the Fathers, no researcher has given detailed attention to Gill’s use of the early Church Fathers.¹⁴

This chapter will argue that Gill should be viewed as a Patristic scholar whose Patristic scholarship was used to defend the doctrine of the Trinity. The chapter begins with four fundamental theses that will establish the methodological approach for the rest of the chapter. Next, Gill’s attitude towards the Fathers is examined, which is then followed by a survey of the Fathers in the writings of Gill and a detailed analysis of Gill’s use of Gregory Nazianzen and Augustine. The chapter concludes with Gill’s use of the Patristic sources in the trinitarian controversy. Some of the questions that will be addressed throughout the chapter are as follows: (1) Which Fathers did Gill know? (2) Which editions of the Fathers’ works did he possess or have access to? (3) How did he use his quotations? (4) Which Fathers were his favorites? (5) How precisely did he quote his sources? (6) What knowledge did Gill have of the Fathers, and how did he use that knowledge?

the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 627–60; Johannes van Oort, “John Calvin and the Church Fathers,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 661–700; Irena Backus, “The Fathers in Calvinist Orthodoxy: Patristic Scholarship,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 839–65; E. P. Meijering, “The Fathers in Calvinist Orthodoxy: Systematic Theology,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 867–87.

¹²Arthur Christian Meyers Jr., “John Wesley and the Church Fathers” (Ph.D. diss., Saint Louis University, 1985).

¹³Michael A. Smith, “The Early English Baptists and the Church Fathers” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982).

¹⁴Michael Haykin has examined Gill’s use of the Fathers in defense of particular redemption. See Michael A. G. Haykin, “We Trust in the Saving Blood,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 57–74.

Fundamental Theses

Thesis I: Gill's citations compares remarkably well to our modern standards of documentation. Despite living in the eighteenth century, Gill's citations of the Fathers corresponds remarkably well to our present standards of documentation. Present standards expect writers to provide "sufficient information either to lead reader's directly to the source consulted or, for materials that may not be readily available, to positively identify the sources used, whether these are published or unpublished."¹⁵ Admittedly, the documentation standards of the eighteenth century were not as high as today's. Nevertheless, Gill's scholarly standards not only met eighteenth-century criteria, but they satisfy, for the most part, modern standards because they provide readers with sufficient information to consult sources and validate details, whether a quote, paraphrase, or fact.

First, there is general evidence to demonstrate that Gill carefully documented his sources. Throughout his writings, the diligent pastor footnoted a large number of sources, which included many Patristic citations. In fact, he recorded over one thousand footnotes in the third edition of his *Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song*, over twelve hundred in his *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, and over two thousand in his *Cause of God and Truth*. Likewise, his commentaries exhibit a similar thoroughness of documented sources. For example, his commentaries on *Genesis* and *Psalms* each contain almost two thousand footnotes, *Isaiah* over thirteen hundred, *Matthew* over seventeen hundred, *Acts* almost fourteen hundred, and *Romans* almost three hundred footnotes. For the sheer volume of footnotes, this is remarkable, even for our modern age. If one examined this meticulous theologian's sermons and treatises and thought that he relaxed his standards, one is mistaken. In his printed sermons and treatises, the Baptist

¹⁵*The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 655.

theologian is just as scrupulous to document his sources. For instance, in his treatise addressing infant baptism entitled, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition*, Gill recorded almost one hundred footnotes, many of which are from Patristic writings. Similarly, he recorded over fifty footnotes in his *Discourse on Singing of Psalms as a Part of Divine Worship*, many of which contained lengthy Greek and Latin quotations. It is true that these various footnotes throughout the *oeuvre* of Gill do not all pertain to Patristic sources. It is also true that many of these footnotes include citations from Rabbinic writings. Certainly, some of Gill's works do not contain any footnotes, such as *The Character and the End of the Wicked Considered* and *The Plague of a Man's Heart, What It Is, to Whom Discovered*. Nevertheless, the overall evidence of voluminous footnotes points to a scholar and servant of the Lord who scrupulously documented his sources.

Even though voluminous in number, one must remember that these footnotes are the original toil of Gill. They are not the additions of later editors, as one may find in some modern critical editions; they are not the output of modern technology; they are the sedulous labor of a servant of God. Besides the general evidence that Gill documented his sources, his footnotes provide specific evidence of how remarkably well his references correspond to our modern day standards. When Gill quoted, paraphrased, or summarized an author, he not only cited his source, but he also provided detailed information to locate that source. For example, in a sermon just mentioned above—*A Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship*—Gill quoted Clement of Alexandria who had mentioned that the Egyptians sang hymns to their gods as part of their worship. In the citation of Clement, Gill mentioned the author's name, title of the work, the chapter number, page location, and the particular printed edition.¹⁶ Likewise, the student of the

¹⁶John Gill, *A Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship: From 1 Corinthians 14:15. Preached the 25th of December, 1733 to a Society of Young Men, Who Carry on an Exercise of Prayer on Lord's-Day Mornings, at a Meeting-House on Horsly-Down, Southwark* (London, 1734), 11. Gill also included the original Greek for the citation. For a similar detailed citation of the Fathers, such as Ignatius, Tertullian, Faustinus, see [John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* \(London: Aaron Ward, 1735–38\), 4:45, note e](#); [John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* \(1814–15; repr., Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel\), 6:206n](#).

Church Fathers provided similar details for a citation of Ignatius in his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*.¹⁷ Whereas Gill did not always state the particular printed edition that he used, he did consistently identify the author, title, and page number or chapter number so that one was able to locate the original source. For authors who were well known, such as the early church historians, Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, Gill simply provided the book number and chapter.¹⁸

In reference to sixteenth-century writers, Anthony Lane wisely cautioned his readers not to assume that because a sixteenth-century author accurately cited some sources, it follows that the author always documented his sources, especially since they were under no obligation at that time to do so.¹⁹ The caution is considered, but Gill is different. First, the profusion of citations throughout Gill's works militates against the idea that he failed to cite his sources. Of course, he may have omitted a reference due to human fallibility, but that seems no more likely than a modern writer doing the same. The evidence simply points to Gill as a scrupulous and meticulous scholar with his sources. In fact, in *The Cause of God and Truth*, Gill included in his footnotes the page number of the first and second editions of his opponent Daniel Whitby's works, when he was under no obligation to do so. Second, this Baptist student of the Fathers presented a table of the editions of all the Church Fathers that he cited in his *Cause of God and Truth*.²⁰ Again, there was no need to be so meticulous, but he did it.

Thesis 2: Gill's editions of the Fathers are available to us. Since Gill's citations correspond remarkably well to our modern standards, we can identify the exact

¹⁷John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 140.

¹⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xli, 609.

¹⁹Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 1.

²⁰Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:446–47.

editions that he used. Although one can sift through his footnotes and discern some of the Patristic editions which he used,²¹ thankfully, Gill has assembled in one place a table of the Patristic editions he used. In this table, he identified the Patristic author, printed edition, and publication year, which can be located at the end of part four of *The Cause of God and Truth*.²² Further, we know that Gill either had access to or owned many, if not, all of these editions listed in the table sometime during his life because one year after his death, Gill's executors donated "fifty-two folio volumes of the Fathers" to James Manning and the College of Rhode Island.²³ Gill's library at the end of his life included works of Ambrose, Clement of Alexandria,²⁴ Cyril, Gregory of Nyssa,²⁵ Gregory

²¹John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731) 25, 118–19.

²²Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:446–47.

²³Reuben Aldridge Guild, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning, and the Early History of Brown University* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), 200. Henry Bartlett Van Hoesen has suggested that the fifty-two volumes of the Fathers should be interpreted to include Rabbinic sources. He wrote, "What chiefly distinguished his [Gill] works seems to have been his extensive rabbinical knowledge, and this too distinguishes his library of the 'Fathers,' if we dare count in—as we must to make up the fifty-volumes—not only Athanasius, Basil, Tertullian, etc. but also Abrabanel, Abraham Seba, Albelda, Judah Leo, J.H. Majus, Mordecai ben Naphtali Hirsh Kremsir, Solomon ben Melech, etc. There were in the 1782 catalog more of the orthodox Fathers—or is it safer to say according to the orthodox definition?—than appear now with Dr. Gill's name in them e.g. Anselm, Augustine, Irenaeus, Isidore, Justin Martyr, Optatus, Origen, Thomas Aquinas etc." Henry Bartlett Van Hoesen, *Brown University Library: The Library of the College or University in the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England in America, 1767–1782* (Providence, RI: Priv. print, 1938), 65–67. In reply, first, it does seem strange for James Manning to identify Rabbinic, Patristic, and Medieval sources under the rubric of Fathers to John Ryland Sr. Surely, the appellation "Fathers" in the eighteenth century would be distinguished from Rabbinic and Scholastic works. Second, the Williams Catalog does not distinguish works that are multi-volume from single volume. For example, the Catalog lists Gill's commentaries on the Old and New Testaments as two volumes when they were printed in nine folio volumes. Therefore, if one is to count, it should be based on the number of volumes. For example, we know that Augustine works were at least 10 volumes; Origen and Athanasius works are also multi-volume. Finally, Van Hoesen acknowledged that of the 607 volumes in the catalog in 1782, "less than two-thirds" can be specifically traced to the donor's name. Hoesen, *Brown University Library*, 80. It is possible that some of these unidentified volumes are unsigned gifts of Gill. In short, it does seem more persuasive to maintain that the donation of Gill consisted of fifty-two volumes of Patristics.

²⁴The edition listed in the catalog of Gill's books indicate the year 1641, while the *Cause of God and Truth* indicate the year 1631. John Gill, *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late Reverend and Learned John Gill, D.D. Deceased. Comprehending a Fine Collection of Biblical and Oriental Literature; Which Will Be Sold by Auction* (London, 1772), 9.

Nazianzen,²⁶ Gregory of Neocaesarea, Justin Martyr, Origen, Optatus, and Eusebius, all of which were either in Greek or Latin or both.²⁷ Therefore, we have knowledge of the exact editions that Gill used in his writings.

Thesis 3: Gill's comments indicate that he had read the Fathers. Gill's statements and citations indicate that he had read the Fathers. In his introductory comments to part four of the *Cause of God and Truth*, the industrious minister removed any doubt whether he had read the Fathers or not, when he wrote,

I have only further to observe, that the testimonies produced in the following work, are taken from the writers before Austin. I have made no use of him, nor of Prosper and Fulgentius, his two boatswains, as Dr. Whitby very wittily, no doubt, as he thought, calls them: nor have I taken any citations upon trust from others; but what is here presented to the reader, is the fruit of my own reading, care, and diligence. I say not this in an ostentatious way, but that the reader may more safely depend upon them. To all which I only add, that I have not attempted an *elegant* translation of these testimonies, but have as much as possible pursued a *literal* one, lest I should be thought to impose my own sense upon an author.²⁸

From the above quotation, two things should be observed. First, Gill confirmed that he labored to read the Fathers. It was the fruit of his own “reading, care, and diligence.”²⁹ Second, he read the Fathers in the original languages, for he indicated that he translated passages literally rather than elegantly. That he read the Fathers in the original is corroborated by an opponent accusing Gill of “great ignorance in translating” the ancient Fathers, which Gill rebutted.³⁰ In addition, the library of Dr. Gill reflects that he owned

²⁵The library indicates a Paris edition of 1609, but the *Cause of God and Truth* mentioned Paris 1615. Gill, *Catalogue of the Library of John Gill*, 9.

²⁶Library mentions Paris edition of 1615 while the *Cause of God and Truth* table indicates Paris 1628.

²⁷Eusebius has three sets of folios, one of which appears to be a combined work of Church History. Gill, *Catalogue of the Library of John Gill*, 17.

²⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:10–11.

²⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:11.

³⁰John Gill, *An Answer to the Birmingham Dialogue Writer's Second Part, Upon the Following Subjects: The Divinity of Christ. Election. Original Sin. Free-Grace. Free-Will... and, Baptism*.

several classical Greek writers in the original languages, whom he cited generously throughout his corpus, implying facility with Greek and thus ability to read the Fathers in the original language.³¹

Moreover, when represented as a “botcher in divinity” and an unlearned man, Gill was compelled to acknowledge that among his extensive readings, he had read the “Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church.”³² This confession of reading the Fathers was published in 1739, which was one year after Gill had published the final part of his *Cause of God and Truth*, in which he examined the early Church Fathers and thus further substantiates that he read the Fathers.

Since Patristic anthologies existed from the sixteenth century and some were extremely popular, such as Herman Bodius’s *Unio Dissidentium*, which went through forty editions, is it not possible that Gill himself used anthologies?³³ It is possible, but it seems unlikely that Gill used or relied on Patristic anthologies ultimately, for he stated twice that his research was the fruit of his own reading. Furthermore, throughout Gill’s writings, there are many insignificant and obscure references, which cannot be ascribed to an anthology. For example, he mentioned from Clement of Alexandria a comment concerning the different types of ointments³⁴ and from Origen the place where John the

To Which is Added, a Postscript, Occasioned by Mr. Henry Heywood’s Introduction to His Translation of Dr. Whitby’s Treatise of Original Sin (London: Aaron Ward, 1739), 45.

³¹Gill owned Philo, Aristophanes, Athenaeus (Greek rhetorician), Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus (Greek historian), Strabo (Greek geographer, historian, and philosopher), Josephus, Philostratus (Greek sophist), Plato, and Plutarch all in Greek and Latin, and Homer in Greek. Gill, *Catalogue of the Library of John Gill*, 9.

³²John Gill, *The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation Considered: Occasion’d by Some Reflections and Misrepresentations of Mr. (Alias Dr.) Abraham Taylor* (London: A. Ward, 1739), 35–37.

³³For examples of 15th and 16th century anthologies, see Anthony N.S. Lane, “Justification in 16th-Century Patristic Anthologies,” in *Auctoritas Patrum: Zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter Im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1993), 69–95; Hall, *Philip Melancthon and the Cappadocians*, 255–56.

³⁴John Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song, Commonly Called Canticles* (London: Aaron Ward, 1728), 29.

Baptist was baptizing.³⁵ Such references one does not expect to find in an anthology.

Therefore, we can conclude that Gill did not rely upon Patristic anthologies as his ultimate sources but read the Fathers himself as attested on two different occasions in writing in two different years to two different audiences. Although Gill read the Fathers himself in the original language, it does not mean that we know the extent of his reading, for that is to be examined in a subsequent section.

Thesis 4: Only actual citations and not allusions or passing references are evaluated. The method adopted in this chapter is to examine only actual citations of the early Church Fathers in the writings of Gill and not allusions and passing references. Allusions and passing references are much more difficult to assess; nor are they necessary, when there are abundant actual citations. Here the author is following Johannes van Oort's definition of a citation: "a *quotation* of, a *paraphrase* of, or a *clear reference* to a Patristic work, council, or person."³⁶ This definition precludes any allusions or passing references to the Fathers.

Gill's Attitude towards the Fathers

Gill expressed a high regard and maintained a respectful attitude towards the Fathers. Expressing high regard for the Fathers, he viewed them as "men of great sobriety and simplicity, of exemplary lives and conversations, and who suffered much and bravely for the sake of the Christian religion."³⁷ He considered Jerome and Eusebius to be men of great learning.³⁸ He commended Athanasius as one who "bore an excellent testimony to the deity of Christ against the Arians" and was a "famous champion for the doctrines

³⁵John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 7:750.

³⁶Oort, "John Calvin and the Church Fathers," 663.

³⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:6.

³⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:91, 140.

of the Trinity, the proper Sonship of Christ, and his eternal generation.”³⁹ Gill regarded Ambrose as an eminent doctor of the church.⁴⁰ He called the Bishop of Hippo the “great Augustine”⁴¹ or “great Austin.”⁴²

Despite his high regard for the Fathers, Gill neither viewed them as final authorities nor overlooked their weaknesses. He made the following observations about the authority of the Fathers in relation to Scripture:

The writings of the best of men, of the most early antiquity, and of the greatest learning and piety, cannot be admitted by us as the rule and standard of our faith. These, with us, are only the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament: to these we appeal, and by these only can we be determined. . . . It is of no great moment with us, what such who lived nearest to the times of the apostles say, unless what they say agrees with *their* words and doctrines.⁴³

Likewise, preaching at the baptism of several persons, Gill reminded his hearers that the Scriptures are the final authority in matters of doctrine and practice. He instructed his hearers to have no compulsion to embrace infant baptism, even if many of the early Church Fathers practiced it, no more than to receive many of their “absurdities, weak reasonings, and silly notions.”⁴⁴

Furthermore, he noted that the best of the early writers had weaknesses and thus deviated from pure doctrine.

The purest writers of the first ages were not free from considerable mistakes and blemishes, and deviations from the word of God, and doctrines of the apostles; which having been taken notice of by many learned men, I forbear to repeat. Indeed we have scarce any thing remaining of what was written in the *first century*, and very little of what was written in the *second*. And besides, the writings of these and after-times have been so interpolated, and so many spurious pieces have been ascribed to the writers of those ages, that it has been difficult to know their true and

³⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 2:59; Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:203.

⁴⁰John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:569.

⁴¹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:53.

⁴²Gill, *Discourse on Singing of Psalms*, 50.

⁴³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:4 [italics original].

⁴⁴Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:487.

real sentiments. Since the reformation, learned men have taken much pains to separate the spurious and interpolated, from their genuine works.⁴⁵

Third, Gill thought the Fathers lagged behind many modern Reformed theologians because the latter had the advantage of previous writings and ability of reading the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. He wrote, “Without any detraction from their real worth and value, they [Fathers] were but *children*, in comparison of some of our European divines, since the reformation.”⁴⁶

Survey of the Fathers

Since Gill maintained a respectful but qualified attitude to the Fathers, it will be useful to analyze the breath and depth of his use of the Fathers. This section will first examine the breath of Gill’s citations by surveying his Patristic references in his works. In this survey, a Greek and Latin author from the first four centuries will be selected, noting their various works cited in Gill. In the next section, we will analyze in greater detail two Fathers: Gregory Nazianzen and Augustine.

In general, the works of Gill demonstrate a wide and comprehensive reading of the Fathers. Anyone that examines Gill’s *Cause of God and Truth* alone will discover that the Baptist pastor cited over forty Patristic authors.⁴⁷ Similarly, he cited many of the ancient Fathers mentioned in the *Cause of God and Truth* in his *Body of Doctrinal and*

⁴⁵Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:5 [italics original].

⁴⁶Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 6.

⁴⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, Part 4 of volume 4. See especially the table of authors cited. (1) Clement of Rome, (2) Ignatius, (3) Justin Martyr, (4) Minutius Felix, (5) Irenaeus, (6) Clement of Alexandria, (7) Tertullian, (8) Origen, (9) Cyprian of Carthage, (10) Novatian, (11) Athanasius, (12) Hilary of Poitiers, (13) Basil of Caesarea, (14) Cyril of Jerusalem, (15) Gregory of Nazianzus, (16) Hilary the Deacon, (17) Ambrose of Milan, (18) John Chrysostom, (19) Jerome, (20) Barnabus, (21) Church of Smyrna in writings of Eusebius, (22) Lactantius, (23) Paulinus of Tyre, (24) Eusebius, (25) Julius Maternus, (26) Macarius of Egypt, (27) Optatus of Milevis, (28) Mark the Eremite, (29) Didymus the Blind, (30) Gregory Nyssa, (31) Pacianus of Barcelona, (32) Epiphanius, (33) Gaudentius of Brixia, (34) Ruffinus of Aquileia, (35) Gregory Thaumaturgus, (36) Arnobius, (37) Victorinus, (38) Chronomatius, (39) Eusebius of Caesarea, (40) Faustinus, and (41) Augustine.

Practical Divinity.⁴⁸ In his defense of the eternal Sonship of Christ, the Baptist pastor cited over twenty Patristic authors.⁴⁹

Apostolic Fathers. Clement of Rome (*fl.* ca. 96)⁵⁰ was an early Church Father who lived in the first century and was thought to have been acquainted with the apostles. Indeed, the historian Eusebius suggested that the Clement mentioned in Phil 4:3 was Clement of Rome.⁵¹ Although some in the early church thought that Clement of Rome penned several works including the “*Clementine Literature*”⁵² and *Second Epistle of Clement*, scholars believe, however, that the only genuine work of Clement’s to be the *Epistle to the Corinthians*. The *Epistle to the Corinthians* is considered one of the earliest postapostolic extant documents outside of the New Testament and unanimously attributed to Clement of Rome.

The Epistle to the Corinthians is cited many times in the works of Gill.⁵³ It is

⁴⁸As best as I can determine, Gill cited these Patristic writers: Arnobius, Athanasius, Gregory Athenagoras, Barnabas, Basil of Caesarea, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Cyril, Epiphanius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Lactantius, Minutius Felix, Origen, Polycarp, Tertullian, and Augustine. Further, Gill referred to Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ruffinus but did not cite from them.

⁴⁹Gill cited the following persons: (1) Polycarp, (2) Justin Martyr, (3) Irenaeus, (4) Gregory Athenagoras, (5) Theophilus of Antioch, (6) Clement of Alexandria, (7) Tertullian, (8) Origen, (9) Cyprian, (10) Gregory Thaumaturgus, (11) Dionysius of Alexandria, (12) Athanasius, (13) Alexander of Alexandria, (14) Epiphanius, (15) Hilary of Poitiers, (16) Gregory Nazianzen, (17) Basil of Caesarea, (18) Gregory of Nyssa, (19) Ambrose, (20) Jerome, (21) Augustine, (22) Fulgentius. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:186–214. Gill cited other early Church Fathers, such as Flavius of Constantinople, but his source was not directly from the Patristic writer but through other works of Historical Theology. For the first four centuries, the overwhelming dominant source was taken directly from the Patristic author.

⁵⁰Dates for early Church Fathers are from Angelo Di Berardino, general editor, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014) or F.L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵¹Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.15.

⁵²The *Clementine Literature* consists of the twenty *Homilies*, ten books of the *Recognitions*, and two Greek *Epitomes*.

⁵³Gill affirmed that the edition he used for Clement of Rome was the Oxford 1669 edition in his “Discourse on the Eternal Sonship,” which was the same that he stated in his *Cause of God and Truth*. John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (1814–15; repr., Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel), 6:181.

most often mentioned in the *Cause of God and Truth* as evidence of an early Church Father whose writings have traces of statements that affirm the Five Points of Calvinism.⁵⁴ Indeed, there are at least twenty-three citations in the *Cause of God and Truth* from the *Epistle to the Corinthians* and many of these are from different chapters of Clement's *Epistle*.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Gill mentioned that Paul had been imprisoned seven times in his commentary on Romans 16:7 and cited Clement as his source.⁵⁶ To the same purpose, he cited Clement's epistle to show that the apostles selected persons to the ministry with the "consent or choice of the whole church."⁵⁷ Other works of Gill that cited the *Epistle to the Corinthians* included his commentary on Job⁵⁸ and his treatise entitled *The Necessity of Good Works unto Salvation Considered*.⁵⁹ Not only did Gill frequently cite from Clement's only genuine work, but he was also aware that some works attributed to Clement were deemed spurious, such as the book of *Recognitions*. He wrote, "though the book of *Recognitions*, ascribed to him, are judged spurious, yet there

⁵⁴Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:17–20, 101–02, 215–16, 307–08, 373.

⁵⁵Below is a sample of six different chapters Gill cited from Clement's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*. The original citation can be found in Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:17–18:

Epist. ad Corinth. i. p. 64 (*First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 27.5; PG 1:268a)

Epist. ad Corinth. i. p. 2 (*First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:1; PG 1:208a)

Epist. ad Corinth. i. p. 104 (*First Epistle to the Corinthians* 46.4; PG 1:304a)

Epist. ad Corinth. i. p. 112 (*First Epistle to the Corinthians* 49.5; PG 1:312a)

Epist. ad Corinth. i. p. 6 (*First Epistle to the Corinthians* 2.4; PG 1:212a)

Epist. ad Corinth. i. p. 88 (*First Epistle to the Corinthians* 38.3; PG 1:285a).

All of the above page references were checked with the 1669 Oxford edition of Clement of Rome, and they were all correct.

⁵⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:586. Gill mentioned Clement in the Introduction to his *Commentary on Hebrews*, but the citation is from Eusebius.

⁵⁷John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1770; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 867.

⁵⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:425, note t.

⁵⁹Gill, *The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation Considered*, 22.

is an epistle of his to the Corinthians thought to be genuine.”⁶⁰ Based on the various citations from Clement, especially in the *Cause of God and Truth*, we may conclude that Gill was intimately acquainted with Clement’s epistle. He read the work extensively and did not recycle the same references throughout his writings.

Another significant Apostolic Father that Gill cited was Ignatius (d. ca. 110), Bishop of Antioch. While journeying to Rome to be martyred for the Faith, Ignatius wrote seven epistles: six of them to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Rome, the last one pleading with them not to intervene with the authorities to spare his life. He wrote, “All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth.”⁶¹ He also wrote one letter to Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, in which he exhorted him to “bear all things for the sake of God, that He also may bear with us. Be ever becoming more zealous than what thou art. Weigh carefully the times. Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes.”⁶²

Throughout his corpus, Gill cited from all seven genuine and three spurious epistles of Ignatius.⁶³ He mentioned how Ignatius wrote an *Epistle to the Ephesians* in which the early Church Father commended them for their intolerance of heresy and

⁶⁰Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:181. See also John Gill, *Antipaedobaptism; Or Infant Baptism an Innovation*, in *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:385.

⁶¹Ignatius, *Epistle to Rome*, 6.1 (ANF 1:76).

⁶²Ignatius, *Epistle to Polycarp*, 3.1–2 (ANF 1:94).

⁶³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:21–22; Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:269; Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:182–83; Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 915; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:685, note o (1 Kgs 3:7); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:200, note y (Matt 18:2); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:248, note k (Acts 11:26); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:209, note k (Col 4:9); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:586, note m (Rom 16:6); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:687, note w (Rev 1:9).

mentioned Onesimus as their bishop.⁶⁴ Commenting on 1 Kings 3:7, Gill observed how Ignatius in his *Epistle to the Magnesians* believed Solomon was crowned king at the age of twelve.⁶⁵ To substantiate that in the early church the primary name of the Lord's Supper was the Eucharist, the Baptist pastor cited from Ignatius' *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*.⁶⁶ He denied that Ignatius taught that Christianity is a work of mere persuasion, citing from *Ignatius' Epistle to the Romans*.⁶⁷ Gill claimed that Ignatius affirmed the perseverance of the saints, by appealing to his *Epistle to the Trallians*⁶⁸ and *Epistle to the Philadelphians*.⁶⁹ In his work the *Divine Right of Infant-Baptism, Examined and Disproved*, Gill denied that Ignatius made any statement regarding infant baptism in his letters, and what he does mention about baptism, Gill asserted, favors believer's baptism.⁷⁰ Moreover, Gill also cited from the spurious works of Ignatius: *Epistle to the Antiochians*,⁷¹ *Epistle to the Tarsians*,⁷² and *Epistle to Mary at Neapolis*.⁷³

⁶⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:337 (Acts 20:17). Gill's page reference to the 1680 edition of Isaac Vossius was checked and confirmed to be accurate as it relates to the Onesimus as Bishop (*Epistle to the Ephesians* 1.3). He does not, however, cite a reference to his statement that the Ephesians did not tolerate heresy. The correct reference is Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistolæ Genuinæ*, 2nd ed., Isaac Vossius (London: Typis Joannis Gellibrand & Roberti Sollers, 1680), 22; Ignatius *Epistle to the Ephesians* 9.1.

⁶⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:685. The page reference of the citation was verified to be correct in the edition of Vossius, and the interpretation accurate. This reference, interestingly, is part of the long recension, though it does not appear to be differentiated as part of the long recension. See longer version in Ignatius *Epistle to the Magnesians* chap 3.

⁶⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 915. The citation reference corresponded exactly to the page reference in edition of Vossius, and interpretation is correct. Ignatius *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 8.1.

⁶⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:219. It should be noted that the translator of *ANF* 1.75 translated the *πεισμονης* as silence rather than persuasion, as Gill correctly did.

⁶⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:374. The page reference cited in Ignatius is correct, and the translation is accurate. Ignatius *Epistle to the Trallians* 11.1–3.

⁶⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:375. Again, the page reference of the citation was confirmed to be correct in the Vossius edition. Ignatius *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 1.1.

⁷⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:269. The page reference in Vossius was correct, and the translation accurate. Ignatius *Epistle to Polycarp* 6.2.

⁷¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:248 (Acts 11:26).

From as early as 1728, when Gill published the first edition of his *Exposition of Solomon's Song*, he displayed an awareness of the claims for the longer recension of the *Epistles of Ignatius*. Speaking about the early witnesses to the canonicity of the Song of Songs, he remarked that, if genuine, the larger epistles of Ignatius cited from Solomon's Song would prove an early reception of the Old Testament book.⁷⁴

From this survey of Gill's citations from Ignatius, one may conclude that Gill had a broad knowledge of Ignatius, having cited from each of his genuine epistles and three of his spurious works. Further, Gill's citations were extremely accurate. Each citation from the genuine epistles were compared to the Vossius edition and found to match exactly, though there was one minor oversight, which was quickly traced to the original source.

Second century. While Clement of Rome and Ignatius addressed their writings to Christian audiences, Justin Martyr (d. before 167) defended Christianity against unbelievers and persecutors. Justin was "the most important of the Greek apologists of the second century and one of the noblest personalities of early Christian literature," according to Johannes Quasten.⁷⁵ After his conversion from paganism, Justin devoted his life to defend the Christian faith in the midst of Roman persecution. His genuine extant writings are his two *Apologies*, which defended Christianity against the persecution of Roman authorities and the *Dialogue with Trypho*, which is the oldest extant Christian apologetic against Jews.⁷⁶

⁷²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:687, note w.

⁷³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:586, note m (Rom 16:6).

⁷⁴Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song, Commonly Called Canticles*, 2.

⁷⁵Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2005), 1:196.

⁷⁶Although several works were found in the manuscripts of Justin with the three genuine works, the following works were also included in the manuscripts but are considered spurious: *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, *Oratio ad Graecos*, *De Monarchia*, *Questiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, *Quaestiones*

Throughout his writings, Gill often cited from Justin’s writings. In at least sixteen of Gill’s works, evidence shows that he cited from the three genuine corpora of Justin.⁷⁷ For instance, Gill cited from Justin’s *First Apology* in his *Body of Practical Divinity* for historical support that the distribution of bread by deacons in the Lord’s Supper can be traced back to the early church.⁷⁸ The Baptist pastor also quoted from Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* in his *Cause of God and Truth* as evidence of an early Church Father who believed in the doctrine of original sin.⁷⁹ Further, in his exposition on 1 Corinthians 7:10, commenting that a woman should not divorce her husband, Gill cited the example from Justin’s *Second Apology* of a Christian woman who had divorced her profligate husband.⁸⁰ Moreover, of his sixteen writings, Gill cited from the three genuine

Christianorum ad Gentiles, Questiones Graecorum ad Christianos, and Confutatio Dogmatum Quorundam Aristotelicorum. Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:205–6.

⁷⁷There is evidence in over fifteen works of Gill that he cited from Justin Martyr. He cited from Justin Martyr in the following works: Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 155; Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:24; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:22 (Gen 3:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:371 (Exod 12:9); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:219 (Josh 10:13); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:616 (Preface to Psalm 22); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:10 (Matt 2:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:212 (Acts 8:9); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:563 (Rom 14:11); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:695 (1 Cor 12:3); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:836 (2 Cor 11:32); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:404 (Heb 6:4); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:688 (Rev 1:10).

Other works of Justin Martyr cited in Gill’s works are as follows: Gill, *Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ*, 186–87; John Gill, *The Divine Right of Infant Baptism, Examined and Disproved: Being an Answer to a Pamphlet, Entitled, A Brief Illustration and Confirmation of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism, Printed at Boston in New England, 1746* (London: J. Ward, J. Robinson, and G. Keith, 1749), 23; Gill, *Antipaedobaptism; Or Infant Baptism an Innovation*, 2:386.

⁷⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 920. See also Justin Martyr, *1 Apology*, chap. 65. Gill’s citation seems to suggest *2 Apology*, but he gives the exact page number in *1 Apology* edition.

⁷⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:219. “Now, we know that he did not go to the river because He stood in need of baptism, or of the descent of the Spirit like a dove; even as He submitted to be born and to be crucified, not because He needed such things, but because of the human race, which from Adam had fallen under the power of death and the guile of the serpent, and each one of which had committed personal transgression” (*ANF* 1:243; PG 6:685c).

⁸⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:645. See also Justin Martyr, *2 Apology*, chapter 2. Gill’s citation here is to *1 Apology*. Based on the previous note and this footnote, it seems that Gill’s copy of Justin Martyr inverted the apologies compared to what is printed in Migne and *ANF*.

works of Justin: fourteen are unique citations, seven from the *Dialogue with Trypho*, six from *2 Apology* (which is *1 Apology* in the modern versions), and one from the *1 Apology* (which is *2 Apology* in the modern versions).⁸¹ Although the diligent pastor cited from *Epistola ad Zenam et Serenum*,⁸² *Expositio Fidei*,⁸³ and *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*,⁸⁴ which were all included in the manuscripts of Justin, he acknowledged that these works may not be the genuine works of Justin.

Like Justin Martyr's, Gill also cited from the writings of Clement of Alexandria (150–ca. 215) in at least fifteen of his works.⁸⁵ Clement of Alexandria has been called “the pioneer of Christian scholarship.”⁸⁶ He was a man “full of eloquence and

⁸¹From the *Dialogue with Trypho*, Gill cited the following chapters of Justin's work: chapter 88 in his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, chapter 16 in his *Cause of God and Truth*, chapter 40 in his commentary on *Exodus*, chapter 132 in his commentary on *Joshua*, chapter 108, in his commentary on *1 Corinthians*, and chapter 78 in his commentary on *2 Corinthians*.

From the *2 Apology* (which is *1 Apology* in modern versions), Gill cited as follows: chapter 27 in his commentary on *Genesis*, chapter 34 in his commentary on *Matthew*, chapter 27 in his commentary on *Acts*, chapter 52 in his commentary on *Romans*, chapter 61 in his commentary on *Hebrews*, and chapter 67 in his commentary on *Revelation*. It should be noted that chapter 61 was also cited in *Divine Right of Infant Baptism* and *Antipaedobaptism*.

From the *1 Apology* (which is the *2 Apology* in the modern versions), he cited from chapter 61 in *Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ*.

⁸²Gill, *Discourse on Singing of Psalms*, 47.

⁸³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55.

⁸⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55.

⁸⁵Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:41–45; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 31; John Gill, *The Head of the Serpent Bruised by the Seed of the Woman. A Sermon on Genesis Iii. 15. Occasioned by the Death of Mrs. Martha Gifford, Late Wife of the Reverend Mr. Andrew Gifford, Preached January 14, 1732*. (London: Aaron Ward and H. Whitridge, 1733), 26; John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew-Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents* (London: G. Keith, 1767), 49; John Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song Commonly Called Canticles*, 3rd ed. (London: George Keith, 1768), 29; John Gill, *Doctrine of the Cherubim Opened and Explained*, in *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:39; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:425 (Exod 19:15); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:471 (1 Sam 12:18); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:771 (2 Kgs 1:2); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:505 (Job 39:22); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:91 (Ps 90:10); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:110 (Matt 10:25); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:198 (Acts 7:20); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:628 (1 Cor 5:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:785 (2 Cor 5:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:193 (Col 2:18).

⁸⁶Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:6.

learning, both in sacred Scripture and in secular literature,” recorded Jerome.⁸⁷ Having succeeded Pantaenus, Clement headed the school at Alexandria.⁸⁸ From his extensive library,⁸⁹ he produced many works, of which his primary extant works are the trilogy *Exhortation to the Greeks*, *Paedagogus*, and *The Stromata*.

The earliest citation of Clement is found in Gill’s *Doctrine of the Trinity*. The citation is from Clement’s *Stromata*, in which Gill referenced Clement to give a reason why the Son is called the Logos.⁹⁰ Two years after initially mentioning Clement, Gill published his sermon on the occasion of the death of Mrs. Martha Gifford. In the sermon, the pastor-scholar made reference to Clement’s *Exhortation to the Greeks*.⁹¹ By the time Gill published the final part of his *Cause and God and Truth*, his citations were primarily from the *Stromata* and *Paedagogus*. What is significant in the *Cause of God and Truth* is the number of places that Gill cited from Clement. In the *Cause of God and Truth*, he cited from all of the books in the *Stromata*, except for books 3 and 8.⁹² One will find a reference to book 3 of the *Stromata* in his commentary on Matthew 8:21. Likewise, he cited from at least five different chapters of book 1 in the *Paedagogus*.⁹³ From this survey of Clement, we may conclude that the citations indicate that Gill had read widely in the *Stromata* and *Paedagogus*.

⁸⁷Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 38.

⁸⁸Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 6.6.

⁸⁹Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 126.

⁹⁰Gill, however, indicated that he used Friedrich Sylburg’s edition for this citation. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 119. The Sylburg edition is the Paris edition, but the only difference is that Gill cited the edition in 1631 in the *Cause of God and Truth*, but in his listing of books in his library, the year given is 1641. Further, in PG, there is no mention of a 1631 Paris edition. There is a 1629 and 1641 but no 1631. For information on the editions that were available at that time, see PG 8:17–22.

⁹¹Gill, *Head of the Serpent Bruised*, 27.

⁹²Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:40–43, 228.

⁹³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 41–42, 382–83, 385.

Third century. Succeeding Clement at the school of Alexandria was his pupil, Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254). Origen was “the outstanding teacher and scholar of the early Church, a man of spotless character, encyclopedic learning, and one of the most original thinkers the world has ever seen.”⁹⁴ He has been dubbed “the first great theologian of the church”⁹⁵ and “greatest early theologian of the East.”⁹⁶ He was one of the most prolific authors of antiquity, alongside Augustine and Marcus Varro.⁹⁷

Despite the reputation, learning, and accomplishments of Origen, Gill was not ignorant of the errors and idiosyncrasies of the first great theologian of the church. Even though he claimed Origen for support for the eternal generation of the Son, the Baptist minister acknowledged that Origen’s writings contained many errors.⁹⁸ Gill noted that Origen taught the doctrine of universal salvation,⁹⁹ the pre-existence of human souls, including Christ’s from eternity,¹⁰⁰ and the erroneous notion that the resurrected body will be new and celestial.¹⁰¹ He also pointed out the deficiencies of the Latin translations of Origen’s work, for he wrote that this translation was “full of interpolations, additions, and detractions; so that, as many learned men observe, ‘one knows not when he reads *Origen*, and is at a loss to find *Origen* in *Origen*.’”¹⁰² He also criticized Origen and the school of Alexandria for “corrupt[ing] the simplicity of the gospel.”¹⁰³

⁹⁴Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:37.

⁹⁵Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983), 1.

⁹⁶Fred Norris, “Origen,” in *The Early Christian World*, 2 vols., ed. Philip F. Esler (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1005.

⁹⁷Joseph Trigg, *Origen* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 245.

⁹⁸Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:194.

⁹⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 1:245.

¹⁰⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 156, 273.

¹⁰¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 610.

Yet for all his criticism of Origen, Gill still recognized the importance and usefulness of the early Church Father's works. In fact, Gill cited from at least fourteen different works of Origen. He cited from Origen's second *Homily on the Gospel of John*, where Origen called the apostle John a divine.¹⁰⁴ In his work *Infant Baptism: A Part and Pillar of Popery*, Gill acknowledged that Origen in his *Commentary on Romans 5* claimed that the practice of infant baptism could be traced back to the apostles.¹⁰⁵ To show that the early church sang psalms, the Dissenting minister quoted a passage from Origen's *On Prayer* and included the original Greek in a footnote.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Gill claimed that the Jews divided the Psalms into five books and supported it with a citation from Origen's *Hexapla*.¹⁰⁷ In the Introduction to his *Commentary on the Gospel* according to Luke, Gill noted that Origen in his commentary on Romans 16:21 thought that gospel writer Luke was the Luke mentioned in Romans.¹⁰⁸ Gill referenced Origen's *Homily on Leviticus*¹⁰⁹ and disagreed with the early Church Father's reference in *First Principles* that Jude cited from the *Ascension of Moses* concerning the dispute over Moses' body.¹¹⁰ In reference to the place where John the Baptist was baptizing, Gill

¹⁰²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:471. Gill expressed the same sentiment in his *Reply to a Book, Entitled, "A Defence of the Divine Right to Infant Baptism."* He commented, "Erasmus observes, it is uncertain whether one reads Origen or Ruffinus; and Scultetus says the same thing; and Huetius, who has given us a good edition of the Greek commentaries of this father, and well understood him, says, that 'his writings are so corrupted by him, that you are at a loss to find Origen in Origen, and so deformed and unlike the original, they can scarce be known.'" Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:421.

¹⁰³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 1.

¹⁰⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xliii.

¹⁰⁵Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:513.

¹⁰⁶Gill, *Discourse on Singing of Psalms*, 49.

¹⁰⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:829.

¹⁰⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:496. See also PG 14:1288a.

¹⁰⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:624.

footnoted Origen who mentioned the place where John baptized in his *Commentary on John*.¹¹¹ As an early witness to the canonicity of the epistle of James, Gill cited from Origen's seventh *Homily on Joshua*,¹¹² and from Origen's first *Homily on Isaiah*, as he mentioned one of the early Church Fathers who affirmed that Isaiah was sawn in two.¹¹³ In his *Commentary on Genesis*, Gill cited Origen from *Philocalia* to corroborate the practice of Arabians circumcising their children at the age of thirteen.¹¹⁴ For a description of the lice in Exodus 8:17, Gill cited Origen's fourth *Homily on Exodus*.¹¹⁵ Then Gill cited from Origen's *Letter to Julius Africanus* to support his claim that the book of Judith was not available in Hebrew.¹¹⁶ Gill's growing reading of Origen is seen in the fact that in his first and second edition of the *Song of Solomon* he did not cite Origen but in the third edition published in 1768, he included a citation from Origen's *Homily on the Canticle of Canticles*.¹¹⁷ He cited from Origen's apologetic work *Contra Celsum* to show the early Church Father taught of the need of grace and help to do any good work.¹¹⁸

While Origen influenced the east with his voluminous writing, Tertullian exercised a similar influence on the Latin west. After Augustine of Hippo, Tertullian is "the most important and original ecclesiastical author in Latin."¹¹⁹ Cyprian's secretary

¹¹⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:674.

¹¹¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:750.

¹¹²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:493.

¹¹³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:468.

¹¹⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:126.

¹¹⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:351.

¹¹⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 6:780.

¹¹⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song*, 97; cf. Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song, Commonly Called Canticles*, 69; John Gill, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song, Commonly Called Canticles*., 2nd ed. (London: John Ward and George Keith, 1751), 92.

¹¹⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:236–37.

recalled how Cyprian “was accustomed never to pass a day without reading Tertullian, and that he frequently said to him, ‘Give me the master,’ meaning by this, Tertullian.”¹²⁰

Tertullian’s extant writings consist of thirty-one manuscripts, and these writings are usually categorized into a threefold division: (1) apologetic, (2) controversial, and (3) disciplinary, moral, and ascetical works.¹²¹

In the corpus of Gill, Tertullian (ca. 160–ca. 225) appears to be one of the most cited Patristic authors. Tertullian is cited in over forty of Gill’s works.¹²² Among the forty

¹¹⁹Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:247.

¹²⁰Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 53.

¹²¹Robert D. Sider, “Tertullian,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed., ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Routledge, 1999), 1107.

¹²²Tertullian is cited in Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:45–47; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xxxviii; Gill, *Antipaedobaptism; Or Infant Baptism an Innovation*, 2:390; John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Rise and Progress of Popery*, in *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:567; John Gill, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, in Favour of Infant-Baptism, with Others, Advanced in a Late Pamphlet, Called The Baptism of Infants a Reasonable Service, &c. Consider’d;... To Which Are Added the Dissenters Reasons for Separating from the Church of England* (London: G. Keith and J. Robinson, 1751), 30; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:346 (Acts 21:5); John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:185, 193; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:795 (John 5:2); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:687 (Rev 1:9); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:748 (1 Cor 16:2); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:653 (1 John 5:7); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:528 (1 Pet 1:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:668 (Introduction to Jude); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:365 (Introduction to Philemon); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:468 (Heb 11:37); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:493 (Introduction to James); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:363 (Matt 27:45); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:519; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:171 (Gen 24:65); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:393 (Exod 15:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:192 (Josh 4:20); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:285 (Judg 2:13); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:731 (1 Kgs 13:1); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:80 (2 Chr 26:15); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:121 (Ezra 8:21); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:177 (Esth 6:8); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:392 (Job 24:15); Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:797 (2 Cor 6:14); Gill, *Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew-Language*, 4; John Gill, *The Prophecies of the Old Testament, Respecting the Messiah, Consider’d; and Prov’d to Be Literally Fulfill’d in Jesus. Containing an Answer to the Objections of the Author of The Scheme of Literal Prophecy*. (London: Aaron Ward, 1728), 112; Gill, *Discourse on Singing of Psalms*, 20; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:180 (Introduction to Ps 110); Gill, *Divine Right of Infant Baptism*, 36; John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes* (London: George Keith, 1771), 66; John Gill, *The Faithful Minister of Christ Crowned*, in *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 1:599; Gill, *Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song*, 510; Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 99.

works, there are at least one citation from at least twenty five works of Tertullian. Gill cited from Tertullian's *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, in support of his interpretation that 1 John 2:19 did not address preachers only but all nominal Christians.¹²³ He suggested that there are traces of the doctrine of election and reprobation in the writings of Tertullian, citing from *De Corona*,¹²⁴ *De Resurrectione Carnis*,¹²⁵ *Ad Nationes*,¹²⁶ and *Adversus Marcionem*.¹²⁷ In addition, Gill found support not only for the doctrine of particular redemption in Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos*,¹²⁸ but also for the doctrine of original sin in *De Testimonio Animae*,¹²⁹ *De Patientia*,¹³⁰ *De Exhortatione Castitatis*,¹³¹ and *De Monogamia*.¹³² From the works of *De Viriginibus Velandis*,¹³³ *De Anima*,¹³⁴ and *Apologeticum*,¹³⁵ Gill found support for effectual grace. Other works that Gill cited from Tertullian included *De Fuga in Persecutione*,¹³⁶ *De Paenitentia*,¹³⁷ *De Idololatria*,¹³⁸

¹²³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 2:351.

¹²⁴Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:45.

¹²⁵Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 2:46.

¹²⁶Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 2:46.

¹²⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 2:46.

¹²⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:116.

¹²⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:229.

¹³⁰Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:230.

¹³¹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:230.

¹³²Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:230.

¹³³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:319.

¹³⁴Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:319.

¹³⁵Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:321.

¹³⁶Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:386.

¹³⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:391.

Scorpiace,¹³⁹ *De Pudicitia*,¹⁴⁰ *Adversus Praxean*,¹⁴¹ *De Baptismo*,¹⁴² *Ad Uxorem*,¹⁴³ *De Oratione*,¹⁴⁴ *De Cultu Feminarum*,¹⁴⁵ *De Carne Christi*,¹⁴⁶ and *Ad Scapulam*.¹⁴⁷ What can we conclude from Gill's citations of Tertullian? We can surmise that Gill engaged comprehensively with Tertullian.

Fourth century. Another favorite of Gill was the eminent doctor of the church, Ambrose (ca. 337–397). Gill cited from over twenty-five different works of Ambrose. He quoted from this eminent doctor's work *De Officiis Ministrorum* to illustrate the different offices that existed in the church at that time.¹⁴⁸ He referenced a historical incident in Ambrose's *De Virginibus*, relating to some virgins travel to Milan from far distances.¹⁴⁹ He quoted from two sermons of Ambrose to show the latter's support for fasting during Lent.¹⁵⁰ In another sermon of Ambrose, Gill made reference to the Latin Father's discussion of Peter and Paul's feasts days.¹⁵¹ He pointed out that

¹³⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:391.

¹³⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:391.

¹⁴⁰Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:392.

¹⁴¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

¹⁴²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 911.

¹⁴³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 957.

¹⁴⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 948.

¹⁴⁵Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:582.

¹⁴⁶Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:180.

¹⁴⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:528 (1 Pet 1:1).

¹⁴⁸Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:570.

¹⁴⁹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:571.

¹⁵⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:577–78.

¹⁵¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:579.

Ambrose's loose expression about the body and blood of Christ in his work *De Initiandis* [*de Mysteriis*] has fueled Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.¹⁵² Likewise, Gill cited Ambrose from his *De Excessu fratris Satyri* and how sailors and travelers took with them the Lord's Supper, which they called *viaticum*, as preparation for the next life.¹⁵³ In Gill's exposition of Proverbs 31:11, he cited Ambrose for different interpretive options, one of the interpretations was from Ambrose's *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII*.¹⁵⁴ In his *Essay on the Origin of Funeral Sermons, Orations, and Odes*, Gill made a passing reference to Ambrose's funeral sermon on Valentinian.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he also cited from *De Isaac* in his third edition of his *Exposition of the Song of Solomon*.¹⁵⁶ Gill cited from various works of Ambrose as witnesses to the doctrine of predestination. He referenced several exegetical works as *De Evangelii secundum Lucam*,¹⁵⁷ *De Abraham*,¹⁵⁸ *Enarratio in Psalm 48*.¹⁵⁹ He also mentioned a few letters (Epistle 5 and 27).¹⁶⁰ Similarly, to correct the notion that some may find in Ambrose's writings hints of particular redemption, Gill directed persons to consider a citation from Ambrose's dogmatic work *De Paenitentia*,¹⁶¹ from his moral and ascetical work, *De Institutione Virginibus*,¹⁶² or from his letters,

¹⁵²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:582.

¹⁵³Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:583.

¹⁵⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:544.

¹⁵⁵John Gill, *An Essay on the Original of Funeral Sermons: Orations, and Odes* (London: J. Roberts and H. Whitridge, 1729), 14. This work was included in a Catalogue of Works of Gill believed to have been published around 1750. A Catalogue of the Works of John Gill, D.D (London, 1750?), 3.

¹⁵⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song*, 52.

¹⁵⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:83.

¹⁵⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:83.

¹⁵⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:83.

¹⁶⁰Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:84.

¹⁶¹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:184.

Epistles 31 or 51.¹⁶³ Further, Gill cited from *De Apologia Prophetae David*,¹⁶⁴ *De Noe*,¹⁶⁵ *De Jacob*,¹⁶⁶ *De Tobia*,¹⁶⁷ *De Fuga Saeculi*,¹⁶⁸ and *De Paradiso*¹⁶⁹ in his discussion of original sin. Another dogmatic work cited from Ambrose was *De Spiritu Sancto*.¹⁷⁰

Another author that was commonly cited throughout Gill's work was Athanasius (ca. 295/300–373). Succeeding Alexander as patriarch of Alexandria,¹⁷¹ Athanasius opposed Arian doctrine throughout his entire life, despite being deposed five times.¹⁷² His many writings evince a man committed to defend the faith of Nicea. These writings consist of apologetic and dogmatical works, historical and polemical writings, exegetical works, moral and ascetical writing, and letters. Of great importance among the letters is the thirty-ninth Festal Letter of 367, which lists the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, declaring them to be canonical.

In Gill's third edition of his *Exposition of Solomon's Song*, he cited Athanasius' *Synopsis of the Sacred Scripture*¹⁷³ as evidence of a Church Father who

¹⁶²Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:184.

¹⁶³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:186.

¹⁶⁴Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:283.

¹⁶⁵Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:285.

¹⁶⁶Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:285.

¹⁶⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:285.

¹⁶⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:285.

¹⁶⁹Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:286.

¹⁷⁰Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:355.

¹⁷¹Sozomen *Ecclesiastical History* 2.17.

¹⁷²Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:20.

¹⁷³Gill was aware that the *Synopsis of the Sacred Scripture* may not have been a genuine work of Athanasius, for he mentioned in the Introduction to his commentary on Ezekiel that either Athanasius wrote the *Synopsis* or someone using his name. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 6:2.

affirmed Solomon as the author of the Song of Songs.¹⁷⁴ Replying to the Presbyterian Jonathan Dickinson, Gill reminded his Presbyterian brother that he should not confuse the acts of discipling and baptizing, and then he cited from Athanasius' *Orationes contra Arianos* to show that the fourth-century writer distinguished the two, noting that to teach preceded baptism.¹⁷⁵ From Athanasius' *Contra Gentes*, Gill referenced a historical observation in his commentary on Micah 1:7 concerning the harlotry of the Phoenician women in the temples.¹⁷⁶ The Baptist commentator mentioned Athanasius' *Synopsis of the Sacred Scripture* to show one of the early Fathers who believed the gospel according to Matthew was written in Hebrew.¹⁷⁷ In his commentary on Hebrews, Gill cited from the *Incarnation of the Word* in reference to Isaiah being put to death by sword¹⁷⁸ and, in his commentary on Exodus, Gill remarked that, according to Athanasius in *Contra Gentes*, the Egyptians worshipped the Nile as a god.¹⁷⁹ The sudden and unusual death of Arius is related in Athanasius' *Letter to Serapion Concerning the Death of Arius*.¹⁸⁰ Defending the eternal generation of the Son, Gill cited Athanasius' *Expositio Fidei* as someone who affirmed the Son was eternally begotten by the Father.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song*, 3. The first two editions do not include the citation to Athanasius. The reference to book 16 in the *Synopsis of the Sacred Scripture* is accurate (PG 28:349c). Athanasius wrote, "Τοῦ Σολομῶντος ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον συγγραφῆ, καθὰ προεδήλωται." The exact reference in *Synopsis of the Sacred Scripture* in the 1686 edition of Athanasius works is Athanasius, *Tou en Hagiois Patros Hemon Athanasiou Archiepiskopou Alexandrias Ta Heuriskomena Hapanta: Sancti Patris Nostri Athanasii Archiepiscopi Alexandriae Opera Quae Reperiuntur Omnia* (Coloniae: Mauritii Georgii Weidmanni, 1686), 2:98.

¹⁷⁵John Gill, *The Divine Right of Infant-Baptism, Examined and Disproved*, in *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:299.

¹⁷⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 6:554. The same comment was also made in Gill's commentaries on Lev 19:29 and Deut 23:18.

¹⁷⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:1.

¹⁷⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:468; Athanasius *De Incarnatione* §24.

¹⁷⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:346.

¹⁸⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:144. For complete letter, see PG 686–690; *NPNF*² 4:564–66.

Gill's Use of Gregory Nazianzen

Having surveyed Gill's use of the Fathers, this section will examine Gregory Nazianzen (ca. 330–90) and then Augustine (354–430) in the next section. In this section, we will examine the sources of citations, a table of citations, accuracy of translations, purpose of use, and assessment of Gill's use of Nazianzen.

Sources of citations. According to the table in part four of the *Cause of God and Truth*, Gill used the 1628 Paris edition of Nazianzen.¹⁸² His catalog of books at the end of his life, however, record that he owned a 1615 Paris edition of Nazianzen.¹⁸³ Further complicating the Paris editions is the discussion of the different Nazianzen editions in volume 35 of *Patrologiae Graeca* (PG). PG indicates that a Greek and Latin version first appeared in the 1609 Paris edition and then another Paris edition was issued in 1630.¹⁸⁴ It seems that the 1628 Paris edition corresponds to the Paris 1630 edition and the Paris 1615 corresponds to the 1609 Paris edition.

¹⁸¹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:203.

¹⁸²Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:447.

¹⁸³Gill, *Catalogue of the Library of John Gill*, 9.

¹⁸⁴PG 35.17–18. For similar editions mentioned in PG, see Edward Harwood, *A View of the Various Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics: With Remarks*, 4th ed. (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1790), 168.

Table 1. Gill's Citations of Nazianzen

Nazianzen's Works	Number of Citations	Gill's Works	Reference in Gill's Works	Publication Date
Orations 1, 5, 9, 14, 16, 31, 38, 42, 43, 51,	13	Cause of God and Truth (CGT)	Part 4, chapter 3, section 21	1738
Carmens 1, 4, 13, 16, 25, 42, 47, 58,	9	CGT	Part 4, chapter 3, section 21	1738
Orations 6, 9, 12, 16, 19, 37, 43, 44,	9	CGT	Part 4, chapter 4, section 14	1738
Orations 4, 9, 32 Epistle to Basil	4	CGT	Part 4, chapter 2, section 23	1738 unknown
Orations 26, 29, 35, 40,	4	A Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ	Vol. 6, pp. 206-7	1768
Orations 4, 18, 20,	3	A Dissertation Concerning the Rise and Progress of Popery	Vol. 1, pp 13- 14, 27	Unknown
Orations 9, 31, 32	3	CGT	Chapter 1, Section 15	1738
Orations 3, 29, 35	3	A Complete Body of Doc- trinal and Practical Divinity	xxxvi; 158 (2)	1769-70
Orations 4, 31	2	CGT	Chapter 5, Section 17	1738
Carmen Iambic 2	2	CGT	Chapter 5, Section 17	1738
Oration 47	1	Commentary Ezekiel	Ezek 1:3	1757-58
Epistle 18	1	Commentary on John	John 19:39	1746-48

Table 1 (Continued)

Oration 3	1	Funeral Sermon of Rev. Aaron Spurrier	Sermons and Tracts (1773): 1:465	Preached 1749 and published 1773
Oration 40	1	The Argument From Apostolic Tradition, In Favor of Infant-Baptism, Considered	Sermons and Tracts (1773): 2:334	1751

In Table 1, one may observe several things. First, Gill’s citations demonstrate a broad engagement with Nazianzen. The Baptist minister cited from twenty six orations, ten poems and two epistles of Nazianzen. Second, these citations show that Gill’s most extensive period of reading Nazianzen occurred by 1738, which coincided with his publication of his *Cause of God and Truth*. His reading of Nazianzen during this period resulted in citations from nineteen orations and ten poems. Third, it is somewhat surprising that Gill did not cite from Nazianzen’s *Theological Orations*, when he published his *Treatise on the Trinity*, though he did cite from the *Theological Orations* in his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*.¹⁸⁵

Translation of Nazianzen. Several citations from Gill were selected and examined for accuracy in the original. Three selections are reproduced for analysis. The first is a passage from *Oration 42 Final Farewell: Delivered in the Presence of the 150 Bishops*. This oration was originally delivered in Constantinople in 381 before the bishops attending the council and before Nazianzen’s own flock. Though Gregory wrote very little on the doctrine of predestination, Gill quoted from this oration because he considered it the most significant passage to confirm Nazianzen’s teaching on predestination:

¹⁸⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

Three persons gathered together in the name of the Lord, are more esteemed of by God than multitudes that deny his Deity; would you prefer all the *Canaanites* to one *Abraham*? or the *Sodomites* to one *Lot*? or the *Midianites* to *Moses*, even to these sojourners and strangers? what, shall the three hundred men that lapped with Gideon, be inferior to the thousands that turned away? or Abraham's servants, though less in number, than the many kings and myriads of soldiers, whom they, though few, pursued and put to flight? How dost thou understand that passage, *If the number of the children of Israel was as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved?* as also that, *I have reserved for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal?* It is not so, it is not, *ouk en tois pleiosin eudokesen o Theos*, "God does not take pleasure in the multitude; thou numberest myriads, but God, *tous sozomenous*, those that are to be saved; thou the unmeasurable dust; but *I ta skeue tes ekloges*, the vessels of election."¹⁸⁶

The translator from the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers (*NPNF*) series translated the same passage as follows:

Three gathered together in the Name of the Lord count for more with God than tens of thousands of those who deny the Godhead. Would you prefer the whole of the *Canaanites* to *Abraham* alone? or the men of *Sodom* to *Lot*? or the *Midianites* to *Moses*, when each of these was a pilgrim and a stranger? How do the three hundred men with Gideon, who bravely lapped, compare with the thousands who were put to flight? . . . Or how do you understand the passage that though the number of the children of *Israel* be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved? And again, I have left me seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *Baal*? This is not the case; it is not? God has not taken pleasure in numbers. Thou countest tens of thousands, God counts those who are in a state of salvation; thou countest the dust which is without number, the vessels of election."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:75–76. "καὶ πλέους Θεῶ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου, πολλῶν μυριάδων ἀρνούμενων θεότητα. Ἡ καὶ τοὺς Χαναναίους ἅπαντας προτιμήσεις ἐνὸς τοῦ Ἀβραάμ; ἢ καὶ τοὺς Σοδομίτας ἐνὸς τοῦ Λώτ; ἢ καὶ Μαδιθηναίους Μωσέως, τῶν παροίκων καὶ ξένων; Τί δαὶ τοὺς μετὰ Γεδεὼν τριακοσίους, τοὺς λάμψαντας ἀνδρικῶς, τῶν ἀποστραφεισῶν χιλιάδων; τί δαὶ τοὺς οἰκογενεῖς Ἀβραάμ, τοὺς μικρὸν ὑπὲρ τούτους τῶ ἀριθμῶ τῶν πολλῶν βασιλέων, καὶ τῶν τοῦ στρατοῦ μυριάδων, ἅς, καίπερ ὄντες ὀλίγοι, κατεδίωξαν καὶ ἐτρέψαντο; ἐκεῖνο δὲ πῶς νοεῖς, ὅτι Ἐὰν γένηται ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸ κατάλειμμα σωθήσεται; τί δαὶ τὸ, Κατέλιπον ἑμαυτῶ ἑπτακισχίλιους ἄνδρας, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔκαμψαν γόνυ τῇ Βάαλ; οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο, οὐκ ἔστιν. Οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν εὐδόκησεν ὁ Θεός. Ἡ. Σὺ μὲν ἀριθμεῖς τὰς μυριάδας, Θεὸς δὲ τοὺς σωζομένους; καὶ σὺ μὲν τὸν ἀμέτρητον χοῦν, ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ σκευὴ τῆς ἐκλογῆς." The page reference was checked in the 1630 Paris edition and confirmed to be accurate. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Gregorion Nazianzenou Ta Euriskomena. Sancti Patris Nostri Gregorii Nazianzeni Theologi, Opera*. (Paris: Claude Morel, 1630), 515 (PG 36:468a-b).

¹⁸⁷*NPNF*² 7.338.

In examining Gill’s citation of the original Greek, he is accurate. His English translation is faithful to the original, though he omits the word count or number (ἀριθμεῖς) in the final sentence so that it should read, “God numbers the multitudes.”

The second passage to be examined is from *Oration 5 Against Julian*. This passage was quoted by Gill in support of Nazianzen’s teaching particular redemption:

O God, why hast thou cast off forever? thy anger is stirred up against the sheep of thy pasture; remember thy congregation which thou hast possessed from the beginning, ἢν περιποιήσω τοῖς τοῦ μονογενοῦ Λόγου σου παθεσιν, ‘which thou hast purchased by the sufferings of thine only begotten Word,’ to which thou hast vouchsafed thy great covenant, and hast drawn to heaven by a new mystery and the earnest of the Spirit.¹⁸⁸

C.W. King, translator of the two invectives against Julian, translated the same passage as follows: “Wherefore hast Thou rejected us, O God; for ever? Hath Thy Spirit been wroth against the sheep of Thy pasture? Remember the help that Thou hast possessed from the beginning, which Thou hast obtained through the sufferings of Thy Only-begotten Word, which Thou hast thought worthy of the great Covenant, which Thou hast drawn up to the heavens by the New Mystery and by the pledge of the Spirit.”¹⁸⁹

Again, Gill’s citation of the original Greek is accurate. As far as his translation, he has a more accurate translation than King in some respects, for he has translated θυμός σου as “your anger” while King translated as “your Spirit been wroth” and Gill has translated συναγωγῆς as “congregation” while King translated as “help.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:171. “Ἴνα τί ἀπόσω, ὁ Θεός, εἰς τέλος; ὠργίσθη ὁ θυμός σου ἐπὶ πρόβατα νομῆς σου; Καὶ μνήσθητι τῆς συναγωγῆς σου, ἧς ἐκτίσω ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἢν περιποιήσω τοῖς τοῦ μονογενοῦς Λόγου σου πάθεσιν, ἢν τῆς μεγάλης σου διαθήκης ἠξιώσας, ἢν καὶ εἰλκυσας εἰς οὐρανούς τῷ καινῷ μυστηρίῳ, καὶ τῷ ἀράβῳ τοῦ Πνεύματος.” The citation was traced to the original source without exception. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Gregorion Nazianzenou Ta Euriskomena. Sancti Patris Nostri Gregorii Nazianzeni Theologi, Opera.*, 124 (PG 35:697).

¹⁸⁹C.W. King, trans., *Julian the Emperor: Containing Gregory Nazianzen’s Two Invectives and Libanius’ Monody: With Julian’s Extant Theosophical Works* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888), 107–8.

¹⁹⁰PG 35:697.

The third passage is from *Oration 40 On Holy Baptism*. Gill cited this passage in his *Discourse on the Eternal Sonship of Christ*: “Believe the Son of God, the word that was before all ages begotten of the Father before time, and in an incorporeal manner; the same in the last days made the Son of man for thy sake, coming forth from the virgin Mary in an unspeakable manner.”¹⁹¹ The *NPNF* translated the passage as “believe that the Son of God, the Eternal Word, Who was begotten of the Father before all time and without body, was in these latter days for your sake made also Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary ineffably.”¹⁹² Besides some differences in expressions, Gill’s English translation is virtually the same as the *NPNF*, and it is faithful to the original text in the Migne edition.¹⁹³

If these three passages are representative of Gill’s citation of Nazianzen, we may conclude that his use of the original is accurate and his translation into English is faithful to the original text.

Purpose of use. How did Gill use Nazianzen? What was his purpose for citing Nazianzen? Two purposes are evident in Gill’s citations of Nazianzen. Gill primarily, but not exclusively, cited Nazianzen for polemical purposes. Of the fifty-six citations from Gregory, fifty are included in a polemical work.¹⁹⁴ Forty-two are included in the polemical work the *Cause of God and Truth* and all of these citations are in part four of the work, in which Gill attempted to demonstrate that the pre-Augustinian Fathers had strands of Calvinistic teaching in their works. Not only forty-two citations were included

¹⁹¹Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:206. “Πίστευε, τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν προαιώνιον Λόγον, τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀχρόνως καὶ ἀσωμάτως, τοῦτον ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν, γεγενῆσθαι διὰ σὲ καὶ Υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ἐκ τῆς Παρθένου προελθόντα Μαρίας, ἀρρήτως” (PG 36:424b).

¹⁹²*NPNF*² 7:377 (Orat. 40.44).

¹⁹³PG 36:424a–b.

¹⁹⁴See table above for total number of citations.

in the polemical work the *Cause of God and Truth*, but four citations were included in the polemical work *A Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ*. Further, Gill cited Gregory for polemical purposes in his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*. Defending the distinctive persons of the Trinity, Gill rejected some that had redefined eternal generation of the Son: “Some, of late, have put a new sense on these words, equally as absurd as the former, and interpret them, of the creation of the human soul of Christ, in eternity; which they say, was then made and taken up into union with God.”¹⁹⁵ After he asserted and defended that eternal generation is taught in Scripture, he acknowledged the explanation of how Christ is begotten is a sublime mystery. Therefore, he looked to Gregory to succinctly express his own thoughts on the ineffability of the eternal generation of Christ. Gregory wrote, “Let the generation of God be honoured in silence; it is a great thing, (abundantly so) for thee to learn or know, that he is begotten; but “how” he is begotten, is not granted to thee to understand, nor, indeed, to the angels.”¹⁹⁶

Though Gill’s primary purpose for quoting Gregory was polemical, he sometimes cited him for non-polemical purposes. In his *Body of Practical Divinity*, Gill cited Nazianzen’s comments in his *Oration Against Julian* to illustrate that Julian the Apostate, in observing the success of Christian preaching, attempted to spread Heathenism by propagating pagan doctrines through lectures and preaching.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, Gill used a citation from Nazianzen to illustrate a point about myrrh in his commentary

¹⁹⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 155. This reference of Gill is probably to Isaac Watts who believed in the pre-existence of Christ’s human soul. See Isaac Watts, *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity: Or Father, Son, and Spirit, Three Persons and One God* (London: J. Clark, E. Matthews, and R. Ford, 1722), 178n; Isaac Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Clark, R. Hett, E. Matthews, and R. Ford, 1726), 18–20; Isaac Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, the Second Part (Viz.) IV. The Sentiments of the Ancient Jews and Christians Concerning the Logos or Word, Compar’d with Scripture. V. A Discourse of the Holy Spirit. VI. The Use of the Term Person in This Controversy. VII. The Distinction of Persons in the Godhead: Or, An Humble Essay to Illustrate the Doctrine of the Sacred Three* (London: J. Clark, R. Hett, E. Matthews, and R. Ford, 1725), 195–96.

¹⁹⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

¹⁹⁷Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 931.

on the Gospel of John. While commenting on the aloes and myrrh brought to bury Jesus in John 19:39, Gill stated that the myrrh, producing a pleasant smell, was used in funerals as, for example, in the case of Nazianzen's brother: "he lies dead, friendless, desolate, miserable, συμυρνς ολιγης ηξιωμενος, 'favoured with a little myrrh.'"¹⁹⁸ Again, at the funeral of Rev. Aaron Spurrier, Gill preached on Philippians 1:23 and, in opening up the text under the second main head, he considered whether the apostle desired to die "in an unlawful or dishonorable way" as some have because they did not want to continue to live because of some disappointment.¹⁹⁹ To illustrate this disappointment, he drew upon Gregory's writing in which Aristotle is reported to have desired death because he could not explain the cause of ebbing and flowing of the Euripus.²⁰⁰

Assessment of use. Several comments can be made regarding the assessment of Gill's use of Nazianzen. First, Gill respected Nazianzen but he sometimes critiques Nazianzen in his writings. For example, in his *Dissertation Concerning the Rise and Progress of Popery*, he traced the errors of the papacy praying to the saints as founded as early in men such as Gregory who prayed to the deceased Cyprian and Basil.²⁰¹ In the same work, Gill recorded how Rome used certain unguarded statements by the Fathers such as Gregory to support their teaching of transubstantiation: "In the fourth century several unguarded expressions were used, as by Athanasius, . . . and by Nazianzen, who speaks of some defiling the altars with blood, which have their name from the most pure and unbloody sacrifice."²⁰²

¹⁹⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:121.

¹⁹⁹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:465.

²⁰⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:465.

²⁰¹Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 1:13–14.

²⁰²Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 1:27.

Second, Gill's citations intimate that he had a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of Nazianzen. These citations reflect that he read Nazianzen's orations, poems, and epistles. As a result of his thorough knowledge of Nazianzen, Gill challenged authors, such as Whitby, regarding their interpretations of the Fathers, often bringing forward quotations to defend his position.

Third, Gill's citations of Gregory indicate a high level of scholarship. Like Calvin, "he did not confine himself merely to commenting on the Fathers or giving brief quotations, as did most of his fellow Reformers. His quotations are long and plentiful."²⁰³ When Gill cited Nazianzen, he gave detailed information that would allow one to examine his writings. His citations were remarkably accurate. As a scholar, he read the original languages and rendered a faithful translation.

Fourth, his use of Nazianzen was generally faithful to the author's intent. For in reading the larger context of some of the selections, Gill accurately represented the authors. This is not to deny that in some places he may not have faithfully represented Nazianzen, but generally he was faithful. For instance, in the *Cause of God and Truth*, Gill is restrained in his claims, making the point that he simply wants to show that Arminians cannot claim consensus of the Ancient Fathers for their position. "I do not pretend to reconcile all their different expressions, which may seem contradictions to themselves and to truth: what I propose, and have in view, is to make it appear that the Arminians have no great reason to boast of antiquity on their side."²⁰⁴ He does not attempt to argue that men such as Gregory of Nazianzus unequivocally taught the Calvinistic system.

In summary, Gill's use of Gregory of Nazianzus was multifaceted. Sometimes, he used Nazianzen for polemical and other times for non-polemical purposes. Gregory

²⁰³Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 51.

²⁰⁴Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:11.

was used to confirm the teaching of the Scripture, rebut the claims of opponents, and illustrate the truth. Moreover, Gill's reading of Gregory was not limited but broad, for Gill's citations indicate wide exposure to the corpus of Gregory's writings. Next, Gill did not read Gregory uncritically, for he was aware that Gregory, though godly and righteous, did not always have clear and distinct views on some doctrines and in even some cases led to the church's corruption in doctrine and practice. Then, Gill's translation and use of Gregory is faithful. We may thus summarize Gill's use of Nazianzen as varied in purpose, comprehensive in reading, critical in appropriation, and accurate in translation and interpretation.

Gill's Use of Augustine

Edition used. By the time Gill was born in 1697, the complete works of Augustine had been printed several times in Latin and another edition was nearing its completion that would be published by 1700. The first edition of Augustine's works was printed by Johannes Amberach in Basel between 1505 to 1517 and was subsequently reprinted in Basel in 1527–28 with a few changes by Erasmus.²⁰⁵ During 1576–77, the theological faculty of Louvain published an edition of the complete works printed by Christophe Plantin in Antwerp.²⁰⁶ Almost a century later, the Benedictines of St. Maur published the most respected edition of Augustine's complete works in Paris from 1679 to 1700.²⁰⁷ From this Maurist edition came the standard text which was reprinted with some minor revisions by Jacques-Paul Migne in *Patrologia Latina* (PL) 32–47 (Paris, 1841–49). Which edition did Gill use for his reading and interaction with Augustine? Thankfully, he has left his readers with no doubt which edition he used. In a footnote in

²⁰⁵Kenneth B. Steinhauser, "Manuscripts," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 528–29.

²⁰⁶Steinhauser, "Manuscripts," 528–29.

²⁰⁷Steinhauser, "Manuscripts," 528–29.

his work, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, in Favor of Infant Baptism, Considered*, Gill informed his reader that he used the Louvain edition published by Plantin in 1576.²⁰⁸

Table 2. Summary of Augustine's Citations

Number	Works of Augustine	Citations	Works of Gill
1.	Confessiones	5	3
2.	Contra Adversarium Legis et Prophetarum	1	1
3.	Contra Duas Epistolas Pelagianorum	4	1
4.	Contra Faustum Manichaeum	2	2
5.	Contra Felicem Manichaeum	1	1
6.	Contra Julianum	3	2
7.	Contra Litteras Petiliani	1	1
8.	De Baptismo contra Donatistas	2	2
9.	De Civitate Dei	35	14
10.	De Correptione et Gratia	1	1
11.	De Cura pro Mortuis	1	1
12.	De Doctrina Christiana	2	2
13.	De Dono Perseverantiae	6	1
14.	De Genesi ad Litteram	1	1
15.	De Gratia Christi et de Peccato Originali contra Pelagium	2	2
16.	De Haeresibus	17	10
17.	De Libero Arbitrio	1	1

²⁰⁸Gill, *Argument from Apostolic Tradition*, 23.

Table 2 (Continued)

18.	De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia	1	1
19.	De Octo Quaestionibus ex Veteri Testamento	1	1
20.	De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione et de Baptismo Parvulorum	7	4
21.	De Praedestinatione Sanctorum	1	1
22.	Enarrationes in Psalmos	5	3
23.	Enchiridion	6	5
24.	Epistolae	7	3
25.	Expositio quarumdam propositionum ex Epistola ad Romanos	1	1
26.	In Epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos Tractatus Decem	2	2
27.	In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus Centum Viginti Quatuor	1	1
28.	Quaestionum in Heptateuchum	1	1
29.	Retractationes	1	1
30.	Sermones	3	2
	Psuedo-Augustine		
	Sermones	2	2
	Non-cited references ²⁰⁹	12	3
	Total	135	

Gill's engagement with Augustine. To what extent did Gill engage with Augustine can be assessed from the summary of his citations in the above table. After reviewing Gill's citations of Augustine, one may conclude that Gill engaged with Augustine extensively and broadly throughout his career. In Gill's literary corpus, he cited Augustine at least one hundred and thirty-five times from at least thirty different works. His favorite citation sources were as follows: (1) *On the City of God* cited thirty-five times, fifteen of which are included in his *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*,

²⁰⁹ These are primarily references or summations to Augustine.

and (2) *On Heresies* cited seventeen times, four of which are included in his *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. Other frequent sources included *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism*, *Letters*, *Confessions*, *Against Pelagian*, and *On Predestination*.

Gill's purpose for using Augustine. Gill's purpose for using Augustine was twofold: polemical and non-polemical. In at least seventy-one of the one hundred and thirty-five citations, his primary use was polemical where he appealed to Augustine to support an argument or sometimes to disagree. For example, he appealed to Augustine as support for his view on eternal Sonship, but was not averse to disagree with him on some teaching, as he did on baptism. Gill's polemical use of Augustine's writings began in 1731 with his work on the *Trinity* and continued throughout his career, reaching its zenith with twenty-three citations in his *Cause of God and Truth* and seventeen citations in his baptismal writings, *Argument from Apostolic Tradition, in Favor of Infant Baptism* and *Antipaedobaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovation*. Not surprisingly, Gill's commentaries appear to be absent of polemical citations.

Although Gill's primary use of Augustine was polemical, his non-polemical use was also quite significant. His non-polemical use can be divided into two categories: exegetical/interpretive and historical/illustrative. By exegetical or interpretive use, Gill interpreted a passage and interacted with Augustine over the meaning. Sometimes, Gill disagreed with Augustine over translation or exegesis and stated his reasons for doing so. For instance, Gill commented that Augustine translated Psalm 39:9 as "because thou hast made me," but Gill believed the better translation of the verse was "because thou didst [it]," arguing that though it is true that God is the creator of man and therefore men are to remain quiet, "the sense is, that the psalmist was determined to be patient and quiet under his affliction, because God was the author of it; for though he is not the author of the evil of sin, yet of the evil of affliction; (see Amos 3:6); and it is a quieting consideration to a

child of God under it, that it comes from God, who is a sovereign Being, and does what he pleases; and does all things well and wisely, in truth and faithfulness, and in mercy and loving kindness.”²¹⁰ The majority of Gill’s exegetical use is found in his *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* and in his *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*

Not only did Gill use Augustine for exegetical or interpretive purposes, but he also used him for historical or illustrative purposes. If a heresy or heretic is mentioned, Gill often referred to Augustine’s work *On Heresies* for historical support of the error and practice.²¹¹ Occasionally, he included some historical detail from Augustine’s writings about the Punic language in his *A Dissertation Concerning The Antiquity Of The Hebrew-Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, And Accents*.²¹² In his commentary, Gill sometimes cited some historical detail from Augustine that is not critical to the interpretation of the passage, but assisted with background information. For example, while commenting on in Genesis 35:30 where Esau begged Jacob to give him some of that red stuff, which is identified as lentils in v. 34, Gill cited Augustine who mentioned that lentils were exported from Alexandria into other countries.²¹³ Similarly, in his exposition of Job 31:24, where Job defends himself by denying that he made gold his hope or fine gold his confidence, Gill cited Augustine who mentioned the Romans who, by contrast, did make gold their confidence by worshipping *Pecunia*.²¹⁴

²¹⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:693. The original reads, “*Obsurdi et non aperui os meum. Quoniam tu es qui fecisti me*” in Augustine, *Opera Omnia, Post Lovaniensium Theologorum Recensionem, Castigata Denuo Ad Manuscriptos Codices Gallicos, Vaticanos, Beligos, Etc., Necnon Ad Editiones Antiquiores et Castigatiores, Opera et Studio Monachorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti e Congregatione s. Mauri*, in *Opera Omnia* (Parisii: Gaume fratres, 1836–38), 4.455.

²¹¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128, 169, 609.

²¹²Gill, *Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew-Language*, 110.

²¹³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:177; Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms: 33–50*, vol. Part III, vol. 16 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2000), 328.

²¹⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:443; cf. Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 4.21.

Gill's Topical Use of Augustine

What topics did Gill address in his use of Augustine? Gill's topical use of Augustine was varied, for at least twelve different topics are addressed in his writings. These topics include baptism, Christ, the church, God, error and heresy, grace and salvation, last things, predestination, resurrection, sin and man, worship, and miscellany. Of these topics, baptism, sin and man, and triune God are the three most cited topics. These three topics will be briefly discussed next.

Baptism. Gill's most cited topic from Augustine was baptism. He cited him twenty times in five works: *Baptism A Public Ordinance of Divine Worship*, *Argument from Apostolic Tradition, In Favor of Infant Baptism*, *Antipaedobaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovation*, *A Reply to a Defence of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism*, and *A Body of Practical Divinity*. These twenty citations are scattered over twelve different works of Augustine and, as expected, all except two are polemical.²¹⁵ For example, in the tract, *Argument from Apostolic Tradition, In Favor of Infant Baptism*, Gill disputed with his antagonist who claimed that both Pelagius and Augustine said that infant baptism was never denied by any man, heretic or catholic and was the constant practice of the church. Gill argued that such a proposition cannot be proven concerning Pelagius when he said, "he never heard, no not any impious heretic, that would say concerning infants, what he had proposed or mentioned."²¹⁶ The antagonist understood Pelagius to mean that Pelagius had never heard any deny infant baptism. Gill replied that is not sense of the passage, for the meaning hinges upon the understanding of the phrase "what he had proposed or mentioned" (*quod proposuit*). He then appealed to and quoted from Augustine who said, "it is objected to them [the Pelagians] that they will not own that unbaptized infants are liable

²¹⁵See Appendix 1.

²¹⁶Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:328.

to the condemnation of the first man; & *in eos transfisse originale peccatum regenerati-
one purgandum*, and that original sin has passed upon them to be cleansed by
regeneration.”²¹⁷ From this quotation of Augustine, Gill concluded that Pelagius’ words
cannot mean he denied infant-baptism, but rather “either that he never heard that any one
should say, that unbaptized infants are not liable to the condemnation of the first man,
and that original sin had not passed upon them to be cleansed by regeneration; . . . or the
meaning is, that he never heard that any of them should say, that unbaptized infants are
liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has passed upon them to
be cleansed by regeneration, which is most likely.”²¹⁸ Nor did Augustine, Gill argued, say
that he had never heard any heretic or catholic deny infant baptism since he would have
read of Tertullian’s opposition to its practice. Further, Gill contended that since
Augustine presided over a council in Carthage that anathemized anyone who denied
infant-baptism, it is high unlikely that Augustine was unaware of some who denied
infant-baptism.²¹⁹

Gill acknowledged that Augustine believed infant-baptism as well as infant-
communion to have been an ancient practice of the church and apostolic tradition.²²⁰ But
he criticized Augustine for his argument based upon John 3:5 and 6:35 that infant-
baptism and the Lord’s Supper are necessary for eternal life.²²¹

Man and sin. The second most cited topic from Augustine in Gill’s writings
was the topic of man and sin. At least sixteen times, Gill cited Augustine. His two most
cited sources from Augustine on man and sin were the *City of God* and *Against Two*

²¹⁷Gill, *Argument from Apostolic Tradition*, 22.

²¹⁸Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:328.

²¹⁹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:329.

²²⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:330–31.

²²¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:331.

Letters of the Pelagians. For instance, after explaining that Adam’s sin resulted in the loss of original righteousness for him and his posterity, and consequently unholiness and unrighteousness set in, Gill cited Augustine who said, “the loss of good takes the name of evil” to affirm that the absence of good is evil.²²² While discussing the consistency of the freedom of the will with some kind of necessity, Gill agreed with Augustine that God does not force his saving will upon men, but he draws them by his omnipotent sweetness.²²³

Doctrine of God. Another commonly cited topic of Gill from Augustine was the doctrine of God. Gill cited Augustine twelve times on this topic with the majority of these citations from *On Heresies*. The primary purpose of these citations was not polemical but historical, for Gill often cited from *On Heresies* as historical evidence for some heresy taught in the past on the triune God.

One work that is surprisingly not cited from Augustine is *de Trinitate*. Not even in the chapter “Proving the Personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost” in Gill’s work on the *Trinity* (1731), or in his later work a *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* does he cite Augustine’s work *de Trinitate*. Such an omission requires some explanation. First, Gill does cite in his work on the *Trinity* the following treatises: Tertullian’s *Against Praxeas*, Boethius’ (480–524) *Against Eutyches and Nestorius*, Fulgentius’ (468–533) *Response to Arianism*, and Owen on the *Trinity*. But Gill does not cite in his treatise on the Trinity, any of Athanasius’ works, Basil of Caesarea’s *Against Eunomius* or *on the Holy Spirit*, any of Gregory Nazianzen’s *Theological Orations*, or Hilary of Poitiers’ the *Trinity*. Second, by 1738, Gill had cited Athanasius’ *Orations Against the Arians*,²²⁴ Basil of

²²²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 336.

²²³Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 1:36.

²²⁴Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:60.

Caesarea on *Against Eunomius* and *On the Holy Spirit*.²²⁵ Hilary of Poitiers on the *Trinity*²²⁶ and Gregory Nazianzen on *Oration 31*²²⁷ are in the fourth part of the *Cause of God and Truth*. Further, he continued to cite Athanasius, Basil, Hilary, and Nazianzen in his *Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ and Body of Doctrinal Divinity*. Third, when Gill published *A Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ* (1757–58), he quoted from Augustine’s *De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus* affirming the tri-unity of the Godhead:

We believe there is one God, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit; the Father because he has a Son, the Son because he has a Father; the holy Spirit because he is from the Father and the Son (proceeding and co-eternal with the Father and the Son,) — the eternal Father, because he has an eternal Son, of whom he is the eternal Father; the eternal Son, because he is co-eternal with the Father and the holy Spirit; the eternal holy Spirit, because he is co-eternal with the Father and the Son.²²⁸

After considering the evidence that Gill quoted from various Church Fathers writings on the doctrine of the Trinity, and even quoted a trinitarian confession from Augustine, it most unusual that he appeared to have never quoted from *De Trinitate*. We know that Gill had access to volume three, which included *de Trinitate*, since he cited *De Doctrina Christiana*, *Enchiridion*, and *De Genesi ad literam*, all of which were included in volume three. What reason then did Gill not cite from *De Trinitate*? One possible reason is that the battle over the doctrine of Trinity in the eighteenth century was primarily over the period prior to Augustine.

²²⁵Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:343.

²²⁶Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:341.

²²⁷Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 4:275.

²²⁸John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:213. The original in Augustine, *Opera Omnia*, 8:1693 is “Credimus unum esse Deum Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum. Patrem, eo quod Filium habeat: Filium, eo quod Patrem habeat: Spiritum sanctum, eo quod sit ex Patre et Filio. . . . Pater aeternus, eo quod aeternum habeat Filium, cujus aeternus sit Pater: Filius aeternus, eo quod sit Patri coaeternus: Spiritus sanctus aeternus, eo quod sit Patri et Filio coaeternus.”

Gill's Historical Use of Augustine

Gill's use of Augustine can be seen over four periods. Each period manifests not only an increased use of Augustine but also a diverse reading of the bishop. There is also a clear development of Gill's reading and citation of Augustine over his career. This section will examine that development over four periods.

1724–1731. Between the years 1724–1731, Gill published at least six works, of which only two included citations from Augustine: *Exposition of Song of Songs* (1728) in two volumes and *Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated* (1731). In these two works, Gill cited Augustine eight times. From these eight citations, there is little evidence, if any, of any significant influence of Augustine upon Gill's theology, for the citations are either used for historical purposes or exegetical purposes, which involved no serious theological debate at that time.

1732–1745. After the publication of his *Treatise of the Doctrine of the Trinity* and prior to the publication of his *Exposition of the whole New Testament*, Gill's citations increased fourfold to thirty-three with twenty-four included in the *Cause of God and Truth*. During this period, Gill cited from seven previously uncited works of Augustine, predominantly for polemical purposes.²²⁹ This polemical purpose focused upon three primary topics: sin and man, grace and salvation, and predestination. These three topics are no surprise, given the significance of Augustine to the Reformation. Although Gill cited Augustine on these various topics, he does not appeal to him as an authority, but rather treats him as *testes veritatis*, witness to the truth.

²²⁹(1) *Confessiones*, (2) *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus Centum Viginti Quatuor*, (3) *Contra Julianum*, (4) *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, (5) *Contra Duas Epistolas Pelagianorum*, (6) *De Correptione et Gratia*, (7), *De Dono Perseverantiae*.

1746–1761. The following period of literary production (1746–1761) indicates Gill’s steady use of Augustine with twenty-nine citations. During this fifteen year period, Gill published his three volumes of the *Exposition of the whole New Testament*, and works on *Argument from Apostolic Tradition, In Favor of Infant Baptism, Antipaedobaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovation*, and *Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship*. Despite the small decrease in total citations, Gill’s cited from twelve previously uncited works from Augustine.²³⁰ We know that he certainly had access to Augustine’s works by 1751 since he stated in *Argument from Apostolic Tradition* that he was using the 1576 edition published by Louvain.²³¹

1762–1770. Gill’s greatest interaction with Augustine coincided with his most flourishing period of writing. Gill published his four volumes of the *Exposition of the Old Testament* and *A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* between 1762–1770. During this period, Gill cited Augustine fifty-seven times, of which forty-four are in his *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. Of the fifty-seven citations, thirteen were from previously uncited works and twenty-four were from the *City of God*.²³² The *City of God* was particularly used during this final period for support in the discussion of the doctrine of last things, for all of Gill’s citations from Augustine on eschatology occurred during this period.

²³⁰(1) *De Peccatorum meritis*, (2) *De Gratia Christi et de Peccato Originali contra Pelagium*, (3) *De Libero Arbitrio*, (4) *De verbis Apostoli, Sermones. 10*, (5) *De Genesi ad Litteram*, (6) *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, (7) *Epist. 106*, (8) *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*, (9) *Epist. 105*, (10) *De tempore Sermones, 119*, (11) *Contra Felicem Manichaeum*, (12) *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*.

²³¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:329, note e.

²³²(1) *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum*, (2) *Retractationes*, (3) *Epist. 44*, (4) *Expositio Quarumdam Propositionum ex Epistola ad Romanos*, (5) *Contra Litteras Petilianiani*, (6) *In Epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos Tractatus Decem*, (7) *Contra Adversarium Legis et Prophetarum*, (8) *De Cura pro Mortuis*, (9) *De Octo Quaestionibus ex Veteri Testamento*, (10) *Epist. 121*, (11) *Epist. 86*, (12) *Epist. 119*, (13) *Epist. 19*.

Gill's use of Augustine can be summarized as comprehensive and varied. It was comprehensive, for Gill cited Augustine over one hundred and thirty times from over thirty different works. It was varied, since Gill cited Augustine for polemical, exegetical, and illustrative purposes, addressing topics, such as baptism, church, man and sin, predestination, God, error/heresy, and worship.

Gill's Use of Patristic Sources in Controversy

In the previous section, it has been argued that Gill should be viewed as a Patristic scholar. This has been shown by the breadth of citations from the Fathers and by the depth of citations through an examination of Nazianzen and Augustine. This section will build upon the previous study of Gill's Patristic scholarship and show how he used his Patristic sources in defense of the Trinity. This section is not intended to be exhaustive but representative of Gill's use of the Fathers in the trinitarian controversy. Gill looked to the Fathers for various purposes to defend the doctrine of the Trinity. He cited the Fathers to defend the plurality of persons in the Godhead, to gain an in-depth understanding of the various trinitarian heresies, and to define key trinitarian terms as person and substance. Further, Gill looked to the Fathers for reasons why the second Person of the Trinity is called the Logos, for defense of the eternal Sonship of Christ, and for justification to believe in the authenticity of the Johannine Comma.

One God Does Not Exclude A Plurality of Persons

In the first chapter of his treatise on the Trinity, Gill noted that Satan either attacks the full deity of the Son and Spirit, or he opposes the distinction of the persons in the Godhead. After quoting the apostle John that anyone who denies the Father and Son is the Antichrist (1 John 2:22), Gill quoted Tertullian as an early Church Father who opposed Praxeas' views that the Father and the Son are not distinct.²³³ Similarly, to show

²³³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 4. Gill cited chapter 30 from Tertullian's *Adversus Praxeam*,

that the Godhead is plural and thus does not exclude the Son and Spirit because of Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,” Gill cited two examples from Fulgentius of Ruspe’s (462/63 or 467/68–527 or 532)²³⁴ work entitled, *One Book Against Arians, Ten Responses to Ten Objections*.²³⁵ Responding to the objection of Deut 6:4 and Matthew 4:8, Fulgentius wrote:

which God we believe, is not the Father only, but the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For our faith, by which we serve and fear the one God, is not contracted by a personal union, nor disjoined by a substantial difference, lest we should either, after the manner of the Heathens, worship gods by worshipping different substances; or with *Sabellius*, deny the Son and the Spirit, not preferring the persons in the Trinity.²³⁶

Fulgentius replied: “If by the Lord God we understand the Father only, then we should neither serve nor worship the Son as God; for whatsoever does not belong to the nature of the Lord God only, ought not to be worshipped by us as God.”²³⁷

Understanding of Heresies

Furthermore, for an in-depth understanding of various trinitarian heresies, Gill immersed himself in the writings of the early Church Fathers. His reading included the works of Irenaeus, Augustine, Jerome, Eusebius, Hilary of Poitiers, Tertullian,

but the citation is actually from chapter 31. ca. 160-ca. 230. Tertullian, *Q. Sept. Florentis Tertulliani Opera: Ad Vetustissimorum Exemplarium Fidem Locis Quamplurimis Emendata, Nicolai Rigaltii I.C. Observationibus & Notis Illustrata Cum Indice Glossario Stili Africani* (Paris: Sumptibus Mathurini du Puis, 1641), 663.

²³⁴Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Fulgentius: Selected Works*, trans. Robert B. Eno, Fathers of the Church, vol. 95 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), xvi.

²³⁵The full Latin title is *Contra Arianos liber unus, ad decem objectiones decem responsiones continens*. For the life of Fulgentius, Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Fulgentius: Selected Works*, 3–56.

²³⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 21. “Quem Deum, non patrem solum credimus, sed patrem, & filium, & spiritum sanctum. Fides enim nostra, qua unum Deum colimus & timemus, nec unione personali contrahitur, nec substantiali diversitate disjungitur: Ne aut Deos Gentiliter colamus diversas colendo substantias, aut filium & spiritum cum Sabellio denegemus, non servantes in trinitate personas.” PL 65:212c.

²³⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 21. “Quod si Dominum Deum, solum patrem accipere debemus, filio ergo nec ut Deo serviamus, nec eum adoremus: Quicquid enim ad naturam Domini Dei solius non pertinet, ut Deus a nobis adorari non debet.” PL 65:221b.

Theodoret, Epiphanius of Salamis, Socrates, Sozomen, Leo Magnus, and Isidore.²³⁸ From Irenaeus, Gill noted that Simon Magus was the founder of all heresies. Magus had not only claimed that God is one person but he also had the audacity to portray himself as that one God who appeared among the Jews as the Son, in Samaria as the Father, and among the nations as the Holy Spirit.²³⁹ Gill's objection of the heresy of Simon Magus was buttressed with comments from Augustine's *Against Heresies* and Jerome's *Commentary on Matt 19:5*.²⁴⁰ Next, Gill acknowledged the early church historian, Eusebius, as a source for learning about the errors of the Ebionites who denied the deity of Christ, claiming that the Lord Jesus was a mere man.²⁴¹ Gill noted that in his *De Trinitate*, Hilary of Poitiers called Photinus "the Ebion of our day" because he imbibed the same erroneous doctrine as the Ebionites, and Jerome commented that Photinus attempted to reintroduce the Ebionite heresy.²⁴² Further, knowing that some in his day were holding to Christ's Sonship grounded solely in his humanity, Gill read of a similar error in the works of Irenaeus. Irenaeus had written about Carpocrates of Alexandria who had propagated that Christ was only a man, "son of Joseph, and was just like other men," except he had a suprahuman soul that was pure and which eventually ascended to the Father.²⁴³ From the writing of Tertullian, Gill observed that Valentinus believed that Christ "passed through the virgin Mary, as water through a pipe" and thus Tertullian concluded that the Gnostic leader believed "Christ was born by a virgin, but not of a virgin."²⁴⁴ In Epiphanius, Gill

²³⁸John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:179–214.

²³⁹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:179. See also *ANF* 1:347–48.

²⁴⁰John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:179. See also *PL* 42.25–26.

²⁴¹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:180. See also *NPNF*² 1.158–59.

²⁴²John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:180. See also *NPNF*² 9.119.

²⁴³John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:184–185. See also *ANF* 1:350–51.

²⁴⁴*ANF* 3:652. John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:185.

read that Theodotus believed that Christ was “a mere man, but born of the seed of man.”²⁴⁵ Gill also cited from Tertullian’s *Prescription Against Heresies* and *Against Praxeas* for evidence of individuals or groups, such as Praxeas, Victorinus, and Cataphrygians, who denied a real distinction in the Godhead.²⁴⁶ Likewise, Gill received help from Augustine’s *On Heresies* for understanding not only the errors of Noetius and Simon Magus who held that there is only person in the Godhead but also the Macedonians, known as the Pnuematomachi, for denying the deity of the Holy Spirit.²⁴⁷ Gill also referenced Tertullian and Augustine for understanding the heresies of Menander, Saturninus, and Basillides.²⁴⁸

Use and Definition of a Person and Substance

Not only did Gill use the early Church Fathers to bear witness to the confession that the one true God does not exclude a trinity of persons and to clarify his understanding of trinitarian heresies, but he also looked to the Ancient Church for the use of the word “person.” Gill noted that the word was used in the early church’s works *Expositio Fidei* and *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, which some thought to be Justin Martyr’s, though Gill had his doubts.²⁴⁹ Again, Gill observed the term “person” was frequently used in the writings of Tertullian and then cited seven different chapters where the word was used in *Against Praxeas*, of which one chapter included a definition of

²⁴⁵John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:186. See also PG 41:964a

²⁴⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 52–53. It should be noted that Gill appeared to have attributed the heresies identified in chapters 46–53 (*Adversus omnes haereses*) to Tertullian, which scholars believe was written by someone else. Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:272. Tertullian wrote, “But after all these, again, one Praxeas introduced a heresy which Victorinus was careful to corroborate. He asserts that Jesus Christ is God the Father Almighty” (*ANF* 3.654). Speaking about the Cataphrygians, Tertullian wrote, “Other heretics swell the list who are called Cataphrygians, but their teaching is not uniform” (*ANF* 3.654).

²⁴⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 52–53, 197. See also PL 42.25–26, 32, 40–41.

²⁴⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 99.

²⁴⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55.

person.²⁵⁰ Boethius' famous definition of a person as "an individual substance of rational nature" was also examined.²⁵¹

Since the word *substantia* was controverted at one point in the early church, Gill cited Patristic sources to clarify how this important term was finally understood. He cited from *Expositio Fidei* and *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, Origen's *Contra Celsum*, and Boethius' *de Persona & Natura* to show that the word *substantia* was at one point in the early church used by some Latin Fathers as being synonymous with *hypostasis*. But when the Latin Fathers saw how *substantia* might lead some to think of three distinct divine beings, he noted that the Latin Fathers chose to use *persona* instead of *substantia*.²⁵²

Reason Second Person Called Logos

Undertaking to understand the reason why the second Person of the Godhead is called Logos, Gill looked to the early Church Fathers and how they understood the term. He suggested that the second Person was designated the Word because as a "conception of the mind, which is Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος is the birth of the mind . . . is the very representation of the mind, and of the same nature with it, yet something distinct from it: so Christ is the begotten of the Father . . . of the same nature with him, though a person distinct from him."²⁵³ Moreover, Gill identified several Fathers or writings that understood the Logos as the interpreter of the Father's mind: Justin Martyr's *Dialogue*

²⁵⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55–56.

²⁵¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 56.

²⁵²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 93–94.

²⁵³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 117–18. Gill cited Ignatius' *Epistle to the Magnesians*, chap. 8 (PG 5.765b); Athenagoras' *Plea for Christians*, chap. 10 (PG 6:909a); Theophilus' *To Autolycus*, chaps 10 (PG 6. 1064c) and 22 (PG 6.1088a-b); and Taitian's *Address to the Greeks*, chap. 5 (PG 6.813c) to show several writers who understood the Logos as an essential or innate Word, which was begotten.

with Trypho,²⁵⁴ Theophilus of Antioch's *To Autolycus*,²⁵⁵ and Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*.²⁵⁶ Gill remarked that when these writers spoke of the Word as an interpreter of the Father's mind, they did not use it in the same sense as Sabellians did, as if the Logos was a "mere attribute, and not a real person."²⁵⁷

Eternal Sonship of Christ

Although some denied the eternal Sonship of Christ, Gill defended it.²⁵⁸ In his work on the eternal Sonship of Christ, Gill marshalled an impressive examination of the early Church Fathers to defend the eternal generation of the Son. In fact, Gill cited twenty-one different Patristic authors.²⁵⁹

Gill denied that Christ was called the Son of God because of his miraculous conception and birth, which some based upon Luke 1:35. After giving the meaning of Luke 1:35, he presented five reasons why the miraculous conception and birth cannot be the ground for calling Christ the Son of God. One of the reasons he offered was that if Christ was the Son of God only due to his human nature, then for Paul to add "according to the flesh" to the Sonship of Christ makes no sense. Gill explained that a father or mother does not speak of his or her son as someone according to the flesh, for it is obvious the son has a human nature. But Paul, he reasoned, added the phrase "according to the flesh" in order to distinguish his human nature from his divine nature. Gill then

²⁵⁴PG 6:776a.

²⁵⁵PG 6:1088b.

²⁵⁶PG 9:16b.

²⁵⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 119.

²⁵⁸See chapter 7 for those who opposed the eternal sonship of Christ.

²⁵⁹Gill cited the following persons: (1) Polycarp, (2) Justin Martyr, (3) Irenaeus, (4) Gregory Athenagoras, (5) Theophilus of Antioch, (6) Clement of Alexandria, (7) Tertullian, (8) Origen, (9) Cyprian, (10) Gregory Thaumaturgus, (11) Dionysius of Alexandria, (12) Athanasius, (13) Alexander of Alexandria, (14) Ephiphanius, (15) Hilary of Poitiers, (16) Gregory Nazianzen, (17) Basil of Caesarea, (18) Gregory of Nyssa, (19) Ambrose, (20) Jerome, (21) Augustine, (22) Fulgentius. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:186–214.

cited from Tertullian's *Against Praxeas*²⁶⁰ and Theodoret's *Dialogue*²⁶¹ as witnesses to corroborate this understanding of Romans 1:4. According to Gill, Paul meant to distinguish the human nature and divine nature when he spoke of Jesus as the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness.²⁶²

Moreover, Gill observed how the early Church Fathers did not pry into the mode of eternal generation. They simply acknowledged its ineffability. Gill cited from Gregory Nazianzen's *Oration 29* in which the Cappodocian Father cautioned his readers not to be overly curious about how the Father generated the Son: "Do you hear of generation? do not curiously enquire how it is. Do you hear that the holy Spirit proceeds from the Father? do not be anxiously solicitous how it is: for if you curiously search into the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit, I shall curiously enquire into the temperament of the soul and body, how thou art dust, and yet the image of God? How the mind remains in thee, and begets a word in another mind?"²⁶³ Similarly, Ambrose of Milan confessed that the generation of the Son is beyond the ken of every creature:

You ask me, how he can be a son if he has not a prior father? I ask of you also, when or how you think the Son is generated? for to me it is impossible to know the secret of generation; the mind fails, the voice is silent; and not mine only, but that of the angels; it is above angels, above powers, above cherubim, above seraphim, and above all understanding, if the peace of Christ is above all understanding, (Phil 4:7) must not such a generation be above all understanding?²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰“Thus does the apostle also teach respecting His two substances, saying, ‘who was made of the seed of David’” (Rom 1:5); in which words He will be Man and Son of Man. ‘Who was declared to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit’ (Rom 1:4); in which words He will be God, and the Word—the Son of God. We see plainly the twofold state, which is not confounded, but conjoined in One Person—Jesus, God and Man” (*ANF* 3.624).

²⁶¹“It is enough to say ‘according to the Flesh’ to declare the Godhead which is not expressed in terms. When speaking of a relationship of man in general I do not say the son of such an one ‘according to the flesh,’ but simply ‘son’” (*NPNF*² 3.172).

²⁶²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 154.

²⁶³John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:207.

²⁶⁴John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:208 See also *NPNF*² 10.212.

Again, Gill cited Rufinus' *Exposition of the Apostle's Creed*, in which the fourth-century author stated: "when you hear of a Father, understand the Father of a Son, the image of his substance; but how God begat a Son do not discuss, nor curiously intrude into the depth of this secret."²⁶⁵ Then, Gill mentioned Boethius who acknowledged the "the Father has a Son begotten of his substance, and co-eternal with him, whose generation no human mind call conceive of."²⁶⁶

When many were denying the eternal Sonship of Christ, Gill looked to the early church for confirmation that the Son was begotten or was the Son of God by nature. Gill mentioned that Ignatius in the shorter recension of the epistle to the Trallians spoke of the Son as begotten by the Father before the creation of the world and in the longer recension of the same epistle there is evidence Ignatius was aware that some in his time denied Christ was begotten by the Father.²⁶⁷ Similarly, Gill noted that Justin Martyr in his *First Apology* speaking about the Son confessed, "We speak that which is true, Jesus Christ alone is properly the Son begotten by God, being his Word, and first-born, and power, and by his will became man; these things he hath taught us."²⁶⁸ And to show that there is a distinction between the Father and the Son, Gill quoted Justin who acknowledged in his *First Apology*, "Ye must understand, ye hearers, if ye do but attend, the Word declares that 'this birth was *begotten by the Father before all creatures*, and that which is *begotten* is *numerically* another from him that *begets*.'"²⁶⁹ Based on Justin's quotation, Gill exclaimed, "What can be more express[ed] for the eternal generation of

²⁶⁵John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:209.

²⁶⁶John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:215.

²⁶⁷John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:183.

²⁶⁸John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:187.

²⁶⁹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:188.

the Son of God, and that as a distinct person from his Father!”²⁷⁰ Next, Gill examined Gregory Thaumaturgus who confessed,

One God, the Father of the living Word, of subsisting wisdom and power, and of the eternal character, perfect begetter of the perfect One, Father of the only begotten Son: and God the Son, who is through all. The perfect Trinity, which in glory eternity and kingdom, cannot be divided nor alienated. Not therefore anything created or servile is in the Trinity, nor any thing superinduced, nor first and last; nor did the Son ever want a Father, nor the Son a Spirit: but the Trinity is always the same, immutable and invariable.²⁷¹

Johannine Comma

In his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, Gill asserted that 1 John 5:7 demonstrated the plurality of three persons in the Godhead. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, 1 John 5:7 had posed a textual problem for trinitarians. Gill defended the authenticity of 1 John 5:7, despite its absence in Syriac, Latin, and many Greek manuscripts.²⁷² He asserted that the text appeared in several early Church Fathers: Fulgentius of Ruspe in the sixth century, Jerome in his Latin translation at the end of the fourth century, Athanasius in the middle of the fourth century, Cyprian in the middle of third century, Tertullian in the beginning of the third century, and Clement of Alexandria at the end of the second century.²⁷³ Therefore, he believed that since there is textual evidence of its use up to one hundred years, that is sufficient evidence of its authenticity. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge that he would not rest his argument on this one text but believes the whole Bible bears witness to the truth of the Trinity.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:188.

²⁷¹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:196.

²⁷²Recent scholars, such as Bruce Metzger, stated that 1 John 5:7 is “absent from the manuscripts of all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic), except the Latin.” He then presented external and internal evidence to show that 1 John 5:7 is a spurious text. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 647–49.

²⁷³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 136.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Gill should be viewed as a Patristic scholar on the basis of a survey of Gill's use of the early Church Fathers, his in-depth reading of Nazianzen and Augustine, and by his employment of the Fathers in the trinitarian controversy of the eighteenth century.

²⁷⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 136.

CHAPTER 5

GILL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: ITS IMPORTANCE, REVELATION, MYSTERY, AND DEFINITIONS

The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity

The previous chapters have provided a context to now examine Gill's doctrine of the Trinity. Consistent with the convictions of the Reformers and the Protestant orthodox,¹ Gill contended that the doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. He expressed this contention in his sermons, commentaries, and treatises. In his sermon at the ordination of John Reynolds in 1766, Gill delivered the charge preaching from 2 Timothy 1:13: "Hold fast the form of sound words." In the sermon, the elder statesman of the Particular Baptists denomination admonished the newly ordained pastor to hold fast to the doctrine of the Trinity because he asserted that it is "the foundation of revelation, and of the economy of man's salvation; it is what enters into every truth of the gospel, and without which no truth can be truly understood, nor rightly explained."² Moreover, the doctrine of the Trinity was a prime article of faith Gill stated

¹Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 4:143–48.

²John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:53. Gill devoted more time to the defend the doctrine of the Trinity in this sermon than any of other nine doctrines he addressed. In fact, his treatment on the Trinity is three times longer than any of the other nine doctrines discussed. There were other Particular Baptists who asserted the importance of the Trinity. Joseph Stennett II maintained that the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity is of "greatest importance" to the glory of God. He continued that it is "of such consequence to the whole œconomy of our salvation, that it is the very plan and basis on which it is built; on which it appears to be the most beautiful structure that was ever contrived, and, without which, it is nothing but confusion." Joseph Stennett, *The Christian Strife for the Faith of the Gospel: A Sermon Preach'd at the Revd Mr. Hill's Meeting-Place, in Thames-Street, the 9th of February, 1738. Before a Society of Ministers and Gentlemen Engaged in a Design for the Encouragement of Young Men in Their Studies for the Ministry, Whose Hearts God Has Inclined to That Sacred Work* (London: Aaron Ward, 1738), 21–22. Benjamin Wallin, a Particular Baptist

in his commentary on Titus 3:10. As he evaluated the meaning of a heretic, Gill presented two definitions, one of which he identified as someone who denied a “fundamental doctrine of Christianity, which affects particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity, and personality of Father, Son, and Spirit.”³ Similarly, in his commentary on 2 Peter 2:1, he deemed destructive heresies introduced by false teachers as “errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; such as relate to a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and to the person of Christ, to his proper deity, distinct personality, eternal Sonship, and real humanity . . . and to the Holy Spirit, his deity, personality, and divine influences and operations.”⁴ Not only did Gill underscore the importance of the Trinity in his sermons and commentaries, but he also emphasized the same in his *Treatise on the Trinity*. For example, at the beginning of his treatise, he declared the Trinity to be “a doctrine of great importance.”⁵

minister, deemed the doctrine of the Trinity as “that first and grand truth principle of revealed truth and the gospel.” Benjamin Wallin, *The Eternal Existence of the Lord Jesus Christ Considered and Improved* (London, 1766), v. Similarly, Wallin asserted that the Trinity of persons “lies at the foundation of our holy religion.” Benjamin Wallin, *The Scripture-Doctrine of Christ’s Sonship: Being Sermons on the Divine Filiation of Jesus, the Only Begotten of the Father* (London, 1771), vii. For similar sentiments on the importance of the Trinity, see Josiah Eveleigh, *A Vindication of Mr. Trosse from the Charge of Uncharitableness: Proving by Ten Arguments... That the Doctrine of the Trinity, and True Deity of Christ, is Fundamental* (London: Eman. Matthews, 1719); Isaac Watts, *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity: Or Father, Son, and Spirit, Three Persons and One God, Asserted and Prov’d, with Their Divine Rights and Honors Vindicated by Plain Evidence of Scripture Without the Aid or Incumbrance of Human Schemes: Written Chiefly for the Use of Private Christians* (London: J. Clark, E. Matthews, and R. Ford, 1722), vii, x, 152; Abraham Taylor, *The True Scripture Doctrine of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity: Stated and Defended, in Opposition to the Arian Scheme* (London: John Clark and Richard Hett, 1727), 12–13; Abraham Taylor, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated: In Opposition to Mr. Watts’s Scheme of One Divine Person and Two Divine Powers* (London: J. Roberts, 1728), i, xiii; Thomas Ridgley, *A Body of Divinity: Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion Are Explained and Defended. Being the Substance of Several Lectures on the Assembly’s Larger Catechism* (London: Daniel Midwinter, Aaron Ward, John Oswald, and Richard Hett, 1731–33), 1:101–02; Daniel Waterland, *The Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity Asserted, in Reply to Some Late Pamphlets* (London: W. Innys and R. Manby, 1734); Samuel Hayward, *Seventeen Sermons on Various Important Subjects* (London: Thomas Field, 1758), 107.

³John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 9:362–63.

⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:595.

⁵John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several*

Although Gill declared and defended the importance of the orthodox view of the Trinity, many others disputed and denied the doctrine as fundamental to Christianity. In his tract, *An Humble Inquiry into the Scripture-Account of Jesus Christ*, Thomas Emlyn (1663–1741), an English nonconformist minister, rejected the deity of Christ as a fundamental article of Christianity.⁶ Martin Tomkins (d. 1755) declared, while preaching to his Dissenting congregation at Stoke-Newington, that he could no longer hold that “the Doctrine of the Trinity, or of the Deity of Christ, according to what is generally reckon’d to be the Orthodox notion, is a *fundamental Doctrine of Christianity*.”⁷ James Foster (1697–50), who delivered a weekly lecture at Old Jewry for over twenty years and was a General Baptist minister in Paul’s-alley, Barbican,⁸ challenged those who insisted that the doctrine of the Trinity was a chief article of faith. Not only did Foster reject this chief article, but he also claimed that anyone who denied the Trinity was not debarred from heaven. Speaking about the Trinity, he stated, “It is not of altogether so high and important a nature as they think it to be, and that a disbelief is not in itself inconsistent with any man’s Christianity, nor will destroy his title to the favour of God, and eternal life.”⁹ He then asserted that the doctrine is not a fundamental or essential doctrine of the Christianity and presented two reasons to support his argument: (1) a fundamental

Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise (London: Aaron Ward, 1731), 3.

⁶Thomas Emlyn, *A Collection of Tracts, Relating to the Deity, Worship, and Satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ... to Which is Prefix’d, A True Narrative of the Proceedings of the Dissenting Ministers of Dublin Against the Author, and of His Prosecution and Suffering &C.* (London: James Knapton, John Sprint, and John Osborn, 1719), 41.

⁷Martin Tomkins, *The Case of Mr. Martin Tomkins. Being an Account of the Proceedings of the Dissenting Congregation at Stoke-Newington, Upon Occasion of a Sermon Preach’d by Him July 13, 1718* (London: John Clark, 1719), 23 (emphasis original); cf. 46.

⁸Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1811–30), 3:216.

⁹James Foster, *An Essay on Fundamentals; with a Particular Regard to the Doctrine of the Ever-Blessed Trinity. With an Appendix, Concerning the True Import of the Phrase, Son of God, as ‘tis Applied to Christ*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Noon, A. Millar, and J. Ward, 1754), 2.

doctrine must be clearly revealed in Scripture and (2) belief in that doctrine must be explicitly stated as necessary to enter eternal bliss.¹⁰ He later drew the conclusion that “the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one Supreme Being, is not a fundamental of Christianity” because he stated it is not clearly revealed in Scripture nor does the Scripture credit it such importance.¹¹

The Anglican divine John Jackson pleaded for liberty for those who rejected the Trinity to be an important and fundamental article of faith.¹² He asserted that there is no fundamental doctrine except what is “clearly express’d in Scripture” and that doctrine must be expressly stated as “necessary or fundamental.”¹³ What are the fundamental doctrines that are clearly revealed in Scripture? According to Jackson, it is to possess eternal life by knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (John 17:3).¹⁴

Besides Emlyn, Tomkins, Foster, and Jackson’s rejection of the Trinity, two Particular Baptist pastors opposed the critical importance of the doctrine. While candidating for the vacant pastor position at Maze Pond Church in London, Sayer Rudd (d. 1757), a medical doctor and pastor, was censured by the church for his unorthodox views on the Trinity.¹⁵ In a meeting on April 3, 1734, the church considered Rudd’s denial of the Trinity as a fundamental error. They explained that the “Trinity of the

¹⁰Foster, *Essay on Fundamentals*, 4.

¹¹Foster, *Essay on Fundamentals*, 43–44.

¹²John Jackson, *Christian Liberty Asserted and the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated: Against a Book Written by Dr. Waterland, and Entitled, The Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity Asserted*, &C (London: J. Noon, 1734), 2–6.

¹³Jackson, *Christian Liberty Asserted*, 4.

¹⁴Jackson, *Christian Liberty Asserted*, 4–5.

¹⁵Joseph Ivimey informs us that the Snow’s-Field meeting place “had been erected in 1736, chiefly by a Mrs. [Elizabeth] Ginn, who was excluded from the church in Maze-pond, for having avowed Unitarian sentiments.” Ginn patronized Rudd as a minister at Snow’s-Field paying him one hundred pounds per year, which was no small amount at that time. Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 3:492–93.

Persons in the Godhead and the divinity of the Mediator which are errors of so dangerous a nature and so pernicious and destructive in their consequences, that they undermine and turn up the foundation of the Christian religion, overthrowing the hope and comfort of every believer and destroying that faith which we ought above all things to earnestly contend for.”¹⁶ Three years later, Sayer Rudd published a sermon in which he openly declared that the doctrine of the Trinity was in no way “necessary to salvation” and then concluded that the doctrine was not a fundamental tenet of Christianity.¹⁷ While Sayer was denying the importance of the Trinity, his brother, John Rhudd¹⁸ was also rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity as foundational to Christianity. In reply to the Broad Street, Wappin, Particular Baptist church where he was pastoring, John maintained that he had not denied any fundamental articles. He insisted that there were only two fundamental articles of Christianity: there is one God and there is one mediator by whom men are saved. Since he affirmed these articles, he believed that he had not denied a foundational tenet.¹⁹ John, however, did reject that one must believe in what he called “the metaphysical knowledge of the divine being is a fundamental” by which he meant the Trinity in unity and unity in Trinity.²⁰

¹⁶Minute Book of London Maze Pond, 1722–43, MSS 2, Angus Library, Regent Park Library, Oxford, England.

¹⁷Sayer Rudd, *The Doctrine of the Divine Being Under His Grand Distinguishing Characters of God, Father and Spirit. A Sermon Delivered at the Meeting House in Snow’s Fields, Southwark: Occasioned by the Anniversary of That Foundation, on the First of August MDCCXXXV* (London: J. Roberts, A. Dodd, and J. Noon, 1737), 74; cf. 78.

¹⁸Although Sayer spelt his own surname as Rudd, John spelt his own surname as Rhudd. For instance, the letter John sent to his congregation, he spelt his name as Rhudd. John Rhudd, *A Letter to the Protestant Dissenting Congregation, Meeting in Broad Street, Wappin, London: Occasioned by Their Late Proceedings Against the Author, on His Profession of Unitarianism* (London, 1734), 54. Interestingly, Sayer spelt his brother’s name as Rudd. Sayer Rudd, *A Letter to the Reverend the Ministers of the Calvinistical Baptist Persuasion: Meeting at Blackwell’s Coffee-House... Remonstrating on the Difference Which Has Subsisted Between That Body and the Author, Since His Professing the Doctrine of One God and One Mediator. Together with a Proposal for Accommodating That Difference* (London: J. Roberts, A. Dodd, and J. Noon, 1735), 16; Rudd, *Letter to the Reverend the Ministers of the Calvinistical Baptist Persuasion*, 44.

¹⁹Rhudd, *Letter to the Protestant Dissenting Congregation*, 30–31.

Despite the antagonists who denied the doctrine of the Trinity to be an essential article of Christianity and thought it should be a left as matter of liberty, Gill replied:

The doctrine of the Trinity is often represented as a speculative point, of no great moment whether it is believed or not, too mysterious and curious to be pried into, and that it had better be let alone than meddled with; but, alas! it enters into the whole of our salvation, and all the parts of it; into all the doctrines of the gospel, and into the experience of the saints; there is no doing without it.²¹

For Gill, the crux of the doctrine of the Trinity was the God who is to be worshipped. While it is true that Gill did not explicitly state this was the crux of the importance of the doctrine, nevertheless this assertion can be deduced from Gill's chapter on "the Object of Worship" in his *Body of Practical Divinity*. Both Gill and his opponents acknowledged that the true and living God alone is the proper object of divine worship.²² Both affirmed that the worship of the true and living God is of highest importance. But the interpretation of this true and living God diverged between the two parties, and, consequently, they differed in their object of worship. For Gill, the true and living God consisted of three distinct divine persons: Father, Son, and Spirit who are "equally the object of divine worship."²³ His opponents, however, denied the triune God is the proper object of divine worship. Notwithstanding his opponents denial of the importance of the doctrine, Gill contended that as long as men and women are required to render worship to God, and the God that is to be worshipped is trinitarian, the doctrine of Trinity is a fundamental doctrine. It is of the highest importance.

²⁰Rhudd, *Letter to the Protestant Dissenting Congregation*, 37.

²¹John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 138.

²²John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1770; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 697. Gill stated that the "doctrine of the unity of the divine Being, is of great importance in religion; especially in the affair of worship. God, the one only God is the object of it. This is the sense of the first and second commands. . . . But this hinders not but that the Son and Spirit may have acts of worship performed to them, equally as to the Father." Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 130.

²³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 698.

The Necessity of Special Revelation for Knowledge of the Trinity

In addition to maintaining the doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental tenet of Christianity, Gill stressed that this doctrine requires special revelation. In his *Treatise on the Trinity*, he declared the doctrine to be of “pure revelation.”²⁴ By which he meant that for anyone to attain to a biblical understanding of the Trinity, there must be special revelation. Whereas he admitted that human reason can discern the existence of a God, nevertheless he denied that unaided reason can know that the true God subsists in three distinct persons and is yet one divine being. He affirmed that it was beyond the ken of unaided intellect. He wrote, “That there is a God, and that there is but one God, who is a Being possessed of all divine perfections, may be known by the light of nature: But that there is a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, who are distinct, tho’ not divided from each other, is what natural reason could never have discovered.”²⁵ Likewise, in the Introduction to his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, he identified the tri-personality of the Godhead as one of those “truths of pure revelation” that form part of the “sum and substance of supernatural Theology,” and, which particular truth, Satan and his minions have endeavored to subvert.²⁶ Further, while preaching on *The Scriptures: The Only Guide in Matters of Religion*, the Baptist pastor reminded his hearers that “if the inquiry is about the doctrine of the Trinity; as the light of nature and reason will tell you, that there is but *one* God, and which is confirmed by revelation; the Scriptures will inform you, that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy

²⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 2, 59. For other writers that also believed the necessity of special revelation for the knowledge of the Trinity, see Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 146; Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:100; Isaac Watts, *A Faithful Enquiry After the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity, Christ; Taught by Christ and His Apostles. In Two Parts*. (London, 1745), 25.

²⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 2.

²⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 1.

Spirit, and that these three are one; are the one God (1 John 5:7).²⁷ Since the doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine revealed only in the Scriptures, Gill rejected rational arguments to prove the Trinity from “the reason of things” or attempts to use metaphors or similes to illustrate this unique and unfathomable mystery.²⁸

The Mystery of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Along with the need of special revelation to know the truth concerning the Trinity, Gill equally insisted that the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery. He began his *Treatise on the Trinity* with the affirmation that the “Doctrine of the Trinity in the unity of divine essence is, without controversy, a great mystery of godliness.”²⁹ That there are three persons and one God, Gill declared, to be “a mystery incomprehensible by us.”³⁰ In his exposition of Job 11:6, Gill noted that there are mysteries revealed in Scripture that cannot be comprehended. Such mysteries included, “the modus, or manner of them [i.e. mysterious doctrines], is not to be searched out and understood; such is the trinity of Persons in the Godhead. . . . men cannot come at them, by their own natural reason and understanding; it is God that reveals them, in his word and by his spirit and gives his people an increasing knowledge of them.”³¹ Again, Gill explained in his *Answer to a Birmingham Dialogue-Writer*, who denied anything is above reason, that a mystery is a doctrine revealed, not contrary to but above reason.³² He wrote, “It is true, that when a

²⁷Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:483 (emphasis original).

²⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 59.

²⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1. Others who affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity to be a mystery were as follows: Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:103; Stennett, *Christian Strife for the Faith of the Gospel*, vi, 22; Abraham Taylor, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated. In Opposition to Mr. Watts’s Scheme of One Divine Person and Two Divine Powers*, 2nd edition (London: J. Roberts, 1728), Preface i.

³⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 59.

³¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:281.

³²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:116; cf. Samuel Bourn, *A Dialogue Between a*

thing is revealed, it is no longer a mystery *that it is*, but may still remain a mystery *how it is, what it is*: as in the case before us, it is no longer a mystery, now revealed, that the three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, are one God; but *how* they are so, is still a mystery.”³³

The Definition of the Key Terms Concerning the Trinity

At the end of the seventeenth and during the eighteenth century, various writers often conflated or rejected key trinitarian terms. Stephen Nye confused the meaning of persons and being, when he claimed that trinitarians believed “There are three Infinite, Almighty, All-wise Persons, three eternal beings, three absolutely-perfect Spirits, and yet but one God.”³⁴ Likewise, William Sherlock, though seeking to maintain orthodox trinitarianism, conflated key trinitarian terms, when he defined a person as “an intelligent being” and from this concluded that the three persons are “three infinite beings.”³⁵ In response to Daniel Waterland’s *Second Defense*, John Jackson conflated the terms person and being, when he stated that it was a contradiction “to suppose three Persons, Beings, or Agents, equally eternal and necessarily existent.”³⁶ A little further in the same work, Jackson asserted that “if God signifies one *in Number*, i.e. one intelligent Being, one acting Substance, one Agent, one Person; then it is self-evident, that *three* of that of

Baptist and a Church-Man. Occasion'd by the Baptists Opening a New Meeting-House, for Reviving Old Calvinistical Doctrines, and Spreading Antinomian, and Other Errors at Birmingham in Warwickshire. Part I (London: J. Roberts, 1737), 14–15.

³³Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:116 [italics original].

³⁴Stephen Nye, *A Letter of Resolution Concerning the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation* (London, 1691), 6.

³⁵William Sherlock, *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God: Occasioned by the Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius, and the Brief History of the Unitarians, or Socinians, and Containing an Answer to Both*. (London: W. Rogers, 1690), 66.

³⁶John Jackson, *Remarks on Dr. Waterland's Second Defense of Some Queries. Being a Brief Consideration of His Notion of the Trinity* (London: J. Noon, 1723), 17; cf. 24.

which it is but *one*, i.e. *three* intelligent Beings, *three* acting Substances, *three* Agents, *three* Persons, cannot be literally, and in number *one* God.”³⁷ Sayer Rudd insisted that if trinitarians defined a person as “an individual intelligent agent; no property, attribute, or mode, but a real, a subsisting person, an hypostasis,” he drew the conclusion that to speak of “three hypostases, three real subsisting Persons,” is to deduce that there are three Gods.³⁸ Moreover, Rudd rejected the Son and Spirit to be *homoousion* with the Father, when he reasoned that if there is one God, then there can be no “co-eternals and co-equals.”³⁹ William Davis, a Christian physician, denied the use of words, such as Trinity, unity, essence, and person, claiming that they are scholastic terms, which should not be used, since the unlearned cannot understand such important terms.⁴⁰ Since some persons confused or denied critical trinitarian terms as being, person, essence, and *homoousion*, Gill as a trinitarian had to define his key trinitarian terms carefully and precisely in order to preserve orthodox trinitarianism.

Trinity

In his writings defending the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, Gill employed a variety of terms or phrases to designate the Trinity. He began his treatise on the Trinity by referring to “a Trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence.”⁴¹ In the same treatise, he spoke of a “Trinity of persons in the Godhead,”⁴² “Trinity of persons,”⁴³ and “Trinity

³⁷Jackson, *Remarks on Dr. Waterland’s Second Defense*, 25 (italics original); cf. 26.

³⁸Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 70.

³⁹Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 10–11.

⁴⁰William Davis, *A Brief Reply to Mr. Gill’s Doctrine of the Trinity: Being a Defence of a Small Piece, Intituled, The Great Concern of Jew and Gentile* (London: H. Kent, 1743), 22.

⁴¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1; cf. 52.

⁴²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 2, 68, 72, 77, 85; cf. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 34.

⁴³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 11, 75, 76.

of persons in the Deity.”⁴⁴ He also referred to a “Trinity of persons in the one God,”⁴⁵ “Trinity of persons in one God,”⁴⁶ and “Trinity of Persons in the unity of Essence.”⁴⁷ Sometimes, he spoke of God as “three divine persons subsisting in the unity of the divine essence,”⁴⁸ “Triune God”⁴⁹ or “Trine-une God.”⁵⁰ Other times, he referred to God as a “trinity in unity,”⁵¹ “persons in the blessed trinity,”⁵² and “the glorious trinity.”⁵³

When Gill employed these various terms and phrases to designate the Trinity, he already hinted at his definition in phrases as “Trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence,” “Trinity of persons in the one God,” and “three divine persons subsisting in the unity of the divine essence.” He succinctly defined the Trinity in the Introduction to his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* as “three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”⁵⁴ Not to be misunderstood when he spoke of the three persons in the Godhead, the Baptist theologian confessed in the Preface to his *Discourse on Prayer* that “the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; yet that these three are but one

⁴⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 53, 62.

⁴⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 59.

⁴⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 85.

⁴⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xli.

⁴⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 24.

⁴⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xliii.

⁵⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 132, 670.

⁵¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:50; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 145.

⁵²John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth: In Four Parts; with a Vindication of Part IV, from the Cavils, Calumnies, and Defamations of Mr. Henry Heywood* (1855; repr., Paris: AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 1992), 231.

⁵³John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (1814–15; repr., Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel), 3:30, 38.

⁵⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xliii.

God.”⁵⁵ Hence, Gill affirmed the full deity of each person in the Godhead. Further, to guard against the false notion that there exists a composition or division in the Godhead, Gill stated that the Trinity of persons in the Godhead consists of “three distinct persons” with “one nature and essence common to them all, and which is not parted and divided among them; nor do these persons really differ from the divine nature and essence, nor from one another, but by their distinct modes of subsisting.”⁵⁶ Thus, Gill was careful to maintain the simplicity of God while distinguishing in the Trinity both a unity and distinction.

As the trinitarian debate continued throughout the eighteenth century, Gill deemed it wise to modify and clarify the church’s Confession of Faith concerning the Trinity. As a result, each member was required to subscribe to Article II of the Confession: “We believe, that there is but one only living and true God, and that he only is to be worshipped: that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, who are equal in nature, glory, and power.”⁵⁷ At the close of his treatise on the Trinity, Dr. Gill united his doctrine with doxology. He professed, “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. . . .To the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God, be all honour, glory, and praise, now and for evermore. Amen.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵John Gill, *A Discourse on Prayer, from 1 Corinthians 14:15. Preached December 25, 1732. To a Society of Young Men, Who Carry on an Exercise of Prayer on Lord’s Day Mornings, at a Meeting-House on Horsly-Down, Southwark.* (London: Aaron Ward and H. Whitridge, 1733), v, 14.

⁵⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 34.

⁵⁷*A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ, in Carter-Lane, Southwark, Under the Pastoral Care of Dr John Gill; Read and Assented to at the Admission of Members* (London, 1771).

⁵⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 203–4.

Essence, Nature, Substance, Being, Form, and Godhead

Throughout his writings, Gill used various words to denote the divine unity. He used the words essence, being, substance, nature, form, and Godhead synonymously and interchangeably.

Essence. Gill defended and defined the use of the term essence in relation to God. He defended that God has an essence, for he pointed out that the Scriptures reveal that “God is that he is, ὁ ὢν, which is, and was, and is to come; and if God is, then he has an essence.”⁵⁹ Further, when God revealed his name to Moses in Exodus 3:14, Gill stated this revelation expressed God’s essence.⁶⁰ He then defined essence as “that by which a person or thing is what it is; and seeing God is, essence may be truly predicated of him.”⁶¹ In another place, Gill expressed a similar understanding, when he defined essence as “that by which a person or thing is what it is, that is its nature.”⁶² This essence of God, he declared, cannot be “perceived, understood, and fully comprehended” either in the present state or in the future state because “it is impossible for a finite mind, in its most exalted state, to comprehend the infinite Nature and Being of God.”⁶³ Explaining the relation of the divine essence to the three persons, he asserted that there is “but one divine essence, which is common and undivided to Father, Son and Spirit and in this sense we assert that there is but one God.”⁶⁴

⁵⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 54.

⁶⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

⁶¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 54.

⁶²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

⁶³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

⁶⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 15.

Nature. In his explanation of what trinitarians believe about the Trinity in unity, Gill often interchanged the terms essence and nature. He wrote, “we say that the whole divine nature or essence is in the Father; and that the whole divine nature or essence is in the Son; and the whole divine nature or essence is in the Holy Ghost; and that it is simple and undivided, and common to all three.”⁶⁵ Similarly, as he explained that it was the second person of the Godhead that assumed a human nature and not the entire Godhead, Gill used the terms nature and essence reciprocally, for he said, “Now let it be observ’d, that the divine nature or essence, simply and absolutely considered, was not united to the human nature; but as it was in such a mode of subsisting. Or in other words, the divine nature, as it subsisted in the person of the Λόγος, or Word, was united to the human nature.”⁶⁶ Again, he said, “essence, which is the same thing with nature, is ascribed to God.”⁶⁷

In several places, Gill expounded the nature of God. He asserted that the nature of God is incomprehensible.⁶⁸ He added that this nature is “common to the three Persons in God, but not communicated from one to another; they each partake of it, and possess it as one undivided nature; . . . it is not a part of it that is enjoyed by one, and part of it by another, but the whole by each.”⁶⁹ Furthermore, he cautioned against speaking of the Father as *fons Deitatis* because it may imply “a priority in the Father to the other two persons.”⁷⁰ Instead, he advised that when speaking of the nature of three persons to say

⁶⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 16.

⁶⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 18.

⁶⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30. Other places in which Gill used nature and essence interchangeably are as follows: Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 48, 50, 77, 96; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 36.

⁶⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 31.

⁶⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

⁷⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

that “they are self-existent, and exist together in the same undivided essence; and jointly, equally, and as early one as the other, possess the same nature.”⁷¹ Based on John 4:22, 24, Gill understood the nature of God to be spiritual and thus God is invisible.⁷² Since God is simple or uncompounded being, Gill explained that “every attribute of God, is God himself, is his nature.”⁷³ Gill asserted that although “there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead, there is but one nature and essence common to them all, and which is not parted and divided among them, but is jointly and equally possessed by them; nor do these persons really differ from the divine nature and essence, nor from one another, but by their distinct modes of subsisting; so that they only distinguish and modify, but do neither divide nor compose the divine nature.”⁷⁴

Substance. Moreover, the word nature is equivalent to substance. Gill spoke of the Christ as “the image of the Father’s person, as he is possessed of the whole divine nature or substance.”⁷⁵ The word essence is also used interchangeably with substance. After commenting on how some of early Church Fathers recognized the ambiguity of using *substantia* for *hypostasis* and therefore replaced *substantia* with *persona* to correspond with *hypostasis*, Gill stated, “a difference there certainly is between “ὑπόστασις subsistence, and οὐσία essence or substance.”⁷⁶ Further, while explaining the eternal generation of the Son, Gill commented on how the “Father’s essence or substance is not the matter out of which he [the Son] is begotten.”⁷⁷ In his reply to Samuel Bourn,

⁷¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 31.

⁷²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 31.

⁷³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 33.

⁷⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 34.

⁷⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 95.

⁷⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 94.

⁷⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 184.

Gill declared that people honor the Father (John 5:23) by acknowledging the Father and Son are “of one and the same essence, substance.”⁷⁸

Being. Another term that was used synonymously with substance, nature, and essence was Being. Before examining the assertion that there is a plurality in the Godhead, Gill summarized his chapter on the singularity of the Godhead, stating that he had endeavored to prove “the unity of the divine Being, or that there is but one God.”⁷⁹ While preaching his final sermon entitled, *The Agreement of the Old and New Testament*, at the lectureship in Great Eastcheap, Dr. Gill reminded his hearers that one of the principal doctrines that the apostle Paul proclaimed was the “doctrine concerning the divine Being, and the persons in the Godhead. One branch of which is, that there is but one God . . . another branch of this doctrine is, that there is a plurality of persons in God.”⁸⁰ In his explanation of the names of God in the New Testament, Gill observed that the name κύριος often translated the Old Testament covenant name of God YHWH, and “denotes the essence or being of God.”⁸¹ He expressed in another place the name YHWH is “expressive of his essence or being” and added that “we are required to believe that he is, that he has a being or essence.”⁸²

Further, Gill justified the term the divine being from the revelation of the name of God to Moses in Exodus 3:14. He commented that when God revealed his name as “I am that I am,” the name signified, “the real being of God, his self-existence, and that he is the Being of beings.”⁸³ Indeed, for Gill, God is a “simple and uncompounded Being” and “the most perfect Being.”⁸⁴

⁷⁸Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:115.

⁷⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 25.

⁸⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:126.

⁸¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 29.

⁸²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

Form. With the being of God, the term “form of God” was sometimes understood to express the same thing as essence or nature of God. Explicating the nature of God, Gill mentioned that the nature of God is “the same with the form of God, in which Christ is said to be (Phil 2:6).”⁸⁵ In his commentary on Philippians 2:6, Gill interpreted the “form of God” to mean the same thing as “the nature and essence of God.”⁸⁶ Continuing and speaking about the Messiah, the biblical commentator reasoned that if the phrase in “the form of a servant” denoted true and proper humanity, then it follows that the meaning of in “the form of God” denoted true and property deity. “Just as the form of a servant signifies that he was really a servant, and the fashion of a man in which he was found means that he was truly and really man; so his being in the form of God intends that he was really and truly God; that he partook of the same nature with the Father, and was possessed of the same glory.”⁸⁷ Again, he showed that he understood the form of God to be interchangeable with nature and essence, when he commented, “That there is but one form of God, or divine nature and essence, common to the Father and the Son, and also to the Spirit; so that they are not three Gods, but one God.”⁸⁸ He says the same thing in his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* in the chapter on “the Incarnation of Christ,” for he mentioned that “form of God . . . signifies the nature of God.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, this term form was not to be understood as accidental, contingent, or nonessential, for Gill declared that “there are no accidents in God.”⁹⁰

⁸³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:329.

⁸⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 35, 37.

⁸⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 31.

⁸⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:132.

⁸⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:133.

⁸⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:133.

⁸⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 385, 390.

Godhead. Another term commonly used to denote the essence, nature, being, or substance is Godhead. Gill could speak of a “Trinity of divine persons in the Godhead”⁹¹ and also speak of a “Trinity of Persons in the unity of Essence.”⁹² He entitled chapter twenty seven in his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* “Of a Plurality in the Godhead; Or a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence” which indicates that term Godhead was interchangeable with essence.⁹³ The term Godhead was also noted to be synonymous with nature, divinity, and deity.⁹⁴ Speaking about the will of God, Gill asserted that there can only be but one will in God, and then explained his reasons as “there is but one God, whose nature and essence is one; for though there are three persons in the Godhead, there is but one undivided nature common to them all, and so but one will.”⁹⁵

The Term *Homoousios*

The key term in the Nicene Creed was the word *homoousios*. Gill was aware of the historical context and meaning of *homoousios*. In his Introduction to his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, he defended the right of Athanasians to use the term *homoousios*, since Arians were willing to introduce a non-biblical term as *homoiousios* to explain their meaning. He wrote, “The Athanasians had as good a right to use the word ὁμόουσιος as the Arians ὁμοίουσιος, and thereby explain their sense and defend their doctrine concerning the person of Christ, and his equality with God, against the latter, who

⁹⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:132. See also Muller’s observation from Witsius that John of Damascus understood the terms “essence, nature, and form” as synonymous in trinitarian discussion. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:174.

⁹¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 2, 68, 72, 77, 85; cf. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 34.

⁹²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xli.

⁹³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 127.

⁹⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

⁹⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 74.

introduced a phrase subversive of it.”⁹⁶ Gill considered ὁμοούσιος as equivalent to the Latin term *consubstantial*, and defined both of these terms as that which “expresses the Son’s being of the same substance, nature and essence with the Father.”⁹⁷ Although some claimed that *homoousios* or *consubstantial* was never used prior to the Nicene Creed, Gill rejected that claim, citing the use of the word *consubstantial* by Eusebius in Theodoret’s *Ecclesiastical History*;⁹⁸ by Gregory Thaumaturgus, whom Gill thought to be the author of the *Second Homily on the Annunciation to Holy Virgin Mary*;⁹⁹ and by the Synod of Antioch 269 in its condemnation of Paul of Samosata.¹⁰⁰

Although Gill used and understood the significance of *homoousios* and *consubstantial*, throughout his writings, he preferred to use the phrases the “same nature” or “same essence.” In his *Dissertation of the Eternal Sonship concerning Christ*, he made reference to the Nicene Creed and its pronouncement against Arius. He then cited the full creed, and in his citation of the Creed, he inserted the phrase “of the same essence” in parentheses immediately after the word *consubstantial*, signifying his understanding that *consubstantial* was synonymous with *homoousios*.

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, the maker of all things, visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten, begotten of the Father, that is, out of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial (or of the same essence) with the Father, by whom all things are made which are in heaven and in earth.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xli. Hilary of Poitiers reasoned in a similar manner to the suggestion that the term *homoousios* should be rejected because it is not used in Scripture. He replied that those who advocate for the use of *homoiousios*, which is not found in Scripture, will have a similar problem. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Synodis* 81.

⁹⁷Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:211.

⁹⁸Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:211.

⁹⁹Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:211. Gill did not mention that the Synod of Antioch condemned the word *homoousion* because of the way Paul of Samosata had used it, but evidently wanted to prove the Pre-Nicene use of the word, even if condemned. See also Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:198.

¹⁰⁰Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:198.

¹⁰¹Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:203.

While explaining the inter-mutual love between the three persons in the Godhead, Gill reasoned that the Father must love the Son, since the Son “ is of the same nature, and possessed of all the same perfections” with the Father.¹⁰² Likewise, he stated that the Father loves the Spirit, since the Spirit possesses “the same nature and essence” with the Father.¹⁰³ Commenting on the passage where Jesus asked the Pharisees whose son is the Christ and the Pharisees replied the son of David, Gill applied the same question of whose Son is the Christ to his present situation and noted how the various groups would answer at that time. One group he highlighted was the Arians and their denial of the *homoousios* of the Son with the Father. He wrote, “If this question was put to some persons, it would appear, that they have no thoughts of Christ at all. . . . [Some] such as bear the Christian name, have very wrong thoughts of Christ, mean, and under-valuing. The Arrian [sic] thinks he is a created God, of a like, but not or the same nature with the Father.”¹⁰⁴

Further, Gill clarified his understanding of the term consubstantial. He declared that it did not mean that the Son was like the Father in substance or nature. In reference to Macedonius who denied the full deity of the Spirit, Gill mentioned that Macedonius denied “the Son was consubstantial with the Father, but taught, that in all things he was like to him that begat him, and in express words called the Spirit a creature.”¹⁰⁵ Similarly, in his discussion of the nature of God, Gill stated that Christ is equal with God and “he is not only the express image of him; not merely of a like, but of the same nature.”¹⁰⁶ It was important to clarify the meaning of *homoousios* and consubstantiality because there were

¹⁰²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 78.

¹⁰³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 79.

¹⁰⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:264.

¹⁰⁵Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:201.

¹⁰⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 30.

those who denied such teaching. Bourn pronounced that to proclaim the Son is of the same substance and nature as the Father is to teach the doctrine of men and not God: “When any preachers preach the *co-equality, co-essentiality, supremacy* of the Son of God, according to my understanding they preach the doctrines of men instead of the truths of God.”¹⁰⁷

Person

Along with the proper definition of *homoousios*, the term “person” was critical to a proper understanding of the doctrine of the triune God. Philip Dixon has pointed out in his work that the term “person” became a problem in the seventeenth century for several reasons: (1) the “changing nature and function of language,” (2) redefinition of person due primarily to the influence of Hobbes and Locke, and (3) trinitarian’s lack of consensus on the meaning of person.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it is no surprise that this problem continued into the eighteenth century, leaving Gill and other trinitarians to defend and define precisely the term person.

Although some critics of the doctrine contended that the term “person” is absent in Scripture, Gill asserted otherwise. He stated that the word “person” is used in Hebrews 1:3 to denote God the Father. Acknowledging the debate whether to translate ὑποστάσεως as “person” or “substance” in Hebrews 1:3, Gill claimed that the some of Greek Fathers in trinitarian discussions understood ὑπόστασις in the same way as the English translators understood person.¹⁰⁹ He admitted ὑπόστασις was used in Hebrews 11:1, and English translators have rendered the word as “substance.” He also conceded

¹⁰⁷Bourn, *Dialogue Between a Baptist and a Church-Man, Part 1*, 16.

¹⁰⁸Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 3.

¹⁰⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 54, 91–92; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 160. Hebrews 1:3: ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. While both the KJV and Geneva Bible translated ὑπόστασις as person, the Latin Vulgate translated ὑπόστασις with *substantiae*, meaning substance or nature.

that some early Latin writers translated ὑπόστασις as *substantia*.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, he pointed out that some of the best scholars have rendered ὑποστάσεως in Hebrews 1:3 as subsistence or person.¹¹¹ Further, when the Latin Fathers realized that to speak of *tres substantiae* might lead people to think there are three individual beings, Gill commented that the Latin Fathers chose to speak of the distinction within the Godhead using *persona* instead of *substantia*.¹¹²

Furthermore, he pointed out that the term “person” is also used in 2 Corinthians 1:11. Gill observed that the Greek Fathers used πρόσωπον to denote the persons in the Trinity, which the translators rendered as person in 2 Corinthians 1:11.¹¹³ Likewise, πρόσωπον is used in 2 Corinthians 4:6, but, though the translators rendered the phrase “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” Gill believed that the sense of the phrase was “the person of Christ.”¹¹⁴ Thus, the glory of God is seen most perfectly in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having considered the use of the term “person” in the Scriptures, Gill then cited a few examples of the historical use and definition of the word “person” in the early Church Fathers. First, he mentioned the use of the term in the writings of Pseudo-Justin’s¹¹⁵ *Expositio Rectae Fidei* and *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*. Next,

¹¹⁰For example, Hilary of Poitiers wrote, “idcirco tres substantias esse dixerunt, subsistentium personas per substantias edocentes, non substantiam Patris et Filii diversitate dissimilis essentiae separantes.” “Consequently they declared there were three substances, meaning three subsistent Persons, and not thereby introducing any dissimilarity of essence to separate the substance of Father and Son” in *De Synodis* 32 (PL 10:504c–505a; *NPNF*² 9:13).

¹¹¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 92.

¹¹²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 160.

¹¹³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 54–55.

¹¹⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55. 2 Cor 4:6: φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

¹¹⁵Gill did express uncertainty whether this was truly a work of Justin. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55.

he quoted from Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, indicating that Gill had some awareness of the earliest use of the term, and he then quoted the famous but problematic definition from Boethius' *Liber De Persona et Duabus Naturis Contra Eutychen Et Nestorium*.¹¹⁶ Gill interpreted Boethius' definition of substance to be interchangeable with subsistence, for he interpolated "subsistence" in Boethius' definition of a person. Quoting Boethius, Gill wrote that a person is "an individual substance or *subsistence* of rational nature" (emphasis mine).¹¹⁷ Gill justified his interpolation of subsistence by citing a passage in the same chapter of Boethius' work. He observed that Boethius mentioned that the Greeks designated the individual subsistence of a rational nature (*naturae rationalis individuum subsistentiam*) using the term ὑπόστασις, while, due to the lack of an equivalent term in Latin, the Latins chose *persona* to correspond to ὑπόστασις.¹¹⁸ Hence, Gill interpreted Boethius to mean that the Latin's use and definition of *persona* as an "individual substance of a rational nature" corresponded to the Greek's use and definition of ὑπόστασις as an "individual subsistence of a rational nature."

Moreover, Gill then considered the definition of the German Reformed theologian and educator Markus Friedrich Wendelin (1584–1652) who defined a person as an "individual, that subsists, is living, intelligent, incommunicable, is not sustained by another; nor is a part of another."¹¹⁹ Relying upon Wendelin's explication of his definition, Gill elaborated the key terms in the definition of a person. He said that a person

is an individual, and therefore something singular: It differs from universal natures. It subsists of itself, and therefore is not an accident; which does not subsist of itself, but inheres in another. It is living; hence a stone, or any other inanimate being, is not a person. It is intelligent, or understands; wherefore an horse, or any other brute, is

¹¹⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 55–56. Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, ch. 3 (PL 64:1343c–d). "*Persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia.*"

¹¹⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 56.

¹¹⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 56, note t.

¹¹⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 56.

not a person. It is incommunicable, and so it is distinguished from essence, which is communicable to more. It is not sustained by another; hence the human nature of Christ is no person, because it is sustained by the person of the Word. It is not a part of another; hence a human soul is no person, because it is a part of man.¹²⁰

Finally, Gill cited two definitions from Daniel Waterland: “That each divine person is an individual intelligent agent: But as subsisting in one undivided substance; they are altogether, in that respect, but one undivided intelligent agent.”¹²¹ The other definition was “a single person is an intelligent agent, having the distinctive characters of I, Thou, He, and not divided or distinguished into more intelligent agents, capable of the same characters.”¹²²

After evaluating the various definitions of a person, Gill stated his own definition. He defined a person as “an individual, that subsists, lives, understands, etc. but such is the Father, therefore a person; such is the Son, therefore a person; such is the Holy Ghost, and therefore a person.”¹²³ By defining a person as “an individual, that subsists, lives, understands,” Gill adopted Wendelin’s definition, for he later applied the key terms in Wendelin’s definition to defend the distinct personality of the Father and the Son.¹²⁴ At the same time, Gill also thought Waterland’s definition was an alternative.¹²⁵

Similar to John Calvin who acknowledged that he was not so attached to the term person if an alternative could be found that maintained the real distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the one divine essence,¹²⁶ so Gill granted that he

¹²⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 56.

¹²¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 56–57.

¹²²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 57.

¹²³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 57.

¹²⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 95, 186.

¹²⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 95.

¹²⁶John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), I.xiii.5.

would accept an alternative if a “more apt and suitable word was substituted in its room; whereby a real distinction in the Deity, might be maintained.”¹²⁷ He then, however, cautioned against introducing new words in such an important matter remarking that “it is a difficult thing to change words, in such an important article as this, without altering the sense of it. It is a rule, that in many instances holds good, *Qui, fingit nova verba, nova gignit dogmata*; he that coins new words, coins new doctrines.”¹²⁸ Thus, Gill remarked, “from the whole, there seems no reason to lay aside the use of this word.”¹²⁹

Hypostasis, Subsistence, and Mode of Subsisting

As mentioned previously, based on Hebrews 1:3, Gill defended the use of the term *hypostasis*. Although the term *hypostasis* was translated in Latin using *persona* to denote the three persons in the Godhead, Gill demonstrated that he was aware of the more precise, theological, and philosophical equivalent to *hypostasis* in Latin was *subsistentia*. While defending the biblical basis for using the term person because the word *hypostasis* is used in Hebrews 1:3, Gill mentioned that some of the Greek Fathers understood the word *hypostasis* “in the same sense as we do, for *subsistence* or person.”¹³⁰ Further, he observed that several learned men, as “Valla,¹³¹ Vatablus,¹³² Erasmus, Calvin, Beza,

¹²⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 57.

¹²⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 57.

¹²⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 57.

¹³⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 160.

¹³¹Lorenzo Valla (1407–57) was an Italian humanist who is best known for exposing the forgery of the “Donation of Constantine” in his work *De Falso Credita et Ementita Constantini Donazione Declamatio* (1440). He wrote several works, including a comparison of the Greek NT and Latin Vulgate in *Collati Novi Testamenti*. It is most likely from the *Collati* that Gill is referring to Valla. “Lorenzo Valla,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1689–90. For the possible reference in Valla’s work, see Lorenzo Valla, *De Collatione Novi Testamenti Libri Duo* (Amsterdam: Apud Henricum Laurentium, Bibliopolam, 1630), 185–86.

¹³²Francois Vatable (d. 1547) was a French Hellenist and Hebraist.

Piscator,¹³³ Paraeus,¹³⁴ and others translated the word *hypostasis* in Hebrews 1:3 as subsistence or person.¹³⁵ Again, observing that when the Latin writers recognized that to speak of three substances could lead some to think of three divine beings and thus replaced *tres substantiae* with three persons or *tres personae*, Gill commented that one should not confuse the difference between “ὑπόστασις subsistence, and οὐσία essence or substance.”¹³⁶

Moreover, Gill also expressed the relation between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Godhead as a “mode of subsisting.” Addressing what distinguishes the three persons in the one divine essence, Gill answered, “The Three in the Godhead are . . . three distinct Persons in a different mode of subsisting, who are really distinct from each other; so that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Spirit either the Father or the Son.”¹³⁷ He explained that while there is one divine essence, but in this one divine essence, “there are different modes of subsisting in it which are called persons.”¹³⁸ Likewise, while rejecting the notion that the simplicity of God discredits the Trinity of persons in one divine essence, Gill commented that what distinguishes the three persons

¹³³John Piscator (1546–1625) was a German Reformed theologian and prolific author. He published several commentaries in Latin on the Old and New Testaments, one of which was a logical analysis on the Epistle to the Hebrews. For possible reference of citation by Gill, see John Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli: Videlicet Ad Romanos. Corinthios Prioris. Corinthios Posterioris. Galatas. Ephesios. Phillippenses. Colossenses. Thessalonicensis Prioris. Thessalonicenses Posterioris. Timotheum Prioris. Timotheum Posterioris. Titum. Philemonem. Hebraeos. Uná Cum Scholiis & Observationibus Locorum Doctrinae.*, 2nd ed. (London, 1594), 700, 702.

¹³⁴David Pareus (1548–1622) was a Reformed theologian who published several commentaries on the New Testament. One of his commentaries was the Epistle to the Hebrews and is probably what Gill is referencing. For the probable reference, see David Pareus, *In Divinam Ad Hebraeos S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolam Commentarius* (Heidelberg: Impensis Jonae Rosae, 1613), 46–47.

¹³⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 92.

¹³⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 94.

¹³⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

¹³⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

from one another is their “modes of subsisting.”¹³⁹ In another place, he affirmed the unity of the Godhead stating that “there’s but one essence,” and added “though there are different modes of subsisting in it.”¹⁴⁰

This mode of subsisting, according to Gill, has several characteristics. It is eternal, for it does not originate or depend on works effected in time.¹⁴¹ It is immutable so that if God never decreed to create the world or ordained to save the elect, Gill maintained that the “manner of subsisting” in the three persons would not alter or change.¹⁴² While God, being omniscient, knows “the mode of each person’s subsistence in the Deity,” his “mode of subsistence of the Persons of the Godhead” and “manner of subsisting of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead” is inconceivable to all creatures, for it is a secret thing that belongs to God.¹⁴³ Hence, Gill declared that the “distinct mode of subsisting” in the divine triunity to be a mystery.¹⁴⁴

The Term *Circumincessio*, *Perichōrēsis*

Richard Muller has observed that “supplementing the term *homoousios*, but more firmly grounded in Scripture is the term *perichōrēsis* or *emperichōrēsis*, usually rendered into Latin as *circumincessio*.”¹⁴⁵ *Circumincessio* and *perichōrēsis* expressed the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This mutual indwelling or

¹³⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 34.

¹⁴⁰John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise*, 2nd ed. (London: G Keith, 1752), 15.

¹⁴¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

¹⁴²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

¹⁴³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 59; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:263, 499.

¹⁴⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 15.

¹⁴⁵Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:185.

interpenetration is based on Jesus' words in John 10:38 "that the Father is in me and I in him" and John 14:10–11 where the Lord Jesus assured his disciples to trust his words "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." Commenting on John 10:38, Gill remarked that the disciples should believe the miraculous works he performed as evidence of his deity because he and his Father are "one in nature, distinct in person, equal in power, and have a mutual inhabitation and communion in the divine essence."¹⁴⁶ In like manner, Gill deduced that the mutual inhabitation of the Father and Son in John 14:10 signified their equality of nature and affirmed their distinction of person. He wrote that the phrase the Father is in me expressed,

the sameness of nature in the Father and the Son; of the Son's perfect equality with the Father, since the Son is as much in the Father, as the Father is in the Son; and also of the personal distinction there is between them; for nothing with propriety can be said to be in itself. The Father must be distinct from the Son who is in him, and the Son must be distinct from the Father, in whom he is; the Father and Son, though of one and the same nature, cannot be one, and the same person.

Further, Gill applied the unity of the divine nature to show that the Spirit also is indwelt by the Father and Son and the Spirit indwells the Father and Son. Arguing for the complacency and delight for the Spirit, Gill reasoned that since "these Three are One, of the same nature and perfections, and have a mutual in being in each other, and so a complacency in one another; for as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, (John 10:38; 14:10) so the Spirit is in them, and they in him."¹⁴⁷ Although the interpenetration of three persons is revealed in Scripture, Gill affirmed that the manner of their indwelling is a mystery.¹⁴⁸

The Justification of Non-Biblical Terms

While some anti-trinitarians rejected the use of the terms as "Trinity, unity,

¹⁴⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:21.

¹⁴⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 253.

¹⁴⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:386.

essence, and person; because they are not literally and syllabically expressed in Scripture,” Gill justified its use.¹⁴⁹ First, he reasoned that if these terms signified what the Scriptures teach, then it is appropriate to use.¹⁵⁰ He expressed the same sentiment when he explained that “words and phrases, though not literally expressed in scripture, yet if what is meant by them is to be found there, they may be lawfully made use of.”¹⁵¹ Similarly, preaching at the ordination of John Reynolds, Gill reminded Reynolds and his hearers not to succumb to the notion that truth must only be expressed in the literally expressed words of Scripture. He stated that it is permissible “to express the sense and meaning of any doctrine” or to employ words that are “synonymous, signify the same thing, and convey the same idea.”¹⁵² Then, he added,

when words and phrases have long obtained in the churches of Christ, and among the faithful dispensers of the word; the sense of which is determinate and established, and well known, and they fitly express the meaning of those that use them; they should not be easily parted with, and especially unless others and better are substituted in their room; for there is often truth in that maxim, *qui fingit nova verba, nova gignit dogmata*, ‘he that coins new words, coins new doctrines.’ Should any man require of me to drop certain words and phrases in treating of divine truths, without offering to place others and better in their room; I could consider such a man in no other view, than that he had an intention to rob me, to rob me of what is more precious than gold and silver, that is, truth.¹⁵³

Furthermore, Gill defended the use of extrabiblical language in order to differentiate between opposing positions. He remarked that if restricted to the formal and expressed words of Scripture, then one cannot distinguish between an anti-trinitarian and trinitarian:

An Arian cannot be known from an Athanasian; both will say, in the words of Scripture, that Christ is the “great God”, the “true God”, and “over all God blessed for ever”; but without expressing themselves in their own words, their different sentiments will not be discerned; the one holding that Christ is a created God, of a

¹⁴⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 53.

¹⁵⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 54.

¹⁵¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xli.

¹⁵²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:50.

¹⁵³Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:50.

like but not of the same substance with his Father; the other, that he is equal with him, of the same nature, substance, and glory: and he that believes the latter, surely it cannot be unlawful to express his belief of it in such words which declare the true sense of his mind. So a Sabellian or Unitarian and a Trinitarian, will neither of them scruple to say in Scripture terms what Christ says of himself and his Father, “I and my Father are one”; and yet the former holds, they are one in person or but one person; whereas the latter affirms, that they are one in nature and essence, but two distinct persons; and surely it must be lawful so to express himself, if this is the real sentiment of his mind.¹⁵⁴

Gill then suggested that the primary reason some are so zealous to confine truth to the expressed words of Scripture was in order to cloak their error and avoid detection.¹⁵⁵

Third, Gill justified the use of non-biblical language as necessary in order to explain the meaning of words in Scripture. Without depreciating the high regard for every jot and tittle in Scripture, Gill nevertheless maintained that one must employ different expressions than the bare words of Scripture to explain Scripture:

As to the former, that we are to be tied up to the bare words of Scripture concerning any doctrine of faith delivered in them; though we ought to entertain the highest esteem of the words of Scripture, and have the greatest value for them, as being clothed with such majesty, and having such an energy in them, which the words that man’s wisdom teacheth have not; yet our sense of them cannot be expressed but in words literally varying from them.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xl.

¹⁵⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xl.

¹⁵⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xxxix.

CHAPTER 6

GILL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: THE UNITY OF GOD AND THE PLURALITY IN THE GODHEAD

The Defense of the Unity of the Divine Essence

God is one, asserted Gill.¹ The oneness or unity of God, continued Gill, is “a first principle, and not to be doubted of; it is a most certain truth, most surely to be believed, and with the greatest confidence to be asserted.”² Since we are commanded to worship the one true God, the unity of God is a truth of vast importance, acknowledged Gill.³ The doctrine of the unity of God, according to Gill, is not only attested by reason and revelation but also “by Jews and Gentiles, by Jewish doctors, and heathen poets and philosophers; by Old and New Testament saints; by holy angels; and even by the devil themselves.”⁴ Indeed, “Christians and Jews agree with the best and wisest philosophers of the Gentiles, that there is but one God.”⁵ This chapter will first show how Gill argued for the unity of God and then demonstrate his arguments for a plurality in the Godhead.

The Unity of the Divine Essence is Discerned by the Light of Nature

¹John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 125.

²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 125–26.

³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 130.

⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 126.

⁵John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (London, 1746–66; repr., Paris, AR.: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 7:657.

Gill held that the light of nature teaches that God is one. Reason, he believed, leads men to the self-evident conclusion there is one supreme being. He contended that the heathens discerned not only from the light of nature that there is a God but that God is one.⁶ Despite some of the heathens' gross idolatry, which was in accordance with the judgment of God according to Romans 1, Gill observed that the wiser heathens affirmed one supreme Being, though they submitted to the custom of offering worship to the "rabble of inferior deities."⁷ He cited Homer's *Illiad* and Hesiod's *Works and Days* as two pagan writers who affirmed the existence of one supreme Being. Both writers mentioned Zeus who was regarded by the Greeks as the "Father of gods and men."⁸ Hesiod wrote, "ὡς ἔφατ'· ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε" in *Works and Days* 59. Similarly, Gill referenced Macrobius, the fifth-century Roman author of *Saturnalia*, who mentioned that the Assyrians called their supreme God Adad, which meant one.⁹ According to Eusebius of Caesarea, the Phoenicians designated their king of gods as Adodus.¹⁰ Furthermore, citing from chapter three, "Quod Sapientia humana unum Deum

⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 126. Others who argued in the eighteenth century for the fact that the unity of God is discerned from the light of nature include Isaac Watts, *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity: Or Father, Son, and Spirit, Three Persons and One God* (London: J. Clark, E. Mathews, and R. Ford, 1722), 25; Abraham Taylor, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated. In Opposition to Mr. Watts's Scheme of One Divine Person and Two Divine Powers*, 2nd edition (London: J. Roberts, 1728), 12; Isaac Watts, *Sermons on Various Subjects, Divine and Moral: With a Sacred Hymn Suited to Each Subject. In Three Volumes* (London: E. Matthews; R. Ford; and R. Hett, 1729), 3:414; Thomas Ridgley, *A Body of Divinity: Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion Are Explained and Defended. Being the Substance of Several Lectures on the Assembly's Larger Catechism* (London: Daniel Midwinter, Aaron Ward, John Oswald, and Richard Hett, 1731–33), 1:96–98.

⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 126.

⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 126.

⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 126. "Deo enim, quem summum maximumque venerantur, Adad nomen dederunt. Eius nominis interpretatio significat unus unus." Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.23.17. "For to God, whom they venerate as the highest and greatest, they gave the name Adad. The meaning of his name signifies one-one" (my translation).

¹⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 126. "But Astarte, the greatest goddess, and Zeus Demarus, and Adodus king of gods, reigned over the country with the consent of Kronos." Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 37.

agnouit,” of Phillippe de Mornay’s¹¹ *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*, the Baptist theologian listed seventeen examples of pagan poets and philosophers who confirmed there is one supreme being.¹²

The Unity of the Divine Essence is Proven by the Perfections of God

Besides the light of nature attesting to the unity of God, the studious Baptist minister argued that the perfections of God prove there is one God. He examined the perfections of the necessary existence, eternity, and immensity of God.¹³

Necessary existence of God. Gill asserted that the necessary existence of God is one reason to believe in the unity of God.¹⁴ He reasoned that God either exists by necessity or by will and choice. If by will and choice, then it must either be by the will and choice of another or by himself. If by the will and choice of another, then that other must be God, since that one is prior to and superior to effect the existence of the other. If by the will and choice of himself, then it implies that God must cause his own existence and thus exist and not exist at the same time, which is impossible and contradictory. Therefore, Gill concluded that God must exist by necessity. And since no reason can be given to demonstrate two necessary beings can exist at the same time, it follows that God must be one.¹⁵

¹¹Philippe de Mornay (1549–1623) was a French Protestant author.

¹²John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731), 5.

¹³Other perfections that Gill treated were omnipotence, goodness, perfect nature, all-sufficiency, first cause of all things. Further, he considered the relations of God to his creatures as creator, king, judge, and lawgiver. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 8–10. For similar arguments for the unity of God from the perfections of God, see Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:95–96.

¹⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 6.

¹⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 6–7.

Eternity of God. Moreover, Gill held that the perfection of God’s eternity is yet another evidence of God’s unity. Gill asserted that eternity is a peculiar attribute of God because God alone is from everlasting to everlasting.¹⁶ No creature, he underscored, dare claim that it has no beginning of life or end of days. In fact, he went on to emphasize that not even the angelic hosts are so bold to make such a claim. Therefore, since God has declared that before him no God was formed, and there will be none after him (Isa 43:10), there cannot be two eternal beings, for to exist prior to God is to be eternal and to live after him is to be eternal. Consequently, since there cannot be two eternal beings, it follows that God must be the one eternal Being.¹⁷ In other words, there can only be one eternal Being and that one eternal Being is God.

Infinity of God. Additionally, Gill argued that the infinity of God was a strong evidence for God’s oneness. He asserted that there cannot be two infinite beings, for if there could be, then “one must reach unto, comprehend, and include the other or not; if it does not, then it is not infinite, and so not God; if it does reach unto, comprehend, and include the other,” then that which is comprehended, and included by it, is finite, and so not God.”¹⁸ If there can only be one infinity, then by inference there can only be one God.

The Unity of the Divine Essence is Established by the Word of God

Not only do the perfections of God prove the unity of the divine essence but, Gill asserted, the Scriptures also establish the unity of the divine essence. Beginning with the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD,” Gill noted that Moses first stirred up the people to pay attention to “this great and momentous

¹⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 7.

¹⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 7.

¹⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 127.

article, the unity of God.”¹⁹ Gill added that Deuteronomy 6:4 teaches that “the Lord, who was the covenant God and Father of his people Israel, is but one Jehovah.”²⁰ Further, Gill cited several passages in Isaiah as clearly affirming the singularity of God. In Isa 43:10: “Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.”²¹ Similarly, the prophet Isaiah declared, “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God” (Isa 44:6). Again, the LORD through the prophet uttered the same sense concerning his unity, when he said, “I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else” (Isa 45:5–6).²² Gill also mentioned Isaiah 45:14, 18, 21, 22 and Isa 46:9 as other Old Testament texts that establish the unity of God.²³

In the New Testament, Gill observed that when the Lord Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, he cited Deuteronomy 6:4 in Mark 12:29.²⁴ Further, he noted that the Lord Jesus addressed God saying, “this is eternal life to know you, the only true God” (John 17:3).²⁵ Similarly, the apostles affirmed the oneness of God. The apostle Paul commented that it is “one God which will justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision by faith” (Rom 3:30) and in 1 Corinthians 8:6 he wrote that “there is but

¹⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:27. Others who argued for the unity of God from the Scriptures were as follows: Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 26–28; Abraham Taylor, *The True Scripture Doctrine of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity: Stated and Defended, in Opposition to the Arian Scheme* (London: John Clark and Richard Hett, 1727), 21; Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 95.

²⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:27.

²¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 11.

²²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 11–12.

²³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 12.

²⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 12.

²⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 12.

one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.”²⁶ Again, Gill noted that Paul declared that “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”²⁷ Likewise, James pointed out that even the demons acknowledge there is one God.²⁸ While these passages clearly establish the unity of the divine essence, which anti-trinitarians would not dispute, Gill was equally concerned to show that these passages do not exclude the Son or Spirit in the oneness of God.

According to Gill, the Scriptures clearly teach the unity of God, but he added that these passages do not exclude a trinity of persons. Indeed, Gill insisted that to affirm a unity of essence does not exclude the deity of the Son and the deity of the Spirit.²⁹ First, he considered Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one Lord.” Commenting on this passage in his exposition, Gill suggested that the meaning of the passage, if one translated the word Elohim, would be “*Jehovah*, our Gods, Father, Son, and Spirit, are one *Jehovah*.”³⁰ This one God, he insisted, however, did not exclude a trinity of persons, for he appealed to Jewish sources and the Patristic Father Fulgentius of Ruspe (468–533) as support to show the Son and Spirit should not be excluded from oneness of God.³¹

Further, Gill mentioned several texts in the prophet Isaiah as clear evidence for the unity of God, which do not exclude the Son or Spirit. He explained that the LORD through the prophet revealed that no god or idol existed before him and none will exist after him: “Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isa

²⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 12.

²⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 13.

²⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 13.

²⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 17.

³⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 19.

³¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 19–21.

43:10). Likewise, when the LORD stated the same truth to Israel that “besides me there is no God” (Isa 44:6), Gill reminded his readers that these words meant that “all others are only gods by name, not by nature, mere nominal fictitious deities, not real ones; and it is to the exclusion of these from the rank of deity, these words are said; but not to the exclusion of the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, who, with the Father, are the one true God.”³² Then, he observed that the LORD God proclaimed that he is the First and the Last (Isa 44:6), which title is also uttered by the Son in Revelation 1:8, 17, implying that the Son is the LORD God.³³ Again, Gill explained that when the question was asked in Isa 44:8, if there is any God besides the LORD, he commented that “there were many fictitious and false deities, but none omniscient and omnipotent, that could foretell future events, and accomplish them as he did; there is no god but the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit.”³⁴ Speaking to Cyrus, God reminded him that he is the LORD and there is no other, there is no God besides him, meaning that he is the one true God, Father, Son, and Spirit (Is 45:5–6). The same God declared that he created the heavens and the earth and thus there is no Lord besides him (Isa 45:18).

Next, Gill discussed an important text for many anti-trinitarians who believed that John 17:3 excludes Jesus from being the one true God.³⁵ Gill replied that if Jesus intended to exclude himself from being the only true God, then he would have never joined himself to the true God in the text.³⁶ Further, if Jesus intended to exclude himself as the true God, then one must likewise exclude the Father from being called Lord, since

³²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:254.

³³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:254.

³⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:255.

³⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:83. Also need to include some insisted that John 17:3 excluded Jesus from the one true God.

³⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 22.

Jesus is called the one Lord (1 Cor 8:6) and only Lord (Jude 4).³⁷ Equally important, Gill reasoned that the Lord Jesus is called the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20) and eternal life depends as much on the Father as on the Son.³⁸ Why then did Jesus speak in this manner? He explained, “The reason of this different mode of expression, is owing to the character of Christ as Mediator, who is said to be sent by the only true God, about the business of man’s salvation.”³⁹ Furthermore, he mentioned a Jewish writer who objected that Jesus cannot be God, since Jesus said that the true God is only one God, nor did he identify himself as God but someone sent by God, and the apostle Paul asserted the unity of God in 1 Timothy 1:17.⁴⁰ Gill replied that Jesus agreed that the true God is one, but he also intimates that he is true God by joining himself in the passage to his Father.⁴¹

Another favorite text in the anti-trinitarians’ arsenal was 1 Corinthians 8:6, namely, that there is but “one God the Father of whom are all things.” Gill pointed out that in the context (1 Cor 8:5) the apostle is contrasting the polytheism of the Gentiles with the one true God.⁴² Further, he suggested that the term Father could be understood either essentially or personally. If understood essentially, Gill explained that Father should be understood of the entire Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and not the relation between the persons in the Godhead. He suggested that one should understand the meaning of Father in this passage in relation to his creatures, similar to how the Scriptures sometimes spoke of God’s relation to his creatures as the Father of spirits.⁴³ If

³⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:83.

³⁸John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or, a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures. In Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1769), 129.

³⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:83.

⁴⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:83.

⁴¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:84.

⁴²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 23.

⁴³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:657.

understood personally so that it addresses the first person of the Godhead in relation to his Son, it cannot exclude the Son or Spirit, said Gill. As he explained: “if Jesus Christ, stands excluded from this one God the Father; then, by the same rule of interpretation, God the Father must stand excluded from the one Lord; which is said of Jesus Christ in the very same text”⁴⁴ and the same reasoning can be applied to Ephesians 4:5–6.⁴⁵

The Unity of the Divine Essence Is Validated in the Writings of the Fathers

While asserting that the Scriptures teach the unity of God, Gill also appealed to Patristic sources to confirm that the oneness of God does not exclude a plurality in the divine essence. He cited Fulgentius’ *Response Against the Arians* to show that the Ancient Church maintained the unity of God though not to the exclusion of the full deity of the Son and the Spirit.⁴⁶

The Explanation of the Unity of the Divine Essence

Although Gill acknowledged that “all professing Christians are Unitarians in a sense,” yet he explained that they do not all have the same understanding. He continued:

Some are Unitarians in opposition to a trinity of persons in one God; others are Unitarians in perfect consistence with that doctrine. Those of the former sort stand ranked in very bad company; for a Deist: who rejects divine revelation in general, is an Unitarian; a Jew that rejects the writings of the New Testament, and Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, is an Unitarian; a Mahometan is an Unitarian, who believes in one God, and in his prophet Mahomet; a Sabellian is an Unitarian, who denies a distinction of persons in the Godhead; a Socinian is an Unitarian, who asserts that Christ did not exist before he was born of the virgin, and that he is God, not by nature, but by office; an Arian may be said, in a sense, to be an Unitarian, because he holds one supreme God; though rather he may be reckoned a Tritheist, since along with the one supreme God, he holds two subordinate ones. Those only are Unitarians in a true and sound sense, who hold a trinity of distinct persons in one God. This is the doctrine of divine Revelation, the doctrine of the Old and of the New Testament, the doctrine of that famous, text before mentioned, *hear O Israel,*

⁴⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 23–24.

⁴⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 130.

⁴⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 20–21. See also PL 65:212c; PL 65:221b.

the Lord our God is one Lord;

Gill then expatiated on the different meanings of the unity of the divine essence.

The unity of the divine essence is not understood in an Arian sense. Gill rejected the Arian sense of the oneness of God. Arians, he said, believed that there is one supreme deity and two lesser or inferior deities.⁴⁷ If the Arians sense was correct, then Gill contended that their insights were no better than the heathen poets and philosophers who affirmed one supreme being and inferior gods.⁴⁸ Further, he pointed out that if the Scriptures lead to the conclusion of one supreme God and lesser gods and heathens using the light of nature come to the same conclusion, then what profit is there in having divine revelation with regard to the knowledge of God.⁴⁹ Against the Arians' affirmation of the unity of God, Gill commented that the Scriptures are not addressing the issue of more than one supreme God, since the heathens did not embrace such a notion.⁵⁰ Rather, the Scriptures declared the oneness of God in order to oppose any notion of subordinate or inferior gods. In addition, the trinitarian apologist reasoned that these inferior gods in the Arian sense—the Son and the Spirit—are either the Creator or creature, for there is no *via media* between Creator and creature.⁵¹ If Creator, then the Son and the Spirit must be the supreme God, for the Scriptures teach creation is the unique work of the supreme God. But if creatures, then “they are not gods that made the heavens and the earth” and thus are subject to the imprecation of the prophet Jeremiah: “Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* they shall perish from the earth,

⁴⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 13.

⁴⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 127.

⁴⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 127.

⁵⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 13–14.

⁵¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 127–28.

and from under these heavens” (Jer 10:11).⁵² Commenting on Jeremiah 10:11, Gill wrote, “The words may be considered as a prediction that so it would be; or as an imprecation that so it might be, and be read, “let the gods . . . and it may be observed, against the deniers of the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that if he is not that God that made the heavens and the earth, he lies under this imprecation or prediction.”⁵³ Finally, the first commandment prohibits the “religious worship” of any lesser or foreign gods.⁵⁴

The unity of the divine essence is not understood in a Sabellian sense. Nor did Gill understand the unity of the divine essence in a Sabellian sense. According to Gill, advocates of Sabellianism believe that the oneness of God means that he is one person. Gill, however, affirmed the one God consists of three distinct persons. After tracing the origin of Sabellianism, Gill observed that the Socinians and modern Unitarians held essentially the same belief of the Trinity as Sabellians. He defended the plurality of the one God, arguing that 1 John 5:7 teaches that the Father, Son, and Spirit are three that testify and not one that testify. He wrote, “if the Father is one that bears record, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost a third, they must be three persons, and not one only.”⁵⁵ Then, he observed that when the Son said, “I and the Father are one,” (John 10:30), it implied that the Son could not mean they are one person, “for this is to make him say what is the most absurd and contradictory; as that I and myself are one, or that I am one, and my Father who is another, are one person.”⁵⁶

⁵²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁵³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:460.

⁵⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 14.

⁵⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁵⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

The unity of the divine essence is not understood in a Tritheistic sense.

Moreover, Gill denied that his understanding of the unity of the divine essence should be understood in a tritheistic sense. By tritheistic sense, he meant that “there are three essences of beings numerically distinct, which may be said to be one, because of the same nature; as three men may be said to be one, because of the same human nature.”⁵⁷ He continued to argue that to maintain three distinct essences are one nature is to affirm three Gods and not one due to “their essences being numerically distinct.”⁵⁸

The unity of the divine essence is understood in a trinitarian sense.

Although often accused of tritheism, Gill denied the charge that he and other trinitarians believe that there are three Gods.⁵⁹ Instead, he affirmed that by the unity of the divine essence, he meant that “the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet not that they are three Gods, but one God.”⁶⁰ He explained that the one divine essence is “undivided and common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, and in this sense but one God, since there is but one essence . . . and these possess the whole essence undivided; that is to say, not the Father has one part, the Son another, and the holy Spirit a third; but as the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in the Father, so in the Son, who has all that the Father has (John 15:16; Col 2:9) and so in the Spirit, and therefore but one God.”⁶¹ Furthermore, this unity is not one of testimony but of nature.⁶² Nor is this unity one of

⁵⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128. For arguments against tritheistic sense, see Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:109.

⁵⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 15.

⁵⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁶⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁶¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁶²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

parts or composition, since God is a simple and an uncompounded Being.⁶³ Nor is this unity of “genus and species, under which may be many singulars of the same kind, but God is one in number and nature.”⁶⁴ Nor is this unity negated by the many names of God, since a man may have many names and yet be one.⁶⁵ Moreover, when Gill declared that he affirmed one God, he meant that there is only one true God contrary to all other so-called gods, and in opposition to “all figurative or metaphorical gods” as “angels, civil magistrates, and judges, are call’d gods because of their exaltation and dignity.”⁶⁶ Finally, nor did he understand the Scripture passages that declare the unity of God to apply to one person to the exclusion of the others.⁶⁷

The Defense of the Plurality in the Divine Essence

Having argued that God is one, Gill proceeded to demonstrate that there is a plurality in this one God. He contended for the plurality of God because of the different grammatical constructions with the plural name Elohim, the plural pronouns spoken of the one God, the distinction of the YHWH with the angel of YHWH and identification of the angel of YHWH as YHWH, and distinction of two who are both called YHWH or God.

Different Grammar Used with the Plural Name Elohim

Gill pointed out that the name Elohim is sometimes used with a singular verb, other times with plural verb, and then sometimes with plural adjectives and participles.

⁶³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁶⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 128.

⁶⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 129.

⁶⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 16.

⁶⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 129.

Singular verb. Gill observed that Elohim, though a plural form in Hebrew, was nonetheless used with a singular verb. He mentioned, for example, Genesis 1:1 where it says, “In the beginning, God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.”⁶⁸ He commented that Elohim is a noun with a plural ending and the verb created (*bara*) is a singular verb. Gill claimed that many believed that the use of a plural noun Elohim and singular verb *bara* “express the truth of a plurality of persons in the unity of essence.”⁶⁹ He pointed out that Moses was not compelled to use the plural noun Elohim, since Moses had used the singular noun, such as YHWH or Eloah, the singular of Elohim in Deuteronomy 32:15–16.⁷⁰ Furthermore, since Moses wrote to “oppose and extirpate the polytheism of the Heathens,” Gill thought it would be unusual for Moses to use a plural noun for the name of God, when Israel had been immersed in polytheism in Egypt.⁷¹ In addition, Gill believed that Moses would not have used Elohim “thirty times” in the creation account and “perhaps, five hundred times more, in one form of construction or another, in the five books of his writings had he not designed some kind of plurality or another.”⁷² Gill denied Moses meant either a plurality of deities, since he later declared to Israel, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut 6:4), or he meant a mere plurality of characters or names because such things, Gill explained, do not have power to create, but only persons possess such power.⁷³

⁶⁸ בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָאָה לַהֲיִים אֱלֹהִים - שָׁמַיִם וָאֲרֶץ אֶרֶץ. Gill cites the Hebrew without vowel points.

⁶⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 26. Gill himself expressed in his commentary on Gen 1:1 whether the plural noun and singular is sufficient or not to establish the trinity of persons in the one divine essence, “yet there is no doubt to be made, that all the three Persons in the Godhead were concerned in the creation of all things.”

⁷⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 26.

⁷¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 26.

⁷²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 26.

⁷³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 27.

Plural verb. Not only did Gill mention that Elohim was used with a singular verb, but he noted that it was sometimes used with a plural verb. He cited examples of the use of the plural verb with Elohim from Genesis 20:13;⁷⁴ 35:7;⁷⁵ 2 Samuel 7:23.⁷⁶ Explaining the meaning of the plurality of name, Gill rejected that it is a plurality of names, since the Shema prohibits, nor of “meer names and characters, but of persons; for to these *Elohim* are ascribed personal actions; as their removal of *Abraham* from his father’s house; their appearance to *Jacob*, and their redemption of the people of *Israel*.”⁷⁷

Plural adjectives and participles. Moreover, the Old Testament sometimes joined plural adjectives and plural participles with Elohim. Gill gave examples from Deuteronomy 4:7; 5:26; Joshua 24:19; 1 Samuel 17:26, 36; and Jeremiah 10:10. Of these passages, the most remarkable which the Baptist pastor highlighted was Jeremiah 10:10, where the passage is translated, “YHWH is the true God; He is the living God.”⁷⁸ The adjective “living” is plural and noun Elohim which it modifies is also plural. Thus, Gill interpreted it as a passage that affirmed the unity of the divine essence but in that one, there is a plurality of persons.⁷⁹

Admitting that Elohim was used to designate one person in the Godhead in Psalm 45:6–7, Gill answered that it should not surprise anyone that Elohim was applied to one person, when you consider “each divine person possesses the whole divine essence

⁷⁴וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר הָעַד, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְהִימָּן מִבֵּית אַבְרָם אֲמַר

⁷⁵וַיִּבְנוּ שֵׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרְאוּ מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִכַּתֵּף מִכַּתֵּף

אֲתָנוּ

⁷⁶וּמִי כַעֲמֻדָּה כִּי־שָׂרָאֵל; וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר חָזַק, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְהִיבְעֵל דָּוִד וְתֵל וְ

⁷⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 28.

⁷⁸וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְהִימָּן מִבֵּית אַבְרָם אֲמַר (my translation).

⁷⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 28.

and nature common to all three.”⁸⁰ In other words, since each person is God, it should surprise no one to apply the name God to one of the persons. Another objection commonly made was to argue that Moses was said to be a god or Elohim to Aaron in relation Pharaoh. Gill replied that Moses was representative of the triune God in relation to Aaron and Pharaoh.⁸¹ Finally, the Hebraist Gill appealed to the rabbinic writings and contended that Jewish authors in the book of Zohar recognized that there was a threesome, which they called three degrees and which was distinct, though one.⁸²

Plural Pronouns Used with the One God

According to Gill, the Old Testament uses plural pronouns to speak of the one God. In Genesis 1:26, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Gill pointed out that the plural pronouns *us* and *our* in Genesis 1:26 clearly show that there is a plurality in the divine essence, especially when you observe that terms image and likeness are singular.⁸³ He wrote, “nothing is more plain from hence, than that more than one was concerned in consultation about, and in the formation of man.”⁸⁴ Consequently, he explained that is why Job 35:10;⁸⁵ Ecclesiastes 12:1;⁸⁶ and Isaiah 54:5⁸⁷ used plural

⁸⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 30.

⁸¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 30.

⁸²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 30.

⁸³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 31.

⁸⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 31.

⁸⁵וְלֹא־אָמַר אֵיחָד וְהָ עָשִׂי בַּלַּיְלָהּ (Job 35:10). “But none says, “Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night” (my translation). Although the Hebrew used a plural participle with a plural suffix (עָשִׂי), the LXX translated the participle with a singular participle (ὁ ποιήσας με and the Latin Vulgate translated with a relative noun that is singular, 3ms perfect active indicative, and personal pronoun that is singular (*qui fecit me*).

⁸⁶וּזְכֹר אֶת־בְּרִיאֲךָ (Ecc 12:1). “Remember your Maker” (my translation). The Hebrew for Maker (בְּרִיאֲךָ) is a plural participle.

⁸⁷כִּי בַעֲלִיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ יְהוָהּ. אַף זֶה נְשָׂאָךָ (Isa 54:5). For your Maker is your husband, YHWH

expressions, and then asked, “What reason can be given for these plural expressions, if there was not more than one concerned in man’s creation?”⁸⁸

Since the Jews objected to a plurality in Genesis 1:26, Gill was compelled to reply to the notion that “God consulted with the souls of men, and with second causes; with the elements, and particularly with the earth, out of which he formed man. . . . So that, in respect of his body, which is of the dust of the earth, he was made after the image of the earth; and in respect of his soul, after the image of God; and so in respect to both, after our image,” Gill responded that it is a preposterous notion and deserves no reply.⁸⁹ Some Jewish interpreters suggested that God consulted with his angels and addressed them with these words, Gill responded that angels are not “God’s privy council, nor were concerned in any part of the creation, and much less in the more noble part of it.”⁹⁰ Nor do angels possess the power to create, much less power to create man in the image of God.⁹¹ Then, others maintained that God employed the *pluralis majestaticus* when he spoke in the plural in order to express his honor and majesty.⁹² Gill answered that when kings spoke a “plural of majesty,” it represented the king acting on behalf of the advice of counselors.⁹³ Furthermore, Gill denied the “plurality of majesty” can be traced to any kings in Israel, or any monarchs as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar when they spoke of themselves.⁹⁴ In fact, Gill asserted that the first time such plural expression can

of Hosts is his name (my translation). The participle (עֹשֶׂה) for Maker is plural.

⁸⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 32. Isaac Watts was inclined to believe that Gen 1:26 did signify a plurality and mentioned other texts as Ecc 12:1; Ps 149:2; Job 35:10; Isa 54:5. Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 132–33n.

⁸⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 32.

⁹⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 33; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:10.

⁹¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 33.

⁹²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:10.

⁹³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 33.

be found in Scripture is in the letters of Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:18 and 7:23, which he considered to be no evidence of a Hebrew way of speaking but of Chaldee.⁹⁵ Quoting Richard Kidder (1633–1703),⁹⁶ Gill wrote, “It is a very extravagant fancy, to suppose that Moses alludes to a custom that was not (for what appears) in being at that time, nor a great while after.”⁹⁷

In addition, Gill responded to the author of the *Great Concern of Jew and Gentile* who suggested that God expressed himself in Genesis 1:26 merely under the character of the word and Spirit.⁹⁸ Gill said, “That the Word and Spirit were concerned with God in the creation of man, is a truth, and is the true reason of this plural expression; but then, these are not to be considered as mere characters, under which God acted; for mere names and characters cannot be consulted with; nor can creative powers be ascribed to them; nor have they any image and likeness after which man could be made.”⁹⁹

Furthermore, Gill considered the plural pronouns in Genesis 3:22: “And the Lord God said, the man is become as one of us.” The Hebrew scholar Gill disagreed with Jewish interpreters who believe that God spoke to angels, for Gill pointed out that angels are not God’s equals; even if God uttered such words to angels, he stated the text would

⁹⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 33–34.

⁹⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 34.

⁹⁶Richard Kidder was bishop of Bath and Wales from 1691 until his death. He was ejected for failing to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity 1662 but conformed in 1664. He was a prolific author, one of his works included the *Demonstration of the Messiah* published in three parts.

⁹⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 133.

⁹⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 36; William Davis, *The Great Concern of Jew and Gentile Or, The Supreme Divinity of the Son of God Asserted and Defended*, 2nd ed. (London: R. Griffit’s, 1751), 23–24.

⁹⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 36. For reply, see William Davis, *A Brief Reply to Mr. Gill’s Doctrine of the Trinity: Being a Defence of a Small Piece, Intituled, The Great Concern of Jew and Gentile* (London: H. Kent, 1743), 16–18. Davis claimed that it is not a mere character but “very significant” character. Davis, *Brief Reply to Mr. Gill’s Doctrine of the Trinity*, 16–17.

have said that the man has become “one of you” and not “one of us.”¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the Baptist elder stated that the context of Genesis 3:22 helps to interpret the passage correctly, for he explained that Satan tempted Eve to be equal with God and not angels, and therefore Genesis 3:22 should be understood to denote the divine being.¹⁰¹

In addition to Genesis 3:22, Gill discussed Genesis 11:7 where he observed the use of plural pronouns in reference to God. Notwithstanding that the Targum¹⁰² and Aben Ezra¹⁰³ interpreted Genesis 11:7 as God speaking to the angels, Gill contended that God could not be speaking to angels, since they lack the power to affect both mind and speech of humans.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, he claimed that Philo of Alexandria, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, interpreted the plural pronoun in Genesis 11:7 as more than one.¹⁰⁵ Not to mentioned Gill added, Genesis 11:8 declares that it was the LORD who scattered the people over the earth, implying that the same “us” is identified as the LORD.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 37. In a sermon on Gen 3:22, Gill wrote, “Others would have the angels here meant, to whom the Lord God thus speaks. But these are not his associates and companions; much less of equal dignity and authority with him. They were never made his privy council. He did not advise with them; nor were they assisting to him in the formation of man: neither was it after their image and likeness that he was created. They are God’s servants, to do his will; *are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.*” John Gill, *Jehovah’s Declaration, Behold the Man Is Become as One of Us*, in *Sermons and Tracts*, 6 vols (London: Old Paths Gospel, 1997), 5–6.

¹⁰¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 37.

¹⁰²Targum Psuedo-Jonathan recorded, “And the Lord said to the seventy angels which stand before Him, Come, we will descend and will there commingle their language, that a man shall not understand the speech of his neighbour.” *Tg. Ps. J. Gen 11:7*.

¹⁰³Abraham ibn Ezra (1092/3–1167) was a Jewish scholar and exegete who published a commentary on the Pentateuch. W.B., “Ibn Ezra, Abraham Ben Meir,” in *God-Istria*, vol. 6 of *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day.*, ed. Isidore Singer (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1901–6), 6:519–23.

¹⁰⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:88.

¹⁰⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 39. γὰρ διαλεγόμενός τιςιν ὡς ἂν συνεργοῖς αὐτοῦ (For he was conversing with some ones as if his fellow co-workers (my translation). Philo *On the Confusion of Tongues* 1.168.

¹⁰⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 39.

There were other passages that Gill cited as proof to establish the plurality in the divine essence, using plural expressions. He mentioned Isaiah 6:8 and 41:21–23. From the New Testament, he referenced John 14:23 where the Lord Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Gill noted that the “we will come” clearly indicates more than one, and in the context, the “we” represent the Father and the Son. Moreover, he pointed out that the indwelling of Father and Son with the believer is a personal action, and hence it is proof of the distinct persons in the Godhead.¹⁰⁷

The angel of the LORD is identified as and yet distinguished from the LORD

Besides the use of plural pronouns and various grammatical constructions with the plural name of Elohim, Gill argued that if the angel of the LORD is identified as the LORD and yet distinct from the LORD, then there must be a plurality in the Godhead. He wrote, “that if there is one who is *Jehovah*, that sends; and another who also is *Jehovah*, that is sent; then there must be a plurality in the Godhead.”¹⁰⁸ First, he contended that the angel of the LORD in Genesis 16:7–13 was not a created angel but a divine person. Gill discussed how Hagar after being visited by the angel of the LORD, was directed to return to her mistress, promised innumerable descendants, and foretold of her descendant’s disposition. While rejecting that any created angel himself could fulfill such a promise of numerous descendants, Gill explained that the response of Hagar makes it clear that the angel of the LORD was the LORD, for she identified the one who spoke with her as the LORD, the God who sees (v. 13).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 41; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:61.

¹⁰⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 41–42.

¹⁰⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 134.

Second, Gill argued that the angel of the LORD in Genesis 18 was identified as a divine person. While three angels appeared in human form, Gill explicated that only one of them was called the LORD (v. 13, 20, 26), the Judge of all the earth (v. 25).¹¹⁰ This angel of the LORD who is identified as the LORD and Judge of all the earth, Gill pointed out that not only is the LORD said to destroy Sodom (Gen 19:24) but that throughout Scripture God is always represented as the one who destroyed Sodom and not a created angel (Jer 50:40; Amos 4:11).¹¹¹

Finally, Exodus 3:2 mentions that the angel of the LORD appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush. Gill remarked that the angel of the LORD is later called the LORD (v. 4), the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 6), who possessed knowledge. Such a name as the LORD and the title of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Gill declared, a created angel would never acknowledge.¹¹²

Distinction of Two Who Are Both Called YHWH or God

Moreover, Gill observed that there are passages in Scripture, which distinguish between two who are both designated YHWH or God. First, Genesis 19:24 says, “Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.” As already mentioned above, Gill denied that this act of judgment was the work of angels, since Scripture always attributed this conflagration to God (Jer 50:40; Amos 4:11).¹¹³ In addition, Gill commented that the one who rained fire and brimstone must be distinguished from the one from whom fire and brimstone was rained and “must be one of equal power with him” and yet both are called LORD.¹¹⁴ Second, Psalm 45:7

¹¹⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 134.

¹¹¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 134.

¹¹²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:326.

¹¹³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 48–49.

says, “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Gill pointed out that the one who anoints and the one who is anointed must be distinct, yet they are both called God.¹¹⁵ Third, Gill showed that God promised that he would save his people by the LORD their God (Hos 1:7) and deduced that the one who promises to save must be distinct from the one by whom he will save, and yet both are designated LORD.¹¹⁶

Gill elaborated on the distinction between the two persons, explaining that the distinction is real and personal and not nominal and essential. He wrote, “Now this distinction must be either nominal or real; not nominal, because they both bear the same name in all these passages. The distinction therefore, must be real; and if it is real, it must be either essential or personal; not essential, for there is but one divine nature or essence; otherwise there would be more gods than one. It remains then, that the distinction is personal, and consequently that there is a plurality of divine persons in the Godhead.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 49.

¹¹⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 49.

¹¹⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 49–50.

¹¹⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 50.

CHAPTER 7

GILL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: THE DISTINCTION OF THE THREE PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD

The Distinction of the Three Persons in the Godhead

In the previous chapter, it was shown that Gill argued that God is one and that within the one, there is a plurality. He then proceeded to demonstrate that the plurality within the one God consisted of three distinct persons and consider what distinguishes these three persons in the Godhead. He noted that whatever distinguishes them is not “merely nominal, which is no distinction at all; as when the Sabellians say, God is one Person, having three names, Father, Son, and Spirit; here is no distinction.”¹ Nor, he added, is the distinction “merely modal” but “real modal,” explaining that “though there are modes of subsisting in the Deity, and each Person has a distinct mode, yet the phrase seems not strong enough; for the distinction is real and personal; the Three in the Godhead are not barely three modes, but three distinct Persons in a different mode of subsisting, who are really distinct from each other.”² Therefore, “the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Spirit either the Father or the Son.”³ Whatever then distinguishes the three persons, he asserted, must be eternal, since the “one God existed from eternity, and if the three Persons are the one God, they must exist from eternity, and exist as distinct Persons” and consequently what distinguishes them must

¹John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 141.

²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

exist from eternity.⁴ Furthermore, whatever distinguishes the three persons cannot be attributed to *opera Dei ad extra*, for the *opera Dei ad extra* are “common to all three Persons; for though one may be more commonly ascribed to one Person, and another to another, yet the three Persons have a concern in each; and therefore they cannot distinguish them from one another.”⁵ Thus, if the external works of God never existed, there would still remain the distinction of three persons in the one divine essence. “If there had never been a creature made, nor a soul saved, nor a sinner sanctified, God would have been the same he is, three persons in one God.”⁶ What then distinguishes the three persons? Gill replied that it is the “distinctive relative properties, which belong to each person, which distinguish them one from another; as paternity in the first Person, filiation in the second, and spiration in the third.”⁷ In other words, the Father begets and is not begotten; the Son is begotten and does not beget; and the Spirit proceeds and is not begotten and does not beget. And the distinction between the Father, Son, and Spirit, according to Gill, was “something in the divine nature, and not anything out of it . . . not any works *ad extra*, done by them; nor their concern in the economy of man’s salvation; nor offices bore by them.”⁸ Gill added that “if one of these distinct Persons is a Father, in the divine nature, another a Son in the divine nature, there must be something in the divine nature which is ground of the relation, and distinguishes the one from the other; and can be nothing else than generation, and which distinguishes the third Person from them both, as neither begetting nor begotten.”⁹ This chapter will accordingly examine

⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 142.

⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 142.

⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 142.

Gill's argument that what distinguishes the three persons in the Godhead is the paternity of the Father, the filiation of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit.

The Paternity of the Father

Gill recognized that the Scriptures distinguished the use of the term "Father" in two ways: essentially and personally. There were, however, some in the eighteenth century who rejected the distinction of essentially and personally. William Davis, a Christian physician, questioned Gill's use of the terms essentially and personally to explain his interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4. Davis stated that such terms are unscriptural.¹⁰ Sayer Rudd insisted that there was no justification for distinguishing "God essential and God personal."¹¹ Furthermore, Rudd denied that the term Father entailed a personal distinction within the Godhead.¹² He continued that "Father is not the title of One individual, intelligent, agent, in distinction from, or opposition to Two other, eternally subsisting in the divine essence (which is the popular notion of the word)."¹³

Despite the objections of Davis and Rudd to the distinction between Father essentially and personally considered, Gill maintained the distinction and argued for it exegetically. On the one hand, when the term "Father" is used essentially, he stated that it denoted the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Spirit as the one God who is the Creator and Preserver of all humans. Thus, "Father" sometimes designated the one God in general as creator and not to any one person in the Godhead. Commenting on the words in 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us there is but one God, the Father," Gill wrote that the meaning

¹⁰William Davis, *A Brief Reply to Mr. Gill's Doctrine of the Trinity: Being a Defence of a Small Piece, Intituled, The Great Concern of Jew and Gentile* (London: H. Kent, 1743), 9.

¹¹Sayer Rudd, *The Doctrine of the Divine Being Under His Grand Distinguishing Characters of God, Father and Spirit. A Sermon Delivered at the Meeting House in Snow's Fields, Southwark: Occasioned by the Anniversary of That Foundation, on the First of August MDCCXXXV* (London: J. Roberts, A. Dodd, and J. Noon, 1737), 52.

¹²Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 19.

¹³Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 19.

of Father may denote the Godhead “in relation to the creatures: so this one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, is the Father of spirits, the creator of angels, and the souls of men, the God of all flesh, the Father of all the individuals of human nature, the Father or author of all the mercies and blessings the children of men enjoy.”¹⁴ In his treatise on the Trinity, Gill asserted that the word Father, as used in Malachi 2:10, sometimes designated “the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit; because he is the common parent, creator, and former of all things.”¹⁵ To the question, “Shall we not be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?” in Hebrews 12:9, Gill understood the phrase “the Father of spirits” to be a reference to the one God who is the creator of the souls of men.¹⁶ Similarly, in his commentary on Acts 17:28–29, Gill explained that when the apostle Paul applied a comment from the heathen poets that all of humanity are the “offspring of God,” it implies that all of humanity have the same Father and Maker.¹⁷ Thus, Scripture sometimes uses the term Father to denote the whole Godhead as creator.

On the other hand, when the term “Father” is used personally, Gill indicated that it denoted the first person in the Godhead who has a peculiar relation to the Son.¹⁸ He wrote that the word Father may be understood with a “peculiar regard to the second person, the Word, who is his only begotten Son; and his Son in such a way of filiation, as neither angels nor saints are.”¹⁹ Remarking on the blessing offered to God in 1 Peter 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the Baptist pastor commented

¹⁴John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 8:657.

¹⁵John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731), 86.

¹⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:474.

¹⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:312.

¹⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:657.

¹⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 86.

that God should not be understood “essentially, but personally considered. . . . God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; and he is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; for, as man, he had no father, nor is he a son by office, but by nature.”²⁰

Richard Muller has observed that British and continental Reformed writers generally disagreed whether Father in the Lord’s Prayer referred to the first person (i.e. personally considered) of the Trinity or to the one God (i.e. essentially considered).²¹ Muller noted that British Reformed writers generally believed that “Father” in the Lord’s Prayer referred to the one God while continental writers affirmed a trinitarian reference.²² Gill sided with the continental writers, for in his commentary on Matthew 6:9, he wrote, “By ‘Father,’ our Lord means the first person in the Trinity, who is the Father of all men by creation, and of saints by adoption.”²³ Writing in his *Body of Practical Divinity* near the end of his life, Gill reaffirmed this conviction. He considered on the one hand that “Father” could be understood to mean “God essentially considered; of the Three Persons in the Godhead, who are the one God, the Creator, and so the Father of all; in which respect this term, *Father*, is not peculiar to any one person in the Deity, but common to all Three.”²⁴ On the other hand, he suggested that “Father” could be understood of God personally, that is, of one person in the Godhead, even of God the Father, the first Person, who stands in the relation of a Father in a special sense, the Father of our Lord Jesus . . . and our Father in Christ.”²⁵ It was the latter meaning that Gill held, for he explained that

²⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:530; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:60.

²¹Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 4:246.

²²Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:247–48.

²³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:58.

²⁴John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1770; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 949.

²⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 949.

“the Father of Christ is our Father, both by adoption and regeneration; and as such may be addressed by us, as here directed; which shews the true order and manner of prayer, which is to be made to the Father, the first Person.”²⁶

Furthermore, the Baptist commentator cautioned his readers from drawing the inference that when the Scriptures speak of the Father personally as the one God it excludes the Son and Spirit from being the one God with the Father.²⁷ Gill argued that if one excluded the Son and Spirit from being God with the Father because 1 Corinthians 8:6 states, “there is but one God the Father,” then by the same rule of interpretation he reasoned that “the Father, in the next clause must stand excluded from being the one Lord with Christ.”²⁸

Moreover, Gill advised his readers that although the Messiah is called the everlasting Father in Isaiah 9:6, it did not signify the peculiar relation of the Son to the Father in the Godhead.²⁹ Gill explained,

There is but one Father in the Godhead, and that is the first Person; indeed Christ and the Father are one, and the Father is in him, and he is in the Father, and he that has seen the one has seen the other, and yet they are distinct, Christ is not the Father; the Son and Spirit may be considered with the first Person as Father, in creation and regeneration, they being jointly concerned therein, but not in the Trinity. . . . But Christ is a Father with respect to chosen men, who were given him as his children and offspring in covenant; who are adopted into that family that is named of him, and who are regenerated by his Spirit and grace: and to these he is an “everlasting Father.”³⁰

According to Gill, what distinguishes the Father from the Son and the Spirit is that the Father begets. He wrote:

The grand distinctive personal act of the Father, is his eternal act of begetting the Son in the divine nature or essence; which though unconceivable, and unaccountable by us, yet is plainly revealed in the sacred scriptures; and is the true reason of his

²⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 949.

²⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:657.

²⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:657–58.

²⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 55.

³⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:55–56.

bearing the character and relation of a Father; and is what distinguished him from the Son and Spirit. The Son is never said to beget, either the Father or the Spirit: And the Spirit is never said to beget either the Son or the Father: The act of begetting, is peculiar to the Father.³¹

Gill affirmed the same truth that the begetting is the unique relative property that distinguishes the Father from the other two persons in the Godhead, when he mentioned that “it is begetting (Ps 2:7) which peculiarly belongs to the first [person], and is never ascribed to the second and third; which distinguishes him from them both and gives him, with great propriety, the name of the Father.”³² Gill denied that the Father was distinguished in the Godhead due to his relation to creation, providence, and grace. For this reason, the Baptist theologian declared that the Father would still be the Father, if not one angel was created, one man was made, or one person redeemed.³³

Further, Gill elaborated and clarified his understanding of begetting. He asserted that the act of begetting is a single act.³⁴ This single act of begetting, he added, must not be understood as if the Father begot the Son’s nature, since the Son’s nature is the same with the Father and the Spirit. Remarking on Psalm 2:7 “this day I have begotten thee,” Gill stated that “the act of begetting refers not to the nature, nor to the office, but the person of Christ; not to his nature, not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit.”³⁵ After explaining that the first person begets the second person, Gill clarified some misconceptions about this single act, and exhorted his readers to be content with the manner of divine generation. He wrote:

³¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 97.

³²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 142; cf. *A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ, in Carter-Lane, Southwark, Under the Pastoral Care of Dr John Gill; Read and Assented to at the Admission of Members* (London, 1771), 3–4.

³³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 143.

³⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 154.

³⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:531; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:376.

In divine generation, person begets person, and not essence begets essence; and this begetting is not out of, but “in” the divine essence; it being an immanent and internal act in God; and in our conception of it, as has been already observed, we are to remove every thing impure and imperfect, division and multiplication, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; and as for the modus, or manner of it, we must be content to be ignorant of it, as we are of our own generation, natural and spiritual.³⁶

Moreover, Gill clarified that when trinitarians speak of the Father as the first person, they deny any notion that the Father is “first, in order of nature, or time, or causality.”³⁷ He insisted that as

the Father is God of himself, so the Son is God of himself, and the Spirit is God of himself. They all three exist together, and necessarily exist, and subsist distinctly by themselves in one undivided nature. The one is not before the other, nor more excellent than the other. But since ’tis necessary, for our better apprehension of them, that there should be some order in the mention of them, it seems most proper to place the Father first. . . . Though, to let us see that there is a perfect quality between them, and no superiority or inferiority among them, this order is frequently inverted.³⁸

Besides the Scriptures general reference to the Father as first in relation to the Trinity, Gill contended that the Father was always the Father. Thus, “the Father was never without the Son, nor the Son without the Father, but was the eternal Son of the eternal Father.”³⁹

The Filiation of the Son

Intimately connected with the paternity of the Father was Gill’s argument for the filiation of the Son as what distinguishes the Son from the Father and the Spirit. This section will first discuss Gill’s doctrinal understanding of the filiation of the Son or eternal Sonship, followed by an examination of the importance and the Scriptural

³⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 157–58.

³⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 97.

³⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 97–98. Gill did not mention specific texts, but he could have cited, for example, 2 Corinthians 13:14.

³⁹John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:56.

arguments for the doctrine. Next, several common objections will be examined and finally an affirmation that the doctrine has an element of mystery to it is considered.

Statement of Doctrine

There is a principle in doctrinal disputes that must be upheld: a person must assert not only what they do mean, but also what they do not mean. Gill exemplified this principle throughout his writings in addressing the eternal Sonship of Christ. He not only asserted what he understood eternal Sonship not to mean, but he also asserted what it did mean.

Negative statement of doctrine. Gill denied the meaning of eternal Sonship to be understood in any manner to denote the Son is inferior or subordinate to the Father. While speaking on the subject of Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, he remarked, “Though the Father may be said to be greater than Christ, considered in his office capacity, yet this does not suppose any subjection and inferiority of his divine Person.”⁴⁰ Nor does the Son derive his essence from the Father.⁴¹ In another place, he explained at length that eternal Sonship does not mean the Son is begotten in essence but in his person.

The divine nature of the Son is no more begotten than the divine nature of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost; the reason is, because it is the same divine nature, which is common to, and is possessed by all three. Hence it would follow, that if the divine nature of the Son was begotten, so would the divine nature of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost likewise. The divine essence neither begets nor is begotten. It is a divine person in the essence that begets, and a divine person in that essence that is begotten. Essence does not beget essence, but person begets person, otherwise there would be more than one essence: Whereas, though there are more persons than one, yet there is no more than one essence.”⁴²

Moreover, Gill denied Christ’s Sonship is founded upon his miraculous

⁴⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 234.

⁴¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 183.

⁴²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 183–84.

conception and birth, or his resurrection from the dead, or his mediatorial office.⁴³ He reflected the same truth in his church's Confession, which was modified several times because of the trinitarian controversy: "[he was] not a Son by creation, as angels and men are, nor by adoption, as saints are, nor by office, as civil magistrates."⁴⁴

Positive statement of doctrine. Positively, Gill declared eternal Sonship is to be understood to mean the Son is a Son "by nature, by the Father's eternal generation (Psalm 2:7) of him in the divine nature."⁴⁵ He is a true, real, and proper Son, for, while commenting on the words "whoever denies the Son does not have the Father" in 1 John 2:23, Gill explained the term the Son to mean "the true, proper, natural, essential, and eternal Son of God."⁴⁶ Gill summarized what he did not mean and what he did mean when he spoke of the eternal Sonship of Christ in the opening verses of his commentary on 2 Corinthians 1:3: "[Christ is a Son] not by creation, as angels and men, nor by adoption, as saints, but in such a way of filiation, as no creatures are, or possibly can be: he is his only begotten Son, his own proper Son, his natural and eternal Son, is of the same nature with him, and equal to him in perfections, power, and glory."⁴⁷

The Importance of the Doctrine of Eternal Sonship

⁴³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 147. In his commentary on 1 John 2:22, Gill called those who believe Christ's Sonship is based upon his miraculous conception, resurrection from the dead, or mediatorial office as antichrists: "[those] who affirm that Christ is only the Son of God by adoption, or because of his love to him, or because of his incarnation and resurrection from the dead; . . . that he is not the natural and eternally begotten Son of God, only by office, and as Mediator, and that God is only his Father, as having installed him into an office . . . all such persons are antichrists, or opposers of Christ." Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:632.

⁴⁴John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (1814–15; repr., Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel), 6:222–23.

⁴⁵John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:223.

⁴⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:632.

⁴⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:756.

For Gill, the doctrine of eternal Sonship, or what he referred to as the eternal generation of the Son, divine filiation, or true, proper, and real Son in some places, is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. He believed that it was one of the central tenets of true religion. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 3:11 where Paul declared that no one can lay any other foundation than Jesus Christ, Gill asserted Christ's divine and eternal Sonship as among the fundamentals of Christianity.⁴⁸ He considered the denial of Sonship as a damnable heresy and one of the "errors in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel."⁴⁹ In his work on *A Body of Divinity*, he expressed the same sentiments when he wrote that the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is one of the doctrines clearly revealed in Scripture and forms part of the "sum and substance of supernatural Theology," and later on in the same work he asserted, "the Sonship of Christ is an article of the greatest importance in the Christian religion."⁵⁰

Not only did Gill consider the doctrine of the eternal Sonship to be a fundamental article, but he believed that it is essential to the doctrine of the Trinity. After arguing that the Sonship of Christ is "the distinguishing criterion of the Christian religion," and upon this foundation "all the important doctrines of it [Christianity] depend," he added, "without this [filiation of the Son] the doctrine of Trinity can never be supported. . . . without this, the distinction of Persons in the Trinity can never be maintained; and, indeed, without this, there is none at all; take away all this, and all distinction ceases."⁵¹ Preaching at the ordination of John Reynolds near the end of his ministry, Gill once again

⁴⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:616.

⁴⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:595.

⁵⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 1, 143. For a similar view of the importance of Sonship, see Benjamin Wallin, *The Scripture-Doctrine of Christ's Sonship: Being Sermons on the Divine Filiation of Jesus, the Only Begotten of the Father* (London, 1771), xiv.

⁵¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 144.

affirmed the inextricable link between eternal Sonship and the doctrine of the Trinity. He declared,

I have said, that “the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, depends upon the article of the Son's generation, and therefore if this cannot be maintained, the other must fall of course;” and for my own part, could I be prevailed upon to part with this article of faith, I would at once give up the doctrine of the trinity, as quite indefensible; and indeed it would be the height of folly to talk of a distinction of persons in the Deity, when the foundation of such distinction is removed; for we pretend to no other distinction in it, but what arises from the internal relative properties in God, as paternity, filiation and spiration, the ground of which is, the eternal generation of the Son; for without that there can be neither Father, nor Son, nor Spirit.⁵²

Hence, for Gill, there can be no logically consistent position that denies the eternal generation of the Son and, at the same time, affirms the distinction of persons prior to the appointment of the Mediator. So fundamental was the doctrine of eternal generation that Gill saw that if this truth was removed, it would affect essential doctrines because the “doctrines of redemption, justification, atonement, and pardon of sin, depend upon the divinity of the person of Christ, as the Son of God (Gal 4:4; Rom 8:3–4; Heb 1:3–4; 1 John 1:7).”⁵³

Scriptural Arguments

Having stated the meaning of the doctrine and its significance to Christianity, Gill presented his reasons to affirm the filiation of the Son. The argument follows along the line that Christ is the Son of God, and this Son is the eternal Son of the Father, and this eternal relation between Father and Son is the only biblical and reasonable basis to distinguish between the persons in the Godhead. This eternal Sonship in no way denies the Son is equal in essence with the Father nor is his Sonship founded upon anything than his nature.

⁵²Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:56.

⁵³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 144.

The Son is designated in Scripture as the Son of God. Gill asserted that the Scripture clearly and explicitly designates Christ is the Son of God. He supported his assertion with Scripture testimony from the Father at the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus (Matt 3:17; 17:15), the testimony of Jesus himself (John 19:17), the testimony of John the Baptist and other saints (John 1:34; Matt 16:15–16), and the devil and fallen angels (Matt 8:28–29). He concluded by acknowledging that there is no disagreement that Scripture teaches Christ is the Son of God, but what is disputed is the meaning of the Son of God.⁵⁴

The Son of God means he is the eternal Son of the Father. Now, since all agree that the term Son of God is biblical, Gill devoted his attention to clarify his meaning concerning the phrase “Son of God.” He began by refuting all false notions and arguments concerning the Sonship of Christ. He rejected six arguments of the Socinians who denied that Christ’s Sonship is founded upon eternal generation. First, Socinians claimed Christ’s Sonship is based upon the Father’s love to him.⁵⁵ Second, they contended his Sonship is based upon his likeness to the Father.⁵⁶ Third, they posited the idea that he is a Son by adoption.⁵⁷ These three arguments, Gill recognized, had little Scripture support and were not insisted upon by his opponents.

Although Gill refuted the previous three arguments in brief, the next three he addressed with more thoroughness. Fourth, the Socinians argued that Christ’s Sonship is grounded in his miraculous conception and birth.⁵⁸ Gill replied with a battery of

⁵⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 140–44.

⁵⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 149.

⁵⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 149.

⁵⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 149.

⁵⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 150.

arguments, which included philological and logical reasons. For example, he observed that if the incarnation is the reason for the Sonship of Christ, then there would be no God the Father in the Old Testament; but this cannot be since Scripture clearly teaches otherwise in Hebrews 1:1–2 and Ephesians 1:3–4.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Socinians claimed that Sonship was founded upon his resurrection.⁶⁰ Like his previous response, Gill presented six reasons why Christ’s Sonship is not dependent upon his resurrection from the dead. One of these six reasons was that Socinians themselves would be inconsistent, for they claimed that the incarnation was the basis of Christ’s Sonship, and if this is true, then his Sonship preceded his resurrection. Therefore, Christ’s Sonship is not dependent upon his resurrection.⁶¹ Further, if the resurrection was the reason for the Sonship of Christ, then Gill argued “his sonship would not be proper, but figurative and metaphorical, whereas he is God’s own, or proper son.”⁶² The final claim of the Socinians was the claim that Sonship is grounded upon Christ’s office as Mediator.⁶³ This last view of Christ’s Sonship was held both by Thomas Ridgley,⁶⁴ Isaac Watts,⁶⁵ an anonymous author identified as Philalethes,⁶⁶ and James Anderson (1680?–1739).⁶⁷ For Gill, this was

⁵⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 150.

⁶⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 151.

⁶¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 151.

⁶²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:268.

⁶³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:268.

⁶⁴Thomas Ridgley, *A Body of Divinity: Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion Are Explained and Defended Being the Substance of Several Lectures on the Assembly’s Larger Catechism* (Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1814), 1:266, 269–74. For article on Thomas Ridgley, see Alan P. F. Sell, “Thomas Ridgley (1667–1734): Doctrinal Zeal and Personal Humility,” in *Hinterland Theology: A Stimulus to Theological Construction* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008), 9–40.

⁶⁵Isaac Watts, *Useful and Important Questions Concerning Jesus the Son of God Freely Proposed: With a Humble Attempt to Answer Them According to Scripture. To Which is Added, A Charitable Essay on the True Importance of any Human Schemes to Explain the Sacred Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: J. Oswald and J. Buckland, 1746), 16–35.

⁶⁶Philalethes, *The Divine Personality, and True Sonship of Christ Defended: Or, a Full*

to confuse the ground of Sonship because the Scriptures name the Son as antecedent to his investiture as Prophet, Priest, and King. Before his appointment as King, the writer to the Hebrews refers to the Son: “But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of his kingdom.’”⁶⁸

Having removed all the possible options for the meaning of eternal Sonship, Gill asserted his understanding of the meaning of eternal Sonship of Christ. His first reason for believing in the eternal generation was grounded in his exegesis of Psalm 2:7. He interpreted the words of the Psalm “You are My Son,” to mean he is a Son in a unique way that cannot be spoken of any creature; and is acknowledged by God the Father to be “the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God.”⁶⁹ The reason, he continued, that the

Consent of Scripture and Reason, to Prove the Absurdity and Inconsistency, of Believing an Eternal, Self-Existent Person to Be Begotten:... In Which is Contain'd, Some Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Gill's Arguments for Eternal Generation and Essential Filiation, Found in His Treatise on the Trinity (London: J. Roberts), 1, 65–75. This author stated that he affirmed that there are three distinct divine persons who are co-equal and co-eternal, but he denied that the Sonship of Christ is rooted in his eternal generation. Rather, he argued that it is grounded only in his mediatorial role. Furthermore, he devoted considerable space to reply to Gill's arguments against Christ's Sonship grounded in his mediatorialship. Philalethes, *Divine Personality, and True Sonship of Christ Defended*, ii, 38–66. This work was written sometime after 1739 because the author mentions the late James Anderson who died in 1739. Further, the author is probably an Anglican because he spoke of the Dissenters as “many of these who are for free liberty in matters of religion” Philalethes, *Divine Personality, and True Sonship of Christ Defended*, vii. It should be noted that an electronic version in the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* database has inverted the title page the *Divine Personality and True Sonship with Antiquity No Certain Guide*. An original copy of both of these tracts can be found at the library in Worcester College, Oxford.

⁶⁷James Anderson, *Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, a Dissertation* (London: Richard Ford, 1733), 64. He wrote, “all the texts that mention his Sonship, speak of it with respect only to his mediatorial office, and not with respect to his eternal generation, though as the divine Logos, he eternally existed” Anderson, *Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, a Dissertation*, 64. Anderson was Presbyterian minister and was considered a learned man, having earned a doctorate of divinity.

⁶⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 152; John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise*, 2nd ed. (London: G. Keith, 1752). When a new place was opened for worship on October 9, 1757, Gill preached on Exodus 20:24 and reminded his hearers that Christ's Sonship is not based upon his office: “Christ is in such sense his Son, and in such a class of filiation and sonship, as none others are, angels, or men ; angels are the sons of God by creation, saints by adoption: but *to which of them*, one or another, *said he at any time*, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Hebrews 1:5) Christ is his own proper, natural Son; of the same nature with him; the Son of himself; *the Son of the Father, in truth and love*; (2 John 3) and not in an improper, figurative, and metaphorical sense; as magistrates, by office, are called the sons of God.” John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 2:120.

Son is designated as the eternal Son is because of words “Today I have begotten You” (Psalm 2:7). The meaning of this expression should be understood as the Father begetting not the essence of the Son but his person, for if the Father begot his Son’s essence, then the Son would not be fully God in himself.⁷⁰ Aware that some of his readers who were not versed in theology might be bewildered at this point, he reminded them that the mode of begetting is inconceivable.⁷¹ It is a mystery.

Following his exposition of Psalm 2:7, he added Proverbs 8:22–30 as additional evidence to establish his assertion that eternal Sonship is biblical.⁷² He interpreted the clause “when there were no depths I was brought forth” to speak of Christ’s eternal Sonship, by arguing that Targum, Syriac, and Septuagint understand it to mean begot or begotten.⁷³ Likewise, the Hebrew word is used similarly to express generation in Job 15:7 and Psalm 51:5.⁷⁴ Although some were convinced by Micah 5:2 to further support the eternal generation of the Son, Gill himself did not believe it was speaking of his Sonship but rather his eternity.⁷⁵

⁶⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:531; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:125.

⁷⁰Gill commented on this clause as follows: “which act of begetting refers not to the nature, nor to the office, but the person of Christ; not to his nature, not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also: much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without father: nor to his office as Mediator, in which he is not a Son, but a servant; besides, he was a Son previous to his being Prophet, Priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office; or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his person; for, as in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so in divine generation; but care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, such as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like: nor can the ‘modus’ or manner of it be conceived or explained by us.” Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:531.

⁷¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:531.

⁷²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 182.

⁷³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:383.

⁷⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:383.

⁷⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 182. See also Micah 5:2 in Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New*

The eternal Sonship is the only biblical and rational means to justify the distinction between the Father and the Son. After establishing the meaning of the phrase the “Son of God,” Gill contended that the only biblical and rational means to justify the distinction between the Father and the Son is the eternal Sonship. Gill maintained that the distinction between the Father and Son is real and not nominal.⁷⁶ This real and personal distinction, asserted Gill, must have existed as early as God existed, for, if the one God is eternal and immutable, and if the three persons are one God, then the three persons are eternal and immutable, and therefore the three persons must have existed as distinct persons from eternity.⁷⁷

Furthermore, Gill argued that if this doctrine of Christ’s eternal generation is denied, then the distinction between the persons can never be established. This was an important point because Thomas Ridgley rejected the eternal generation of the Son and in its place substituted the basis for distinction upon Christ’s office.⁷⁸ Ridgley believed that the deity of Christ is not denied, if his Sonship rests upon his office.⁷⁹ Nor, he says is the distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit removed.⁸⁰ Gill rejected any suggestion that the eternal Sonship of Christ was grounded in his being Mediator, since he must first be proved to be a Son before he can be the mediator.⁸¹ At the ordination of

Testaments, 6:574.

⁷⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

⁷⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 141.

⁷⁸Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:266.

⁷⁹He wrote, “This account of Christ’s Sonship does not take away any argument, by which we prove his deity; for when we consider him as Mediator, we always suppose him to be both God and man, which is what we intend when we speak of the Person of Christ in this respect; so that, as God, he is equal with the Father, and has an equal right to divine adoration.” Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:270.

⁸⁰Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 1:270.

⁸¹Gill expressed indignation at Ridgley’s effort to maintain the tri-unity of God while establishing it upon the mediatorial office of Christ.

John Reynolds, Gill expressed how untenable Ridgley's position was to him: "indeed it would be the height of folly to talk of a distinction of persons in the Deity, when the foundation of such distinction is removed; for we pretend to no other distinction in it, but what arises from the internal relative properties in God, as paternity, filiation and spiration, the ground of which is, the eternal generation of the Son; for without that there can be neither Father, nor Son, nor Spirit."⁸²

Various Objections

There were several persons that objected or denied the eternal generation of the Son. Isaac Harmon, a member of the church where Gill was the pastor, acknowledged "he had long been at enmity with the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ by the generation of the Father."⁸³ Harmon published a short tract in which he purposed to expose numerous contradictory statements made by advocates of eternal generation, such as Gill and other divines.⁸⁴ In his tract, Harmon stated that he could not in good conscience submit to a doctrine which never had been and never will be proved from the Scriptures.⁸⁵ Further, an author who identified himself as Philalethes wrote a tract,

⁸²John Gill, *The Form of Sound Words to Be Held Fast*, in *Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:56. Gill expressed indignation at Ridgley's effort to maintain the tri-unity of God while establishing it upon the mediatorial office of Christ in a footnote: "Of such absurdity and inconsistency the late Dr. Ridgley was guilty; exploding the doctrine of the generation of the Son of God, and adopting the Socinian notion of sonship by office; and yet at the same time declaring for a distinction of three divine persons in the Godhead. A strange paradox this! and it is a disgrace to that body of men of whole denomination the Doctor was, that none of his brethren attempted to refute him, though they in general disliked his opinion and dissented from him; perhaps they thought the contradiction was so glaring, that his own notions confuted themselves; this is the best apology I can make for them." Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:56.

⁸³Minutes of Members' Meeting of Horselydown Church, Metropolitan Tabernacle. Isaac Harmon had been a member of the Horselydown Church from May 22, 1757 until he was removed from the church by unanimous vote at church meeting on July 24, 1768. Goat Yard/Carter Lane Church Book 1719–1808, Metropolitan Tabernacle, 22, 27.

⁸⁴Isaac Harman, *The Creed of the Eternal Generationists. Compiled from the Writings of Some of Those Sensible, Consistent, and Orthodox Gentlemen* (London, 1768), v-vi.

⁸⁵Harman, *Creed of the Eternal Generationists*, 27–28.

defending himself and others against the charge of heterodoxy because they denied the eternal generation of the Son, though they affirmed there is one God and three distinct divine persons in the Godhead who are co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal. Philalethes considered eternal generation to be “error errorum,”⁸⁶ and insisted that the second Person could not be begotten by the first Person and still be co-eternal and co-essential, for the author could only conceive a begetting with a beginning and thus the first Person must precede the Second.⁸⁷ Therefore, he argued that advocates of eternal generation to contend that the Father begot the Son and the two are co-eternal and co-essential was to maintain something impossible and contradictory.⁸⁸ Instead, he argued that what constitutes the second Person is not the eternal generation of the Son, but his being the Mediator, which is the “union of two natures.”⁸⁹ When the second Person was “made flesh, then the Sonship actually was manifested, and then it appear’d that the union of two Natures (the Deity shining thro’ the Humanity, and the Humanity glittering by its nearness to the Deity) constituted the Son.”⁹⁰ He further clarified his convictions that he believed the second Person to be fully divine yet denied his Sonship is eternal: “It has all along been granted that the Person subsisting in the divine and human Nature united, is an eternal, self-existent Person; but the Sonship which arises from the deity in union with humanity, and that in union with divinity is not eternal, it was not always thus united, tho’ the Person in the union did himself eternally exist.”⁹¹ Samuel Stockell (1710–1750), a

⁸⁶Philalethes, *Antiquity No Certain Guide in Religion: Or, the Doctrine of the Eternal Generation of the Second Person in the Adorable Trinity, Consider’d: And the Absurdity and Inconsistency of Believing an Eternal, Self-Existent Person to Be Begotten, is Plainly Demonstrated* (London: J. Roberts, 1735), v.

⁸⁷Philalethes, *Antiquity No Certain Guide in Religion*, vii.

⁸⁸Philalethes, *Antiquity No Certain Guide in Religion*, 13.

⁸⁹Philalethes, *Antiquity No Certain Guide in Religion*, vii.

⁹⁰Philalethes, *Antiquity No Certain Guide in Religion*, 47–48.

⁹¹Philalethes, *Divine Personality, and True Sonship of Christ Defended*, 47.

Congregationalist minister, expressed his strong disapproval of eternal generation, when he wrote,

I cannot understand the terms in vogue among us, namely, *eternal generation*, and *essential filiation*, because I am positive, that Christ, as the eternal God, was never begotten, since it is impossible for me to conceive the begetter and begotten to be of equal date. I, therefore conclude that which he begets must be before the begotten, in order of time, and superior to him, in order of essence or nature; nay, 'tis impossible, that the begotten of God should be of the same essence with God, because self-existence, eternity, and independence are the inseparable properties of an infinite essence.”⁹²

Aware that this doctrine provoked several objections, Gill considered the four most common objections. First, the term eternal generation is not Scriptural. Second, the term eternal generation is contradictory. Next, the doctrine seems contrary to the Son’s eternity and independence. Finally, the doctrine appears to make the Son subordinate and unequal in essence with the Father.

The term eternal generation is not Scriptural. As to the objection over the term eternal generation, Gill stated that the term is biblical since the Scriptures speak of the Father as the one who begets (Psalm 2:7) and consequently he must be a Father; and it also speaks of one that is begotten (John 1:14, 18) and therefore there must be a Son; and if he is begotten, then he must be begotten by generation.⁹³ Now, for Gill the terms begotten and generation are the same. If the Son is begotten of the Father who is eternal, then the Son is begotten in eternity and therefore the Son is eternally begotten or eternally generated. “[N]o moment and instance can be given or pointed at, neither in eternity nor in time, in which Christ was not the begotten Son of the Father; therefore he must be eternally begotten of him.”⁹⁴

⁹²Samuel Stockell, *The Redeemer’s Glory Unveil’d, or the Excellency of Christ Vindicated, in the Antiquity of His Person, as God-Man, Before the World Began* (London, 1733), 41.

⁹³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 144.

⁹⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 145.

Again, Gill wrote, “Nor should the phrase, ‘eternal generation’, be objected to, because not syllabically expressed in scripture; it is enough that the thing is which is meant by it: nor are the words, a ‘Trinity of Persons’, or three distinct Persons in one God; nor the word ‘satisfaction,’ expressive of a doctrine on which our salvation depends. It is most certain, that Christ is the Son of God; and it is as certain, that he is the ‘begotten’ Son of God; and if begotten, then the word generation may be used of him, for what is begotten is generated.”⁹⁵

The term eternal generation is contradictory. Another objection came from the Socinians who believed the term eternal generation to be contradictory: “It must be observed this generation out of the Father’s essence involves a contradiction.”⁹⁶To which Gill responded that it is no more a contradiction than the “Trinity in Unity” or “three being one.”⁹⁷ He further clarified by distinguishing eternal generation from human generation and granted that if it meant the latter, then it would be a contradiction. He also suggested the distinction between the priority of order and priority of time to be helpful, where the Father generates the Son in priority of order but not in priority of time.⁹⁸

The eternal Sonship of Christ is contradictory to the Son’s eternity and independence. A third objection is the claim that the one who generates must precede the one is generated. If this true, then it must be true that the Father must precede the Son and therefore the Son is not co-eternal with the Father since the Son must have a beginning.⁹⁹

⁹⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

⁹⁶*The Racovian Catechism, with Notes and Illustrations, Translated from the Latin: To Which is Prefixed A Sketch of the History of Unitarianism in Poland and the Adjacent Countries*, trans. Thomas Rees, (1609; repr., London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 70.

⁹⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 145.

⁹⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 145.

⁹⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 147.

Gill responded with a rule that he says must be adhered: “correlates mutually put or suppose each other.”¹⁰⁰ He meant by this that “they commence together, they exist together, they co-exist, and that one is not before the other, not the one after the other.”¹⁰¹ He illustrated this by considering a father and a son. A father does not exist as a father prior to begetting a son and a son does not exist any longer as a son than the father as a father who begets. If the father and son should live for one hundred years, the father as a father will be no older than the son and the same is true about the son as a son.¹⁰² “Their relations rise and continue together till one or other of them cease. There is no priority nor posteriority, no *before* nor *after* in these relations.”¹⁰³ Therefore, if you consider the Father and the Son, there can be no “post-existence of him that is begotten, nor pre-existence of him that begets.”¹⁰⁴ As long as the Father is eternal, the Son must also be eternal. Therefore, the Son must be co-eternal.

Some claimed that the term Son signifies dependence upon the Father. Gill responded by asking what dependence does a son have upon a father in human generation.¹⁰⁵ A father, he stated, is not the efficient cause of his son, for God is the efficient cause, but the father is the instrumental cause.¹⁰⁶ He granted that a son in the infant stages of life is dependent upon his father, but the opposite is true of a father who is dependent upon his son in the later stages of his life. Gill further explained that since

¹⁰⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 147.

¹⁰¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 147.

¹⁰²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 147.

¹⁰³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 147.

¹⁰⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 147.

¹⁰⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 148.

¹⁰⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 148.

there is no infancy or old age in the divine nature, there can be no dependence. Moreover, he affirmed the Son's *ἀυτοθεός* and independence.¹⁰⁷

The doctrine makes the Son subordinate and unequal to the Father. Some argued that the Son is subordinate to the Father and therefore unequal to the Father. Gill replied that one must distinguish between Christ's divine and human natures. In the former, he is equal with God the Father, but in the latter he is subordinate and unequal. One passage some used to argue for the subordination of the Son is 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28. First, Gill replied that this text has reference to the future and therefore, it is no proof "of what is or has been."¹⁰⁸ Second, the text does not specify if it is the Son as the Son of God or the Son as Son of man who will hand over the kingdom. Third, he argued that it is the Son of man to whom the text refers and he will hand over the kingdom and will subject himself so that God, the triune God will be all in all.¹⁰⁹ Further, Gill pointed out passages where the Son of God addresses himself to the Father without the least hint of subordination as John 17:24.

The Doctrine of Eternal Sonship Has an Element of Mystery

Having addressed common objections, Gill reminded people that the doctrine of eternal generation has an element of mystery in it. In particular, he acknowledged the manner of generation is a mystery: "As for the modus, or manner of it, we must be content to be ignorant of it, as we are of our own generation, natural and spiritual. . . . It is enough that Christ is revealed as begotten of the Father; though the manner how he is begotten, cannot be explained."¹¹⁰ He continued, "If we must believe nothing but what we

¹⁰⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 148.

¹⁰⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 148.

¹⁰⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 148–49.

¹¹⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

can comprehend, or account for the manner, or ‘how’ it is, we must be obliged to disbelieve some of the perfections of God; as eternity, immensity, and omniscience, etc. yea, that there is a God, or that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead.”¹¹¹ He then cited Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen as confirmation that eternal generation is a mystery. Athanasius wrote, “‘How’ the Father begat the Son, I do not curiously inquire; and ‘how’ he sent forth the Spirit, I do not likewise curiously inquire; but I believe that both the Son is begotten, and the holy Spirit proceeds, in a manner unspeakable and impassable.”¹¹² Nazianzen said the same thing: “Let the generation of God be honoured in silence; it is a great thing, (abundantly so) for thee to learn or know, that he is begotten; but ‘how’ he is begotten, is not granted to thee to understand, nor, indeed, to the angels.”¹¹³

Historical Argument

Having argued Scripturally for the eternal Sonship of Christ, Gill further argued in *A Dissertation Concerning the Eternal Sonship of Christ* that the overwhelming majority of Christians throughout church history have affirmed this doctrine.¹¹⁴ Beginning in the first century, he showed in each century those who had affirmed this doctrine and those who had opposed it. He cited from men such as Polycarp,¹¹⁵ Irenaeus,¹¹⁶ Tertullian,¹¹⁷ Athanasius,¹¹⁸ the Cappadocian Fathers,¹¹⁹ Jerome,¹²⁰ and

¹¹¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

¹¹²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

¹¹³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 158.

¹¹⁴John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:178.

¹¹⁵John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:186.

¹¹⁶John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:188–89.

¹¹⁷John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:193–94.

¹¹⁸John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:203.

Augustine,¹²¹ and asserted that all the sound divines in evangelical churches after the Reformation have held to this teaching. At the end of this work, he presented a list of all those in favor of and those against it. He concluded by saying,

Now since it appears that all the sound and orthodox writers have unanimously declared for the eternal generation and Sonship of Christ in all ages, and that those only of an unsound mind and judgment, and corrupt in other things as well as this, and many of them men of impure lives and vile principles, have declared against it, such must be guilty of great temerity and rashness to join in an opposition with the one against the other; and to oppose a doctrine the Church of God has always held, and especially being what the scriptures abundantly bear testimony unto, and is a matter of such moment and importance, being a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, and indeed what distinguishes it from all other religions, from those of Pagans, Jews and Mahometans, who all believe in God, and generally in *one* God, but none of them believe in the Son of God: that is peculiar to the Christian religion.¹²²

The Spiration of the Spirit

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, what distinguishes the Spirit from the Father and the Son is the spiration of the Spirit. For Gill, the spiration of the Spirit was not a name of essence or name of office but a “mode of subsistence” distinguishing the Spirit from the other two persons in the Godhead.¹²³

The Biblical Evidence for the Spiration of the Spirit

Gill held that the Scriptures teach the spiration of the Spirit. In his commentary on John 15:26, he noted that when Christ spoke of the Spirit “proceeding from the Father,” it expressed the Spirit’s “peculiar personal and distinctive character.”¹²⁴ This

¹¹⁹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:206–8.

¹²⁰John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:208–9.

¹²¹John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:213.

¹²²John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6:221.

¹²³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 142.

¹²⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:72.

peculiar personal and distinctive character of the Spirit was sometimes designated using the term spiration, which expressed the “Spirit’s distinct mode of subsisting” in the divine essence.¹²⁵ According to Gill, when the Lord Jesus mentioned the phrase “proceeding from the Father,” Christ intended to convey “the eternal, ineffable, and continued act of his [Spirit’s] procession, from the Father and the Son; in which he partakes of the same nature with them, and which personally distinguishes him from them.”¹²⁶ Similarly, Gill mentioned the term “breath” as synonymous with the procession of the Spirit or spiration of the Spirit, which expressions denote the distinguishing character of the Spirit: “the relative property, or personal relation of the third person is, that he is “*breathed* by the first and second Persons; hence called, the breath of the Almighty, the breath of the mouth of Jehovah the Father, and the breath of the mouth of Christ the Lord, and which is never said of the other two Persons; and so distinguishes him from them” (Job 33:4; Ps 33:6; 2 Thess 2:8).¹²⁷ While Jesus stated to his disciples that he would send the Spirit from the Father (John 15:26), Gill rejected the notion that the sending of the Spirit in any way hints at or intimates the inferiority of the Spirit in essence or nature to the Father or to the Son. For, if the sending of the Spirit denotes inferiority, then it stands to reason that the Son is inferior to the Father and Spirit, since the latter two sent the Son on mission.¹²⁸

The Historical Debate over the Spiration of the Spirit

In the early church, there was debate and eventually a division over whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son.¹²⁹ The Eastern

¹²⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 190–91.

¹²⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:72.

¹²⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 142.

¹²⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:72.

¹²⁹For a recent treatment of the history of the *filioque* controversy, see A. Edward Sicienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), and for still

Churches maintained the Spirit proceeded alone from the Father, and the Western Churches maintained the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son. Showing an awareness about the debate in the early church over the procession of the Spirit, Gill affirmed the double procession or *filioque*: “It was once a warm controversy between the *Greek* and *Latin* churches, whether the Spirit proceedeth from the Son as well as from the Father: It seems he should, since he is called “the Spirit of the Son,” as well as of the Father.”¹³⁰ Likewise, in his discussion concerning the intra-trinitarian love between the three persons within the Godhead, Gill affirmed the *filioque*, when he remarked that the Son “loves the Spirit, since he proceeds from him, as from the Father, and is called the Spirit of the Son (Gal 4:6).”¹³¹ Expressing the same truth but in stronger language in his sermon *Words of David, Words of Jehovah*, Gill wrote, “A dispute there was in ancient times, and that in the churches—whether the Spirit proceeded from the Son as from the Father? It is most certain he proceeded from the one as from the other.”¹³²

The Unfathomable Mystery of the Spiration of the Spirit

If asked to explain or speculate on the meaning of the spiration of the Spirit, Gill maintained a reverent ignorance. He admitted that what is meant by proceeding, “we know not; we are unable to explain it: we must take it as it is.”¹³³ In his exposition of

a very useful examination, see Henry Barclay Swete, *On the History of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit, from the Apostolic Age to the Death of Charlemagne* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1876).

¹³⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 195. Thomas Ridgley, the Presbyterian divine, acknowledged the *filioque* controversy in the Early Church, but he oversimplified the dispute, when he wrote, “neither side well understood what they contended about.” Thomas Ridgley, *A Body of Divinity: Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion Are Explained and Defended. Being the Substance of Several Lectures on the Assembly’s Larger Catechism* (London: Daniel Midwinter, Aaron Ward, John Oswald, and Richard Hett, 1731–33), 122.

¹³¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 79; cf. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 112, 253–54.

¹³²John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:22.

¹³³John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:21.

Psalm 131:1 where David speaks of not concerning himself with great matters, Gill pointed out that one of the great matters we should “be content to be ignorant of, or not to have adequate ideas of, or be capable of accounting for” is the procession of the Spirit.¹³⁴ Indeed, the procession of the Spirit is a secret thing known only to the Lord.¹³⁵

The Various Objections to the Spiration of the Spirit

Various divines objected to the spiration of the Spirit. The Presbyterian divine, Ridgley, criticized the use of the term spiration, that people do not understand its meaning and suggested that it conveys a metaphorical expression and therefore thought that the use of the word “spiration” should be laid aside.¹³⁶ Isaac Watts held that the names paternity, filiation, and spiration did not adequately account for the distinction within the Godhead and even stated that paternity, filiation, and spiration “seems to be made up of words rather than ideas.”¹³⁷ He claimed that the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son is unscriptural and a deduction from an uncertain argument.¹³⁸ He held that the procession of the Spirit derived from the “Popish Schoolmen,” and the reason that the Reformers did not expel such scholastic terminology was that “they knew no better way to explain the doctrine of the sacred Trinity.”¹³⁹ Influenced perhaps through reading Watts, Philip Doddridge (1702–51) asserted that the term spiration was introduced by

¹³⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 4:263.

¹³⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 2:135.

¹³⁶Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 122.

¹³⁷Isaac Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, the Second Part (Viz.) IV. The Sentiments of the Ancient Jews and Christians Concerning the Logos or Word, Compar'd with Scripture. V. A Discourse of the Holy Spirit. VI. The Use of the Term Person in This Controversy. Vii. The Distinction of Persons in the Godhead: Or, An Humble Essay to Illustrate the Doctrine of the Sacred Three* (London: J. Clark, R. Hett, E. Matthews, and R. Ford, 1725), 213–14.

¹³⁸Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 156.

¹³⁹Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 157.

“*Popish* school-men” and since it cannot be explained, therefore he concluded that it cannot be defended.¹⁴⁰

Conclusion

Several persons opposed Gill and his doctrine of the paternity, filiation, and spiration. Some of these persons included such highly esteemed men as the learned Thomas Ridgley and godly Isaac Watts. In addition, Gill was attacked in print by a former member of his church, Isaac Harman, fellow Particular Baptist minister Sayer Rudd, and an anonymous author named Philalethes. Despite the numerous objections and opposition, Gill argued against these men and others, maintaining that the most faithful witness to Scripture to establish the divine distinctions between the Father, Son, and Spirit was to affirm the paternity of the Father, filiation of the Son, and spiration of the Spirit. Central to defending these distinctions for Gill was to maintain the eternal generation of the Son, for he held that one could not deny the eternal generation of the Son without obliterating the distinctions and thus undermine the doctrine of the Trinity.

¹⁴⁰Philip Doddridge, *A Course of Lectures on the Principal Subjects in Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity: With References to the Most Considerable Authors on Each Subject*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Buckland, J. F. and C. Rivington, W. Clarke and R. Collins, S. Crowder, T. Longman, 1776), 397. For

CHAPTER 8

GILL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE THREE PERSONS

The Distinct Personality and Deity of the Father

The previous chapter has argued that the ground of personal distinctions within the Godhead, according to Gill, are the paternity of the Father, the filiation of the Son, and the spiration of the Spirit. This chapter will examine how Gill argued for the distinct personality and deity of the Father, Son, and Spirit. In his commentary on 2 Timothy 1:13, Gill remarked that Paul's command to Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words" meant that Timothy maintain among other doctrines "the doctrines concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the proper deity and distinct personality of each of them."¹

The Personality of the Father

Although Gill believed that the paternity of the Father had established his distinct personality, he nevertheless presented additional reasons to confirm the distinct personality of the Father. Gill contended that the distinct personality of the Father can be deduced from the definition of a person and personal actions ascribed to him.

Agreeing with Marcus Wendelin's definition, Gill defined a person as "an individual that subsists, is living, intelligent, not sustained by another, nor is a part of

sources, Doddridge referred his readers to Watt's chapter "A Discourse on the Holy Spirit" in *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*.

¹John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (London, 1746–66; repr., Paris, AR.: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 9:321.

another.”² This definition was then applied to the Father in order to show that the Father is a distinct person. Gill wrote:

The Father of Christ is an individual, and so distinguishable from the divine nature he is possessed of, in common with the Son and Spirit; he subsists of himself, he does not owe his being to another, nor is he upheld in it by another; nor is he possessed only of a part, but of the whole Deity; he is the living Father, has life in himself, and not from another (John 5:26; 6:57) and is intelligent, knows himself, his Son and Spirit, and all things (Matt 11:27).³

Moreover, Gill asserted that the personal actions of the Father demonstrates his distinct personality. These personal actions include creation (Heb 1:2; Eph 3:9) and works of providence in upholding the universe (John 5:17). These personal actions also include sending his Son to save men and women, which Gill pointed out, meant that “he that sends, and he that is sent, cannot be the same person, but must be distinct.”⁴ Finally, the Father’s personal acts of grace toward the elect prove the Father’s distinct personality. The Father is said to have elected his people according to his foreknowledge (1 Pet 1:2), chosen them in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), and entered into covenant with his Son for the salvation of the elect, which acts lead one to deduce that the Father must be distinct from the Son.⁵

The Deity of the Father

Although the debate over the deity of the Father was not called into question, Gill still believed that it was appropriate to give four major reasons to affirm the full divinity of the Father: (1) divine names, (2) divine attributes, (3) divine works, and (4) divine worship ascribed to him. Gill applied the same categories to argue for the deity of the Son and the Spirit.

²John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 160.

³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 160.

⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 160.

⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 160–61.

Divine names. Gill asserted that the Father’s deity is demonstrated from the divine name “God” applied to the Father. Supporting his assertion, Gill observed that the Father is explicitly called God in Romans 15:6, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Philippians 2:1, and Galatians 1:1.⁶ Since the deity of the Father was not a disputed point, Gill briefly examined the divine names.

Divine attributes. Next, Gill considered several attributes of God that establish the deity of the Father. He contended that the Father has the following attributes: (1) self-existence, (2) eternity, (3) omnipresence, (4) omniscience, (5) omnipotence, and (6) immutability. First, the Father is self-existent because he “owes his being to no other; nor does he depend upon another, but subsists of himself.”⁷ Gill supported his assertion of self-existence of the Father from John 5:26: “For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son, to have life in himself.”⁸ Second, the Father is eternal, having no beginning of days or end of life, for he is identified in Revelation 1:4 as the “one who is and who was and who is to come.”⁹ Gill pointed out that eternity is a peculiar perfection of God;¹⁰ no one else but the true God is from everlasting to everlasting. Again, Gill asserted that God is omnipresent: he is “unbounded with respect to space and place” and therefore “must be everywhere.”¹¹ Gill noted that Christ often spoke of the Father as being omnipresent because the Father is said to be in “heaven, and yet with him

⁶John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731), 87; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 161.

⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*.

⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 87–88.

⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 87–88.

¹⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 46.

¹¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 42.

on earth, and with all his people, at all times, in all ages, and among all nations.”¹² And therefore if believers are to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son (1 John 1:3) through all periods and all nations, then he must be omnipresent.¹³ Fourth, according to Gill, the Father is omniscient, knowing all persons and things. The Father has perfect and infinite knowledge of the Son and even possesses knowledge of the day and hour of judgment, which neither the angels nor the Son of man knows.¹⁴ Further, God is omnipotent, meaning that he is capable of doing all things that are not contrary to his nature and perfections. The Father is omnipotent, for Christ prayed to the Father, acknowledging that all things are possible for him (Mark 14:36).¹⁵ Finally, Gill affirmed that is God immutable. Since the Father is God, he is immutable, for Scripture reveals there is no “variableness nor shadow of turning with him” (James 1:17).¹⁶

Divine works. Besides the divine attributes, Gill held that the divine works of the Father establish his deity. These works consist of the creation of the world, preservation of the world, forgiveness of sin, and resurrection of the dead.¹⁷ Gill asserted that the “author of creation is God, and he only.”¹⁸ As God, the Scriptures teach that the Father created the world through his Son (Heb 1:2), and that the believers acknowledged in their prayer that God was the one who “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things in them (Acts 4:24, 27).¹⁹ As God, the Father preserves and governs all things in

¹²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 88.

¹³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 88.

¹⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 88.

¹⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 161.

¹⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 89.

¹⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 90–91.

¹⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 260.

¹⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 260.

heaven and earth. When Christ was accused by the Jews for Sabbath breaking, he vindicated his actions by replying that his Father is working until now and the Son is also working (John 5:17), which Gill commented shows that the Father has and still is preserving the world.²⁰ Likewise, Christ uttered the same truth when he addressed the Father as “Lord of heaven and earth” (Matt 11:25), meaning that the Father is the creator, upholder, and preserver of both.²¹ Gill claimed that “forgiveness of sins is peculiar to God,” observing that the Jews were correct in thinking that God alone can forgive sins (Mark 2:7).²² Being God, the Father has authority to forgive sins. For this reason, the Son on the cross appealed to the Father to forgive his enemies who had sinned against him (Luke 12:34).²³ Finally, the resurrection of the dead, according to Gill, is a “work purely divine.”²⁴ Gill observed that the resurrection of Christ is most often ascribed to the Father, and the Father is identified as the one who will raise the dead on the final day (1 Cor 6:14).

Divine worship. For Gill, “none but God is and ought to be the object of religious worship and adoration,”²⁵ because Christ declared that God alone is to be worshipped and served (Matt 4:10). Gill also noted that the Father is the one “whom we are to love, to hope, and believe in; as the object of prayer and supplication, . . . and stands first in the form of baptism, which is a solemn act of divine and religious worship.”²⁶

²⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 285.

²¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 90.

²²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 90.

²³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 161.

²⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 90–91.

²⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 161.

²⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 91.

The Distinct Personality and Deity of the Son

Not only did Gill defend the distinct personality and deity of the Father, he argued similarly for the distinct personality and deity of the Son.

The Distinct Personality of the Son

Following this pattern of defining a person and then showing that the definition accords with the Father, Gill did the same for the Son. Gill defined the personality of the Son as

an individual, distinct, though not separate from the divine nature, he has in common with the Father and the Spirit; he subsists of himself in that nature distinctly, and independently; is not a part of another, the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in him; nor is his human nature, which he assumed in time, a part of his person, nor adds anything to his personality; but being taken up into union with his person, subsists in it; he has life in himself, and is the living God; is intelligent, has understanding and will; knows himself, his Father and the Spirit, and all creatures and things, and does whatsoever he pleases.²⁷

Besides the relative property of being begotten, Gill expressed several reasons to demonstrate that the Son is a distinct person. First, the Scriptures reveal that the Son was with God (John 1:1) and was brought up with him (Prov 8:30). Gill explained that the preposition “with” signifies distinction. For this reason, he wrote that the Son must be “a person to be with another; and he must be distinct from him with whom he is. He cannot properly be said to be with himself”²⁸ or “be brought up with himself.”²⁹

Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that the Son was appointed from eternity to be the covenant head of his people, the mediator, and the one in whom all the blessings of grace were entrusted. Gill then reasoned that the one who appointed the covenant head must be distinguished from the one who was appointed, and the one who appointed the

²⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 162.

²⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 187.

²⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 162.

mediator must be distinct from the one who is the mediator.³⁰ Nor is it reasonable to believe, he added, that “a mere name and character could . . . be said to be set up, to be covenanted with, or to have persons and things committed to his care and charge.”³¹

Third, the Scriptures reveal that God sent his Son in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4), which clearly implies that the one who sent—the Father—is distinct from the one who is sent—the Son. Gill underscored that it is untenable to think that the one who sent and the one sent are the same person: “It is too gross and absurd to be admitted.”³²

Fourth, Gill argued that the Son advocates (1 John 2:1) and intercedes (Heb 7:25) with the Father, plainly showing the distinction of the Father and the Son. Surely, he inquired, the one who advocates must be distinct from the one with whom he advocates, for otherwise, the Son is said to advocate with himself.³³ Likewise, the Son must be distinct from the Father, to whom he prays to for another Comforter (John 14:16), and the Son must be distinct from the Spirit for whom he prays.³⁴

Finally, Gill contended that the Son’s appointment as the final judge demonstrates his distinct personality. As the final judge, the Son will gather all the nations before him, then divide them into two groups: some on his right and the rest on his left, and then render a final sentence.³⁵ All such actions, Gill insisted, cannot be attributed to any other than a divine person who is distinct from the Father, since the Father is said to judge no one but has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22), and the Spirit is never said to render a final judgment to the world.³⁶

³⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 162.

³¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 162.

³²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 162.

³³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 163.

³⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 163.

³⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 163.

While Gill defended the distinct personality of the Son, there were some who thought otherwise. Isaac Watts denied the literal and proper distinct personality of the Son.³⁷ It is true that in his work *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity* he spoke of a plurality in the Godhead. In his preface to this work, Watts wrote, “I render hearty thanks to God, who hath guarded the freedom of my thoughts as to keep them religiously submissive to plain revelation; and has made these later inquiries a means to establish my faith in this blessed Article; that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three Persons and one God.”³⁸ Watts spoke of one God who “subsists in three Persons.”³⁹ In fact, he even used the language of distinct personality. He stated that he will argue in *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity* that the Father, Son, and Spirit have “personal actions and characters ascribed to them in Scripture” and then will show that “these actions require distinct Persons.”⁴⁰ But when Watts expounded the meaning of person in his

³⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 163.

³⁷Several persons wrote in opposition to Watts. Abraham Taylor wrote a trenchant reply accusing Watts of denying the proper and real personality of the Son and Spirit. Abraham Taylor, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated. In Opposition to Mr. Watts’s Scheme of One Divine Person and Two Divine Powers*, 2nd edition (London: J. Roberts, 1728). Moreover, Arthur P. Davis has pointed out that Thomas Bradbury commented about Watts writing on the Trinity as a “pity, after you have been more than thirty years a teacher of others, you are yet to learn the first principles of the oracles of God. . . . Was Dr. Owen’s church to be taught another Jesus, that the Son and Holy Spirit are only two powers in the divine nature?” Arthur Paul Davis, *Isaac Watts; His Life and Works* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1943), 112. Cotton Mather thought Watts was “a very disqualified person, for the managing of the vast subject he has undertaken. . . . Could his predecessor [Isaac Chauncy] once again take his pen into his hand, he would charge him with nothing Less than grievous haeresies.” Davis, *Isaac Watts*, 114–15. Gill denied Watts was a Trinitarian, considering Watts more in the scheme of the Sabellians. John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 6 vols. (London: Old Paths Gospel, 1997), 6:219.

³⁸Isaac Watts, *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity: Or Father, Son, and Spirit, Three Persons and One God* (London: J. Clark, E. Mathews, and R. Ford, 1722), vi.

³⁹Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, x.

⁴⁰Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 134. Watts asserted that he cannot understand how anyone can deny the sacred three to be “three distinct personal agents.” Isaac Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, the Second Part (Viz.) IV. The Sentiments of the Ancient Jews and Christians Concerning the Logos or Word, Compar’d with Scripture. V. A Discourse of the Holy Spirit. VI. The Use of the Term Person in This Controversy. Vii. The Distinction of Persons in the Godhead: Or, An Humble Essay to Illustrate the Doctrine of the Sacred Three* (London: J. Clark, R. Hett, E. Mathews, and R. Ford, 1725), 140.

Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, he explained that the eternal Word should not be called a person in a literal and proper sense but in a figurative and metaphorical sense, though Watts was willing to affirm the God-man as a literal and proper person.⁴¹

In the sixth dissertation, “the Use of the term *Person* in this Controversy,” Watts examined the distinctions in the divine nature and what it meant to call the Father, the Son, and Spirit, three persons. After affirming that the divine nature consists of “*one single consciousness only, or one single Spirit,*” he commented:

Now, if the complete divine nature, or the infinite Spirit be represented as including in it two distinct powers, which are called the Word and the Spirit, by way of analogy to the human soul, which includes in it the powers of mind and will, and if we suppose the human soul acting by the mind and will, to represent God the Father as acting by his two divine powers, the Word and Spirit, 'tis evident that the Father is *properly called a Person*, an intelligent voluntary agent, with very little or no alteration of the common sense of the Word in human language. . . . But when the Word and Spirit are called Persons, which are supposed to be really but divine powers of the Father, whose inward distinction we know not, the term Person is then used in a *figurative or metaphorical sense, and not in so proper and literal a sense as when the Father is called a Person* (emphasis mine).⁴²

In other words, when the term person is applied to the Father, Watts understood it to denote a proper and literal person, but when the term person is applied to the Son and Spirit, he understood it to denote a figurative and metaphorical person. Thus, for Watts, the Son and Spirit are not persons in the exact same sense as he understood for the Father. And it is because of his two different definitions of a person, Watts spoke of “three Persons and one God,”⁴³ one God who “subsists in three Persons,”⁴⁴ and distinct Persons.⁴⁵ Yet Watts wanted to maintain a “sufficient distinction between them [Father,

⁴¹Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Part 2, 187.

⁴²Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Part 2, 187.

⁴³Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, vi.

⁴⁴Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, x.

⁴⁵Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 134. Watts asserted that he cannot understand how anyone can deny the sacred three to be “three distinct personal agents.” Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the*

Son, and Spirit] to lay a foundation for such a distinct personal representation of them in Scripture.”⁴⁶ For this reason, he endeavored to construct a sufficient distinction by showing that man’s faculties are often represented as a person. He argued that Near Eastern custom often personified parts and characters of man, Jews often distinguished “the powers of a Spirit personally from that Spirit,” and the Ancient Church spoke of the Logos as a personal power.⁴⁷ Claiming that most, if not, all orthodox trinitarian schemes agree with his metaphorical and figurative interpretation of the word “person,” Watts wrote, “the word Person is not applied to all the Sacred Three in the full and literal sense of it, though the Word God is attributed to them in the literal sense.”⁴⁸ Again, Watts complained to God that if he had revealed in Scripture in any one text that “the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three real distinct Persons” in the Godhead, then he would never had suffered himself to be “bewildered in so many doubts.”⁴⁹

Furthermore, Sayer Rudd denied that the Son in his divine nature was a distinct person in the Godhead. It is true that he affirmed that Christ the mediator is “a person and distinct person from the Divine Being, both as Father and Holy Ghost”⁵⁰ or another

Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2, 140.

⁴⁶Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 187.

⁴⁷Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 187–92.

⁴⁸Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 194.

⁴⁹Isaac Watts, *A Faithful Enquiry After the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity, Christ; Taught by Christ and His Apostles. In Two Parts*. (London, 1745), ix. According to Thomas Milner, this work was “printed in 1745, while the author [Watts] was still living, but for certain reasons suppressed.” Only fifty tracts were printed. Having read the previous works of Watts, there is nothing new in this work that he did not express in his previous trinitarian tracts and treatises. Thomas Milner, *The Life, Times, and Correspondence of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.* (London: Thomas Richardson and Son, 1845), 727.

⁵⁰Sayer Rudd, *The Doctrine of the Divine Being Under His Grand Distinguishing Characters of God, Father and Spirit. A Sermon Delivered at the Meeting House in Snow’s Fields, Southwark: Occasioned by the Anniversary of That Foundation, on the First of August MDCCXXXV* (London: J. Roberts, A. Dodd, and J. Noon, 1737), 63.

hypostasis.⁵¹ It also true that Rudd asserted that the mediator is the “conjunction or union of the divine and human natures in Christ,”⁵² but he then explained that the divine nature united to the human nature was not the second person of the Godhead but the Father or what he preferred to call the “divine Being under the person character of the Father.”⁵³ In other words, it was the Father who took on flesh and thus the divine and human natures were united, or stated another way “God manifest in the flesh” was interpreted to mean God or the divine Being described under the name of Father was united to the human nature of Christ.⁵⁴ Therefore, Rudd stated that he did not object to distinction in general, but he objected to three divine distinct persons in the Godhead. He wrote, “I have no objection to the doctrine of personality in the main of it; but . . . my objection . . . is levelled against this distinct divine personality; making absolutely three distinct Intelligent Agents or Persons in the divine Being.”⁵⁵ Fundamental to Rudd’s rejection of the distinct divine personality of the second person in the Godhead was his denial of the eternal sonship of Christ. For Rudd, the doctrine of eternal sonship was deemed unbiblical and contradictory.⁵⁶ Indeed, he called the distinction of three persons “a

⁵¹Sayer Rudd, *The Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator: Delivered, in Part, in a Sermon, for the First of August, 1738. But Containing as Now Published, a General Explication of Such Scriptures as Are Most Express in Asserting the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ: With a Distinct Answer to All the Objections Commonly Advanced Against This Argument. As Also Particular Dissertations on the Logos or Word; the Sonship of Christ, His Equality with the Father; and the Rest. The Whole of Which, in Conjunction with a Sermon for the Last Year Concerning the Divine Being, is Humbly Proposed as a Summary View of the True Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: J. Noon, 1739), 5.

⁵²Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator*, 8.

⁵³Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator*, 13.

⁵⁴Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator*, 13–15.

⁵⁵Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 65.

⁵⁶Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator*, 9–11.

scholastic juggle . . . no where to be found but in the jargon of the Schools.⁵⁷

Deity of the Son

In the eighteenth century, the deity of the Son was under severe assault and opposition from different denominations. From the Anglican denomination, assaults came from Samuel Clarke and John Jackson who both denied the *homoousion* of the Son.⁵⁸ From the English Presbyterians, James Peirce and Joseph Hallet⁵⁹ both denied the full deity of the Son.⁶⁰ James Foster, a General Baptist, asserted that Christ should not receive the highest worship because he is not the supreme God.⁶¹ And Sayer Rudd argued that the Lord Jesus pre-existed in his human soul, which was created in eternity and united with God.⁶² According to Rudd, this pre-existent human came into existence before the creation of the world and was produced by God. In the words of Rudd, “the Mediator in his human soul, preexisting the creation of our system; as that soul and consequently he, the Mediator, was brought forth by the divine Being, in the closet union with himself; this

⁵⁷Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator*, 9, 10, 12. Rudd also wrote another lengthy treatise (347 pages) in which he devoted part of it to answer Gill’s arguments for a divine plurality. Sayer Rudd, *The Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pre-Existing His State of Incarnation, as Man and Mediator, the Production of His Human Spirit in Union with the Father, from Everlasting: Being the Substance of Six Sermons, Begun to Be Delivered on the First of August 1739; and Continued for Several Weeks Following... Together with a Particular Reply to All Mr. Gill’s Arguments for a Divine Plurality... The Whole Argued on the Principles and Illustrated from the Writings of the Calvinistical Trinitarians* (London: J. Noon, 1740), 137–52, 270, 302–33.

⁵⁸See the section “Samuel Clarke: New Scheme” in chapter 3.

⁵⁹Joseph Hallet, *The Truth and Importance of the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation Demonstrated: In a Defence of the Late Learned Mr. Peirce’s Thirteen Queries; and a Reply to Dr. W--’s and a Gentleman’s Answers to Them: Together with a Full Confutation of Dr. Waterland’s Late Book of The Importance, &c: To Which is Added, a Complete Chronological Catalogue of Mr. Peirce’s Writings* (London: John Noon, 1736), 3.

⁶⁰See the section “Salter’s Hall Debate” in chapter 3 for a discussion of James Peirce.

⁶¹James Foster, *An Essay on Fundamentals; with a Particular Regard to the Doctrine of the Ever-Blessed Trinity. With an Appendix, Concerning the True Import of the Phrase, Son of God, as ‘tis Applied to Christ*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Noon, A. Millar, and J. Ward, 1754), 40.

⁶²Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pre-Existing His State*, 16–17.

production, at the same time, laying the foundation of the paternal character on the side of God, and of the filial character on the part of Christ.”⁶³ Moreover, Rudd held that though the human spirit of Christ was produced in eternity, Christ was still divine in a sense and worthy of worship. He wrote,

The Word was God. This was the glorious result of producing the human spirit of our Lord at this time, and in this manner: being produced in union with God, he became a partaker with him in supreme divinity. . . . The divinity originated proper to God only, diffused itself thru’ the whole man; incircled the Mediator in his preexisting soul, in such manner, as to become part of his private nature; to be necessarily included in our ideas of the mediatorial person. The divine being, by dwelling in this human spirit, filled him with all fullness of the Godhead and so consequently, gave him a right and title to his characters, works, and worship.⁶⁴

Following the same pattern of argument for deity of the Father, Gill opposed the various objections to the deity of the Son. In his commentary on Psalm 45:6, Gill summarized the four points of argument concerning the full deity of the Son, noting that the Son “who is truly and properly God, the true God and eternal life; as appears by the names by which he is called, as Jehovah, and the like; by his having all divine perfections in him; by the works which he has wrought, and by the worship which is given unto him.”⁶⁵ In other words, Gill contended that the divine names, attributes, works, and worship prove the deity of the Son.

Divine names. Gill contended that the divine names ascribed to the Son evince his deity. Commenting on John 1:1, Gill elaborated that the Son was “not made a God, as

⁶³Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, More Especially with Regard to His Person, as Mediator*, 82.

⁶⁴Rudd, *Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pre-Existing His State*, 93–94.

⁶⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:713; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:659; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:55; Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:739. Besides Gill, others employed the same pattern of argument for deity (names, attributes, works, and worship): Watts, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, 39–97; Abraham Taylor, *The True Scripture Doctrine of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity: Stated and Defended, in Opposition to the Arian Scheme* (London: John Clark and Richard Hett, 1727), 201–517; Thomas Ridgley, *A Body of Divinity Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion Are Explained and Defended Being the Substance of Several Lectures on the Assembly’s Larger Catechism* (1731–33; repr., Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1814), 134–99.

he is said here after to be made flesh; nor constituted or appointed a God, or a God by office; but truly and properly God, in the highest sense of the word, as appears from the names by which he is called; as Jehovah, God, our, your, their, and my God, God with us, the mighty God, God over all, the great God, the living God, the true God, and eternal life.”⁶⁶

First, Gill asserted that the divine name YHWH revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14, meaning “I AM WHO I AM” is a unique name of the true and living God that is “incommunicable to another.”⁶⁷ This name, said Gill, expresses God’s self-existence and independence and denotes that God is the Most High over all the earth (Ps 83:18).⁶⁸ Reasoning that if the divine name YHWH is applied to Christ or Christ is called YHWH, Gill stated that Christ must then be the Most High over all the earth.⁶⁹

Gill collated several Old Testament passages in which YHWH is identified, interpreting them in light of the New Testament, and showing that the divine name YHWH was applied to Christ. Gill observed that the Scriptures reveal that Israel tested YHWH in the wilderness (Exod 17:2, 7; Numb 21:5–6), yet Paul stated that the one whom the Israelites tested in the wilderness was the Lord Jesus Christ: “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroy’d of serpents” (1 Cor 10:9).⁷⁰ Commenting on the fact that some of the Israelites tempted Christ in 1 Corinthians 10:9, Gill remarked, “Christ was the angel that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, the angel of God’s presence, that bore, and carried, and saved them; he is the Jehovah they tempted at Massah and Meribah, and elsewhere, and God they spake

⁶⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:739.

⁶⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 28.

⁶⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 29.

⁶⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 122.

⁷⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 122–23.

against at this place referred to; hence it is clear that our Lord existed before his incarnation, and that he is truly and properly God.”⁷¹ Therefore, if Christ was the one tested in the wilderness as Paul has interpreted, then Christ must be YHWH and consequently the Most High over all the earth. Moreover, Isaiah reported that he had seen the Lord (Adonai), sitting on a throne, whom the seraphim and Isaiah acknowledged to be YHWH of hosts (Isa 6:1–3, 5). Interpreting Isaiah 6:1–3, 5 in light of the New Testament, Gill noted how the apostle John identified the Lord Jesus as the one whom Isaiah saw on the throne: “These things saith Isaiah, when he saw his glory and spake of him” (John 12:41).⁷² In his commentary on John 12:41, Gill explained that Isaiah spoke of Christ as “the true Jehovah, the Lord of hosts; and which therefore is a very clear and strong proof of the proper divinity of Christ.”⁷³ Again, Gill commented how Isaiah prophesied of one who would prepare the way of YHWH (Isa 40:3), which Matthew explained was John the Baptist preparing the way before Jesus Christ (Matt 3:1–3).⁷⁴ Another passage that Gill applied to the Lord Jesus was Jeremiah 23:6: “YHWH our righteousness.”⁷⁵ Gill pointed out that both ancient and modern Jews understood “YHWH our righteousness” referred to the Messiah.⁷⁶ In addition, Gill showed that the context of verse 6 must apply to the Messiah, since it is the Father who “will raise unto David a righteous branch” (23:5) and appoint a King who will be the offspring of David.⁷⁷ Although some claimed that the name YHWH is given to various created beings and things, Gill replied to these various

⁷¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:674; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:807.

⁷²Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 123.

⁷³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:43.

⁷⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 123.

⁷⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 124.

⁷⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:527–28.

⁷⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:527.

objections, indicating either the name was applied to an angel who was the pre-incarnate Christ or the name was improperly applied to the ark, Jerusalem, altars, Mount Moriah, or judges and priests.⁷⁸

Second, Gill argued that Christ is called God in both the Old and New Testaments. From Psalm 45:6: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” Gill observed that the God who is mentioned in verse 6 is the Son, which is confirmed in the next verse where verse 7 distinguishes between “God” and “your God.” And then Gill pointed out that Hebrews 1:8 puts the matter beyond dispute when the writer of Hebrews explicitly applied Psalm 45:6 to the Son.⁷⁹ Gill commented as follows on Hebrews 1:8:

Deity is here ascribed to the Son of God; he is expressly called God; for the words will not bear to be rendered, “thy throne is the throne of God, or thy throne is God”; or be supplied thus, “God shall establish thy throne”: nor are the words an apostrophe to the Father, but are spoken to the king, the subject of the psalm, who is distinguished from God the Father, being blessed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the apostle, who says they are addressed “to the Son,” who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature.

Again, in Isaiah 45:22–23, God exhorted all the ends of the earth to look unto him and be saved, knowing that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess. Gill noted that the apostle Paul applied Isaiah 45:23 to the Lord Jesus (Rom 14:10–12).⁸⁰ Then, Gill remarked that John 1:1 made it clear that the Word is distinguished from God and yet God, and this same Word who is God became flesh (John 1:14).

Third, Gill pointed out other places in Scripture where the name God is applied to Christ with a personal pronoun. He noted that Isaiah 25:9 and 40:3 prophesied of the coming Messiah who is called “our God.”⁸¹ Gill considered Isaiah 25:9 to be “expressive of his [Christ’s] true and proper deity” and Isaiah 40:3 to be a noble testimony to the

⁷⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 124–26.

⁷⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 127.

⁸⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 127.

⁸¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 128.

proper deity of Christ.⁸² Likewise, Isaiah prophesied to the people: “Behold, your God will come” (Isa 35:4–5). Gill interpreted the coming of God to signify the incarnation of the Son, and as part of his promised coming, Isaiah prophesied that he would perform miraculous works, which Gill stated was “fulfilled in the times of the Messiah, and by him appealed to as proofs of his Messiahship and Deity” (Isa 35:4–5).⁸³ Moreover, Gill observed that the angel prophesied to Zacharias that he would have a son, John the Baptist, who would turn the hearts of many back to the Lord their God (Luke 1:16).⁸⁴ Who is this Lord their God referring to? According to Gill, the meaning of the Lord their God must be interpreted to denote Christ, for in the next verse John the Baptist was prophesied “to go before him,” who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Gill wrote that “not Jehovah, the Father; for though he was the Lord God of the Jews in general, and of those that were turned by John's ministry in a special manner; yet John cannot be said ‘to go before him,’ as he is in the next verse; but the Messiah is here meant, who is the Lord Jehovah, and is often so called in the Old Testament.”⁸⁵ Further, when Thomas recognized that it was his Lord who had been raised from the dead, he confessed, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Gill observed that Christ accepted Thomas’ confession of him as his Lord and God, which certainly would not be approved if Christ was not truly and properly God.⁸⁶ In sum, Gill concluded that the Son is “called our God, your God, their God, my God, by which epithets those that are not truly God are never called.”⁸⁷

⁸²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:141, 222.

⁸³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 128.

⁸⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 128.

⁸⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:503.

⁸⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:129.

⁸⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 5:55.

Fourth, Gill argued that there are several places in Scripture where Christ is called God with some epithet. He mentioned that Isaiah prophesied that the one of the names of the Messiah would be Immanuel (God with us), signifying his hypostatic union.⁸⁸ Isaiah foretold that one of the names of the coming righteous King would be “mighty God” (Isa 9:6).⁸⁹ Likewise, Paul identified Christ as over all, God blessed forever (Rom 9:5). Gill underscored that the emphasis of trinitarian’s argument is not Christ being over all but his being identified as God.⁹⁰ Again, Gill noted that Christ is called our great God (Titus 2:13) and pointed out that this epithet cannot be applied to the Father, since the Scriptures never speak of the Father appearing but only the Son and in the next verse the Son is said to offer himself to redeem sinners, which was the unique work of the Son.⁹¹ Finally, Jesus Christ is called the true God (1 John 5:20). Gill reasoned that the Son must be the true God in the context, since the immediate antecedent is the Lord Jesus and the same true God is said to be eternal life, which is also true of the Son who is called eternal life (1 John 1:2).⁹²

Divine attributes. Besides the divine names, Gill held that the divine attributes of Christ prove the full deity of the Son.⁹³ Since Scripture declares that in Christ “dwells all the fulness of the Godhead” (Col 2:9), Gill explained that every attribute essential to deity dwells in Christ.⁹⁴ To declare that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ,

⁸⁸Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 129.

⁸⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 129.

⁹⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 130.

⁹¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:357.

⁹²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:659.

⁹³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 165. For similar arguments for the deity of Christ from his divine attributes, see John Gill, *The Fulness of the Mediator: A Sermon Preach'd June 15, 1736. to the Society That Support the Lord's-Day Evening Lecture, Near Devonshire-Square* (London: Aaron Ward, 1736), 6–8.

according to Gill, is to affirm that in Christ dwells “the fulness of the divine nature, of all the perfections of deity, such as eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, necessary and self-existence, and every other; for if anyone perfection was wanting, the fulness, much less all the fulness of the Godhead, would not be in him.”⁹⁵

First, the attribute of eternity was considered “peculiar to the Godhead.”⁹⁶ Gill pointed out that Scripture predicates the attribute of eternity to the Son. Gill explained,

Jesus Christ was not only before *Abraham*, but before *Adam*; yea, before any creature existed. For if he is the ἀρχή (Rev 3:14), the beginning, the first cause of the creation of God; if he is πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, (Col 1:15) the first parent, bringer forth, or producer of every creature; if he was in the beginning of the creation of all things with God; and by him were all things made; then he must be before all things. As Mediator he was set up from everlasting, and had a glory with his Father before the world was. His goings forth, or acting in the covenant of grace, on the behalf of his people, were of old, from everlasting. The elect of God were chosen in him, before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them in him, before the world began.⁹⁷

Furthermore, the attribute of immensity and omnipresence is predicated of Christ. Gill observed that Christ in his divine nature is omnipresent, since as “a divine person, was in heaven, when he, as man, was here on earth (John 1:18; 3:13).”⁹⁸

Similarly, Gill insisted that Christ must be omnipresent in order to fulfill his promises to his “ministers, churches, and people, to be with them at all times, in all ages, and in all places, wherever they are (Matt 18:20; 28:20),” and “walk in the midst of his golden candlesticks, the several churches, in different places; and fill all things and persons in them, as he certainly does (Rev 1:13; Eph 4:10).”⁹⁹

⁹⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 131.

⁹⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:186.

⁹⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 132; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 46.

⁹⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 132–133; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:855.

⁹⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 43.

As with the attribute of omnipresence, Gill affirmed that the perfection of omnipotence was essential to deity.¹⁰⁰ Gill observed that the Scriptures apply omnipotence to Christ, when it designates him as the mighty God (Isa 9:6), mighty One (Ps 45:3), and the Almighty (Rev 1:8). The evidence that Christ is omnipotent and almighty, Gill pointed out, “appears by his works of creation and providence; by the redemption of his people; by his care and government of them; by succouring them under all their temptations and afflictions; by strengthening them for every service, duty, and suffering; by pleading their cause, and supplying their wants; by preserving them to his kingdom and glory; by raising them from the dead at the last day, and by introducing them into the possession of the heavenly inheritance.”¹⁰¹ All these works of Christ’s omnipotence are “according to his mighty power, which is able to subdue all things to himself (Phil 3:21).”¹⁰²

Fourth, the omniscience of Christ is another attribute that evinces his deity. Gill observed that the Son “knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify to him what was in man; he could tell the woman of Samaria all that ever she did; he knew from the beginning who would believe in him, and who would betray him; he knew the secret thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees.”¹⁰³ When questioned by his Lord concerning his love, Peter appealed to his master as the omniscient God: “Lord, thou knowest all things, though knowest that I love thee” (John 21:17).¹⁰⁴ Christ informed the angel to the Church of Thyatira that he is the one who searches the mind and heart, which

⁹⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 165.

¹⁰⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 166.

¹⁰¹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:712.

¹⁰²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 166.

¹⁰³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 165.

¹⁰⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:133.

Gill interpreted to mean that I am the omniscient God.¹⁰⁵ To the objection that Christ stated that he did not know the day or hour of judgment, Gill responded that Christ was speaking as the Son of Man and not as the Son of God. Thus, as the Son of Man or in his human nature, he did not possess knowledge of future events, and “what knowledge he had of future things in his humanity, he had from his deity.”¹⁰⁶

Fifth, the attribute of immutability also demonstrates the deity of the Son. Gill noted that the writer of Hebrews applied Psalm 102:25–27 to Christ in Hebrews 1:10–12. In particular, he commented that the words “thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end” (Ps 102:27) expressed the immutability of Christ.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Christ is recognized as immutable in “his person, perfections, and essence, as God” in the words in Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.”¹⁰⁸

Finally, Gill contended that the Son necessarily exists and therefore must be fully divine. The Son, Gill emphasized, is not “ἀυτουτούς Son of himself,” but he did affirm the Son is “ἀυτοθεός, God of himself.”¹⁰⁹ Gill further explained, “as God [i.e. the Son], he owes his Being to none; it is not derived from another: He is ‘over all, God blessed for ever.’”¹¹⁰

Divine works. Just as Gill argued that the divine works of the creation of the world, the preservation of the world, the forgiveness of sin, and the resurrection of the

¹⁰⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:704.

¹⁰⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:478.

¹⁰⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:379.

¹⁰⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:486.

¹⁰⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 132; cf. John Gill, *An Answer to the Birmingham Dialogue Writer’s Second Part, Upon the Following Subjects: The Divinity of Christ. Election. Original Sin. Free-Grace. Free-Will... and, Baptism. To Which is Added, a Postscript, Occasioned by Mr. Henry Heywood’s Introduction to His Translation of Dr. Whitby’s Treatise of Original Sin* (London: Aaron Ward, 1739), 13.

¹¹⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 165.

dead establish the deity of the Father, likewise he argued that the creation of the world, the upholding of the cosmos, works of miracles, redemption of his people, and final judgment prove the deity of Christ.

Gill declared that the Scriptures reveal that the Son, who is the image of the invisible God, created all things (Col 1:15–16). Similarly, Gill noted that the apostle John affirmed that “all things were made” by the Son and “without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).¹¹¹ Speaking about the Son, Gill observed that the Father declared that the Son laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens were the work of his hands (Heb 1:10).¹¹² Again, Gill pointed out that God made all things by Jesus Christ (Eph 3:9; Heb 1:2). Since “the author of creation is God, and he only,” Gill deduced that Jesus Christ must be God because Scripture teaches that Christ is the author of creation.¹¹³

Although Gill believed the Scriptures clearly teach the Son created all things, he still had to contend with the influence of Socinian exegesis which held that the creation spoken of in John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 was not the original creation but a new creation. The *Racovian Catechism* held that John 1:3 “treats not of the first creation of all things, but of a second creation: because in the account of the first creation there is no direct mention of any person by whom God effected the great work, as we find to be done in respect to the second creation.”¹¹⁴ Likewise, showing that the term “create” is sometimes applied in Scripture to the new creation (Eph 2:10; James 1:18), the Catechism inferred that Colossians 1:16 should be interpreted to denote a new creation.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 136.

¹¹²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 260.

¹¹³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 260.

¹¹⁴*The Racovian Catechism, with Notes and Illustrations, Translated from the Latin: To Which is Prefixed A Sketch of the History of Unitarianism in Poland and the Adjacent Countries* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 87–88.

Gill responded that John 1:3 does not say “that all things are new made, but made.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore, Gill pointed out that if John 1:3 is speaking of the new creation, then, when the passage says all things are made, the inference is that “all were converted” but “all men are not renewed, regenerated, nor reformed.”¹¹⁷ In response to the Socinians argument that Colossians 1:16 should be understood to signify the new creation, Gill replied, “The creation of all things, by him, is not to be understood of the new creation, for whenever that is spoken of, the word “new” is generally used, or what is equivalent to it, or some clause or phrase added, which determines the sense, and is not the case here.”¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Gill argued that if Colossians 1:16 is speaking about the new creation, then, it follows that the new creation applies to all that is in heaven—sun, moon, and stars—but these inanimate things, Gill pointed out, are not capable of a new creation, state, or condition. Likewise, if Colossians 1:16 is speaking about the new creation, then it implies that angels who are in heaven and have never sinned are renovated, which is not true.¹¹⁹ In the same manner, all things on earth cannot be interpreted and restricted to all men, since all men, righteous and unrighteous, are not renewed and regenerated.¹²⁰

Another common objection to the deity of Christ established by his work of creation was to argue that the Son was the mere instrument of God the Father. The Racovian Catechism, for instance, commented that when John wrote that the world was made by Christ in John 1:10, the biblical writer adopted an “expression which denotes an

¹¹⁵*Racovian Catechism*, 91–92.

¹¹⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:739.

¹¹⁷Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:739.

¹¹⁸Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:172. Even Samuel Clarke thought the Socinian exegesis of John 1:3 was “extremely forced and unnatural.” Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: James Knapton, 1712), 91.

¹¹⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:172.

¹²⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:172. Again, Clarke thought the Socinian exegesis of Colossians 1:16 was “forced and unnatural.” Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 91.

intermediate cause.”¹²¹ In the same way, the Socinians interpreted Colossians 1:16 to signify that Christ was an “intermediary or secondary cause” in creation.¹²² Gill, however, insisted that the Son was the creator of all things, not as “an instrument, but as the efficient cause; for the preposition ‘by’ does not always signify the former; but sometimes the latter; (see 1 Cor 1:9; Gal 1:1).”¹²³

A third common objection to the deity of the Son from his work of creation was to affirm that the Son created everything, but he himself was created in eternity before everything else. Gill reasoned that the Son cannot have been created, since he is eternal and maker of all things:

“all things” can only refer to the things that are made: eternal things can never be said to be created; this is a contradiction in terms; the Father is not created by him, nor he himself as the Son of God, nor the Spirit; but everything that is made is created by him: hence it follows, that he himself is no creature, otherwise he must create himself, which also is a contradiction, since every creature is made by him; and consequently he must be God, for he that made and built all things is God.¹²⁴

Not only the works of creation establish the deity of the Son, but Gill argued that the upholding of the universe proves the Son’s divinity. Jesus replied to the Jews’ objection to his healing on the Sabbath that “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” which the Jews understood to be a claim to be equal with God (John 5:17). Gill commented that by saying “I work,” Jesus meant that he is “a co-efficient cause in the works of providence, in the government of the world, in upholding all things in it, in bearing up the pillars of the earth, in holding things together, and sustaining all creatures.”¹²⁵ The same truth concerning the Son’s sustenance of the world is taught in

¹²¹*Racovian Catechism*, 89.

¹²²*Racovian Catechism*, 91.

¹²³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:172; cf. Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:739; Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 260.

¹²⁴Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:172.

¹²⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:799.

Hebrews 1:3, where it says the Son is “upholding all things by the word of his power,” which Gill commented is evidence that the Son is “truly and properly God.”¹²⁶ Again, the Scriptures reveal that by Christ all things are held together (Col 1:17).

Besides upholding the universe, Gill contended that other divine works establish the deity of Christ. The works of miracles in the person of Christ demonstrate not only his Messiahship, explained Gill, but also his deity, for only God in Christ could perform such mighty miracles as “curing the lame, the blind, and dumb and deaf, and even raising the dead, by a word.”¹²⁷ Again, the redemption of his people prove Christ’s full deity, for if he was not fully and properly God, he would not have been able to deliver his people from the wrath of God and the power of sin: “What gave virtue and efficacy to his blood, to purchase his church and people, and cleanse them from their sins, is his Deity.”¹²⁸ Then, the final judgment of all men proves the deity of Christ. Speaking about Christ and final judgment, Gill wrote, “Now if he was not truly and properly God, he would not be equal to, nor able to go through this work. Was he not God, he could not gather all nations together before him, nor separate the sheep from the goats, and set the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.”¹²⁹

Divine worship. Besides the divine works that prove the true and proper deity of the Son, Gill contended that the divine worship of the Son demonstrates his full divinity. Gill stated that when Jesus rebuffed the Tempter, his words indicate that men are to worship God alone (Matt 4:8). And since all the angels are called to worship the Son (Heb 1:6) with “a religious worship and adoration,” and men are to “honor the Son, even

¹²⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:375.

¹²⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 166.

¹²⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 166.

¹²⁹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 138.

as they honor the Father” (John 5:23), it is clearly evident that the Son is fully divine, especially when the LORD declares that he will not give his glory to another (Is 42:8).¹³⁰

The Distinct Personality and Deity of the Spirit

Having shown that the Father and Son are distinct personalities and fully divine, Gill then considered the distinct personality and deity of the Spirit.

Meaning of the Word “Spirit”

Following the pattern of the Reformed writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,¹³¹ Gill was careful to distinguish the various meanings of the “spirit” throughout Scripture. At the beginning of the chapter on “Proving the Personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost” in his *Treatise of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, he observed that the word “spirit” sometimes means the “wind.” In his commentary on John 3:8, Gill noted the same Hebrew and Greek word is used to designate the wind and Holy Spirit.¹³² Other times the word “spirit” means breath.¹³³ Equally important, Gill pointed out that the word spirit can also signify the “soul of man,” “angels,” or the essential nature of God, which latter meaning was identified to denote spirit based upon John 4:24, “for God is spirit.”¹³⁴ Commenting on John 4:24, Gill stated that the term “spirit” refers not primarily to the distinct person of the Holy Spirit, but to all three persons of the Godhead and his essential nature:

God is a spirit; that is God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: for taking the words in this light, not one of the persons is to be understood exclusive of the other. . . . God, as a spirit is immaterial, immortal, invisible, and intelligent, willing, and active being;

¹³⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 138–39.

¹³¹Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 4:338–41.

¹³²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:769.

¹³³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 190.

¹³⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 191–92.

but differs from others spirits, in that he is an increated one, an immense and infinite spirit, and an eternal one, which has no beginning nor end.¹³⁵

After clarifying and then disposing of some erroneous views on the meaning of spirit, Gill concluded his review of the different meanings of spirit with the statement, “God, as essentially considered is said to be a Spirit . . . which may be said of all the three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; but the third person is only called the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost in distinction from the Father and Son.”¹³⁶ The reason Gill highlighted the various meanings of the word “spirit” is grounded in the exegesis of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed writers, for these writers understood that certain words are used variously throughout Scripture and heretical groups used ambiguous terms to propagate their false teaching. For example, John Owen, the seventeenth-century English divine, in his *Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*, advised his readers to be aware of the various Scriptural meanings of the term spirit and warned against those who improperly use the term “spirit.”¹³⁷ He then proceeded to discuss and prove the various meanings of the spirit in Scripture. Gill, therefore, following in the tradition of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century divines and aware of the importance of the proper meaning of terms to right doctrine, seeks to establish the proper meaning of the word “spirit.”

The Person of the Holy Spirit

The heart of Gill’s main argument of the person of the Holy Spirit was to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is a distinct, divine person and “not a mere name and character, power or attribute of God.”¹³⁸ He supported his assertion for the person of the

¹³⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 7:788.

¹³⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 191.

¹³⁷John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, 16 vols, ed. William H. Goold (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965–91), 3:47; cf. Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, 3:48–52 for his treatment of the various meanings of spirit.

Holy Spirit with four reasons: (1) personal subsistence is ascribed to Him, (2) personal actions are performed by Him, (3) personal properties are attributed to Him, and (4) personal properties are predicated to Him.¹³⁹

First, Gill reasoned that since the Holy Spirit is the author of natural and spiritual life, he must possess life within himself, for he could not impart life, natural or spiritual, unless he possessed life himself.¹⁴⁰ From the Spirit's possession of life in himself, Gill deduced that the Spirit is a person. "If he has life in himself, he must be a person that subsists of himself."¹⁴¹

Furthermore, Gill defended the person of the Spirit by arguing that personal actions are performed by Him. By personal actions, Gill meant the Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8), which he then drew out the logical inference that only a person can convict: "He that convinces another of his mistakes, brings him to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to repentance for them, must be a person, and not a mere name and character."¹⁴² Similar actions that the Spirit performs, wrote Gill, is to comfort the heart of believers, testify to their adoption, teach believers all things, and guide them into all truth.¹⁴³ Gill explained that the Spirit comforts believers "by shedding abroad the love of God in the hearts of the Lord's people; . . . by applying great and precious promises; by declaring to them the pardon of their sins," which he deduced are all actions of a person.¹⁴⁴ Further, the Spirit, according to Gill, also assists

¹³⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 167.

¹³⁹ Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 192–93.

¹⁴⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 167.

¹⁴¹Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 192.

¹⁴²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 167.

¹⁴³Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 192.

¹⁴⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 167.

believers in prayer, makes intercession for them, and has sealed them for the day of redemption.¹⁴⁵

Third, Gill argued that the Holy Spirit is a person because of “personal properties ascribed to him.”¹⁴⁶ The two personal properties Gill especially discussed are the Spirit’s understanding or intelligence and will. The Spirit’s infinite knowledge of God, Gill contended, is evidence of his intellect. “For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:10–11). As Gill mentioned previously in his definition of the “person,” the intellect is essential to the definition of a person. To demonstrate the Spirit possesses a will and is, therefore, a person, Gill commented on 1 Corinthians 12:11: “This is a clear and full proof of the personality of the Spirit, who is not only distinguished from his gifts, and the distribution of them, which is a personal act described to him; but this is said to be done according to his will, which supposes him an intelligent agent, capable of choosing and willing.”¹⁴⁷ Owen remarked similarly in his work the “Divine Nature and Personality of the Holy Spirit Proved and Vindicated” that the will is the “most eminently distinguishing character and property of a person. Whatever is endued with an intelligent will is a person.”¹⁴⁸

Fourth, Gill argued that the Holy Spirit is a person because personal affections are ascribed to Him. Personal affections include being vexed, lied to, blasphemed against, and grieved. Gill added that the Spirit can be lied to, as Ananias and Sapphira did in Acts 5. The Spirit can also be blasphemed and sinned against by people.¹⁴⁹ The ungodly

¹⁴⁵ Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 192–93.

¹⁴⁶ Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 193.

¹⁴⁷ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:697.

¹⁴⁸ Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, 3:80.

conversation of believers grieves the Holy Spirit, noted Gill.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, the rebellious conduct of Israel in the wilderness is said to have vexed the Holy Spirit (Isa 63:10).¹⁵¹ Gill concluded that if the Spirit was not a person, then he could not be grieved, vexed, lied to, or blasphemed and sinned against.¹⁵²

The Distinct Personality of the Spirit

Not satisfied with simply establishing the Holy Spirit as a person, Gill proceeded to demonstrate the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. The distinct contribution of this division is probably leveled at the errors of Sabellianism, for Rippon reported that the publication of the *Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity* “was occasioned by the progress of Sabellianism among some of the Baptists churches at that time.”¹⁵³ Sabellianism is the erroneous teaching that denies the personal and real distinctiveness of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, several authors denied the literal and proper distinct personality of the Spirit. Isaac Watts wrote a two-part treatise entitled, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, in which he denied the literal and proper distinct personality of the Holy Spirit and instead argued for a figurative and metaphorical understanding of the personality of the Spirit. In his fifth dissertation on the Spirit, Watts defended his metaphorical meaning of the personality of the Spirit against a literal and real personality. He affirmed:

Since the Scripture represents him [the Spirit] under the characters of true Godhead, and under the character of a person distinct from the Father and the Son, since also it is exceeding hard to reconcile strict and proper deity with three strict and proper

¹⁴⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 168.

¹⁵⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 168.

¹⁵¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 168.

¹⁵²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 168.

¹⁵³ John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D. D.* (London: J. Bennett, 1838; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1992), 37.

personalities in the Godhead itself, in a fair consistence with reason and Scripture, it seems to be most agreeable to the Word of God, that we should explain the personality of the Spirit in a *figurative* sense, that we may better maintain his proper *eternal Deity*, and his unity with the Father. This seems to be much more eligible than that we should explain his *Personality* in a strict literal sense, for this would lead us into one of these two dangers (*viz*) either to make three distinct consciousnesses, or intelligent Minds, in the one true and eternal God, or to sink the character of the holy Spirit into a creature, that we might save the proper *Personality*.”¹⁵⁴

Further, when someone raised the objection that if the Spirit is not a real and proper person, how can someone offer a doxology to the Spirit with the Son and the Father, Watts answered that he was unaware of one example in Scripture where a doxology is offered directly and distinctly to the Spirit. He continued that perhaps one of the reasons for the omission is that “both the Father and the Son (considered as God-Man) are proper distinct Persons, while the proper, distinct, and real character of the Spirit, is that of a divine Power, or Principle of Action, and ’tis only personaliz’d by idioms of speech.”¹⁵⁵ Again, Watts confessed that “if the Holy Spirit were really a true and proper Person, it would be as difficult to account for all these and many more expressions in Scripture, which cannot be possibly be ascribed to a proper Person. . . . And thus the Spirit of God need not any where be construed into a real proper distinct Person.”¹⁵⁶

Besides Watts, Sayer Rudd rejected the distinct personality of the Spirit. He denied the Spirit was a distinct person in the Godhead, when he wrote, “the word Spirit or Holy Ghost, as applicable to divinity is not to represent . . . a third divine substance or

¹⁵⁴Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 175–76. Evidently, Watts “only allows a separate person, such as we find among men, to be a literal and proper person, and admits no medium between that and a figurative person.” Taylor, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated*, 35.

¹⁵⁵Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 151. Watts did acknowledge that praise and honor should be offered to the Spirit, even though he has a figurative personality. Watts, *Dissertations Relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 2*, 153.

¹⁵⁶Watts, *A Faithful Enquiry After the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity, Christ; Taught by Christ and His Apostles. In Two Parts.*, 37.

hypostasis in the one God, proceeding from two other subsistencies (which is the popular system).”¹⁵⁷ Similarly, in his explication of the term Spirit or Holy Ghost, Rudd dismissed any notion that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person in the Godhead. He asked and answered, “Who is this Holy Ghost? A Third Personal Distinction in the Godhead? No. . . . that God and the Holy Ghost are so far from being two distinct persons, two real hypostates in the same divine essence.”¹⁵⁸ In another place, he asserted that the terms God and Spirit are used interchangeably to denote the “*Same Divine Person* and not divided between *Different Subsistencies* in the Godhead.”¹⁵⁹

The first reason Gill assigned for the distinct personality of the Spirit was the procession of the Spirit. This argument is essentially that the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son, which is based on John 15:26: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” Gill reasoned that since the Spirit proceeds from the Father, he must be distinct from the Father.¹⁶⁰ He was aware of the controversy over the *filioque* clause and believed the Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son.¹⁶¹

Furthermore, Gill argued that since the Father and the Son sent the Spirit on a mission, the Spirit must be distinct from both (John 14:26). He commented on this passage that this is a clear and unmistakable evidence of the distinct personality of the Spirit as it “very distinctly points out the third person in the Trinity.”¹⁶² Gill also pointed

¹⁵⁷Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 28.

¹⁵⁸Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 31.

¹⁵⁹Rudd, *Doctrine of the Divine Being*, 34.

¹⁶⁰Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 194.

¹⁶¹Gill did express more confidence concerning the Spirit’s procession in his sermon “Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit.,” for he wrote, “A dispute there was in ancient times, and that in the churches—whether the Spirit proceeded from the Son as from the Father? It is most certain he proceeded from the one as from the other” Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:22; cf. Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 194–95.

¹⁶²Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:62.

out that the Spirit could not be a “mere power, attribute, or quality” because how then could he be sent?¹⁶³ The denial that the Spirit is a mere power or attribute is directed, at least, at the Socinians (Unitarians) who embraced the *Racovian Catechism*. The *Racovian Catechism* states, “The Holy Spirit is a virtue or energy flowing from God to men, and communicated to them: whereby he separates them from others, and consecrates them to his own services.”¹⁶⁴ Thus in denying that the Spirit is merely a power or attribute of God, Gill was attacking the errors of the Socinians.

Third, from John 14:16, Gill saw a clear proof of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit in the request for another Comforter: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” His reasoning was that the Son, who is one person, prayed to the Father, who is another person, for another Comforter, which is identified as the Holy Spirit, who is yet another person. He wrote, “This is no inconsiderable proof of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; here is the Father prayed unto, the Son in human nature praying, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter prayed for; who is the gift of the Father.”¹⁶⁵

Further, Gill maintained that the several distinct appearances of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son demonstrate the distinct personality of the Spirit. For the Holy Spirit was present in likeness of a dove at the baptism of Jesus. When the Lord Jesus was baptized and a voice came from heaven, the Spirit descending in the form of a dove means he must be distinct from the one being baptized and the voice speaking from heaven.¹⁶⁶ Likewise, Gill reasoned that when the Spirit descended at Pentecost, his presence indicated a distinct person. Since Jesus was at the right hand of the Father, and

¹⁶³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 168.

¹⁶⁴ *Racovian Catechism*, 285.

¹⁶⁵Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:59.

¹⁶⁶Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 196.

the Spirit was the promise of the Father, therefore, the Spirit is distinct from the Son and the Father.

Finally, Gill declared that the Spirit's inclusion in the baptismal formula is proof for the distinct personality of the Spirit. He reasoned that the Spirit would never have been placed on an equal rank with the Father and the Son, unless He was a distinct person.¹⁶⁷ For if the Father is a person and the Son is a person, then surely it follows that the Spirit is a person, since he is placed on an equal level with the Father and the Son.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Gill argued for the deity of the Spirit using the same fourfold categories that he employed for the deity of the Father and the Son: divine names, divine attributes, divine works, and divine worship. Socinians, however, in their *Catechism* flatly denied the deity of the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit is never expressly called God in the Scriptures. Nor is to be inferred that it is itself God, or a person of the Divinity."¹⁶⁸ Again, in another section of the *Racovian Catechism*, the divinity of the Holy Spirit is denied: "That the Holy Spirit is not a person in the Godhead you may learn from hence."¹⁶⁹ The Socinian writer then proceeded to present reasons to support his denial of the deity of the Holy Spirit. Against such errors, it should be no surprise that Gill expended more effort to establish the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Divine names. First, Gill asserted that the Holy Spirit is true and proper deity because divine names are given to him. In Acts 5:3, Ananias and Sapphira are both charged with lying to the Holy Spirit. Peter then declared that they had not lied to men, but to God. In his commentary on the text, Gill wrote, "for he [Ananias] had lied . . . to

¹⁶⁷ Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 196–97.

¹⁶⁸ *Racovian Catechism*, 36.

¹⁶⁹ *Racovian Catechism*, 289.

the Holy Ghost, who is truly and properly God, of which this passage is a full proof and it was owing to his omniscience, which is a peculiar attribute of deity.”¹⁷⁰ In addition, Gill offered another reason in support of his claim that the divine name is given to the Holy Spirit. He showed that the Holy Spirit is called the sacred name Jehovah in Scripture. When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, the Scripture says that they tempted Jehovah (Exod 17:7). But when the prophet Isaiah spoke of the same incident, he declared that they vexed his Holy Spirit (Isa 63:10). Gill inferred from these two passages that if the people rebelled against Jehovah, and then later Scripture teaches that the people rebelled against the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit must be Jehovah.¹⁷¹ Another reason Gill claimed that divine names are given to the Holy Spirit is that the bodies of believers are called the “temple of God.” He argued that since we are called the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16) and our bodies are called the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and we are commanded to glorify God in our bodies, it follows that the Spirit is God.¹⁷² Commenting on 1 Corinthians 3:16, Gill said,

This furnishes out a considerable proof of the deity and distinct personality of the spirit, since this is mentioned as an evidence of the saints being the temple of God, which would not be one, if the spirit was not God, who dwells therein; and since a temple is sacred to deity, and therefore if he dwells here as in a temple, he must dwell here as God; and since he is mentioned as distinct from God, whose spirit he is, and dwelling, a personal action is ascribed to him, he must be a distinct divine person.¹⁷³

Divine attributes. Moreover, just as important as the divine names are to proving the full deity of the Holy Spirit, so are his divine attributes possessed by him. Gill discussed several attributes of the Holy Spirit as proof of the deity of the Spirit. He asserted that the Spirit possessed the perfections of eternity, omnipresence, omniscience,

¹⁷⁰Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:180.

¹⁷¹ Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 197–98.

¹⁷²Gill, *The Trinity*, 199.

¹⁷³Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 8:618.

and omnipotence.¹⁷⁴ He is referred to as the eternal spirit in Hebrews 9:14. Again, the psalmist declared that no one can flee from his presence (Ps 139:7). Therefore, he must be omnipresent. Next, he is said to know all things, even the depths of God, the infinite God (1 Cor 2:16). Again, the Spirit overshadowed the womb of the Virgin and gave birth to the humanity of Christ. Gill in discussing the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit said, “the many signs, wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost, loudly proclaim him to be the omnipotent God.”¹⁷⁵

Divine works. Third, the Holy Spirit is full deity because he performs divine works. The Spirit, wrote Gill, was involved in creation of the world and the creation of man (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6; Job 33:4). Gill interpreted Psalm 33:6 as clear proof of the Spirit’s work in creation and, therefore, evidence of his deity. After describing the various works of creation, he commented on Psalm 33:6:

All these are made by the breath or spirit of Jehovah’s mouth: that is, by the Spirit of God, the third Person in the Trinity; a name which is suitable to him who is breathed forth, and proceeds from the Father and the Son, and to whom creation is ascribed, (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; 26:13); and which is no inconsiderable proof of his deity; and shows that he must be equal to the work of sanctification, which he begins and carries on. Now though the creation of the heavens is attributed to the Word, and the host of them to the Spirit, yet we are not to suppose that one Person took one part, and another Person another part of the creation; but they were all, Father, Word, and Spirit, jointly concerned in the whole.¹⁷⁶

According to Gill, the Spirit is also demonstrating his divine work in regenerating the hearts of men, preserving them to the end, inditing the Scriptures, and performing signs and wonders through the apostles.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 200–201. For discussion of the Spirit’s perfections of eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, see John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:22.

¹⁷⁵Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 201.

¹⁷⁶Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 3:663; cf. John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:23.

¹⁷⁷Gill, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 202–203.

Divine worship. Finally, Gill argued that the Holy Spirit is fully divine because he receives divine worship. He understood 2 Thessalonians 3:5, “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ,” to be a prayer directed to the Holy Spirit since the God the Father and Christ are both distinguished in the verse. Since prayer is act of worship, therefore prayer to the Holy Spirit is worship. Further, when believers are baptized into the name of the triune God, it is an expression of worship to the Spirit as well as the Father and the Son. “Baptism, a solemn act of religious worship, is administered in his name, as in the name of the Father and the Son” (Matt 28:19).¹⁷⁸

Conclusion

Although some opposed either the real and proper distinct personality of the Son, and Holy Spirit or the fully deity of the Son and the Spirit, Gill argued that the biblical doctrine of the Trinity affirms that the Father, Son, and Spirit are truly and really distinct persons and each person in the Godhead is fully God.

¹⁷⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 171.

CHAPTER 9
GILL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY APPLIED

Introduction

In his Introduction to his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, Gill asserted there is an intimate connection between doctrine and practice. He wrote, "Doctrine and practice should go together," with the former "being the foundation of the other."¹ He continued, "Doctrine has an influence upon practice, especially evangelical doctrine, spiritually understood, affectionately embraced, and powerfully and feelingly experienced. . . . Where there is not the doctrine of faith, the obedience of faith cannot be expected. . . . On the other hand, doctrine without practice, or a mere theory and speculative knowledge of things, unless reduced to practice, is of no avail."²

Having examined Gill's doctrine of the Trinity, this chapter will show how Gill exhorted believers to put into practice the truths concerning the doctrine of the Trinity or how to apply the doctrine of the Trinity to various aspects of the Christian life, such as worship of the triune God, knowledge of the triune God, perfections of the triune God, graces from the triune God, love to the triune God, prayer to the triune God, communion with the triune God, and preaching of the triune God.

Worship of the Triune God

For Gill, true worship is trinitarian. In the first chapter of his *Body of Practical Divinity*, Gill argued that the only object of worship is the Lord God because the Lord

¹John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1769; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), xxxv.

²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, xxxv.

Jesus declared in response to Satan’s temptation, it is written, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt 4:10).³ Gill then distinguished the worship of the Lord God in his essence and in his tri-personality.⁴

Gill stated that God “considered in his nature and essence” is “the foundation of worship.”⁵ Since Scripture enjoins men and women to worship God without identifying any specific person in the Godhead in some passages (Rev 14:7; 19:10; 22:9), Gill inferred that worship is to be offered to God in his essence.⁶ In his commentary on Revelation 19:10, Gill noted that worship is to be offered to God alone, “God the Father, Son, and Spirit; not the Father to the exclusion of the Son, the firstborn, whom all the angels are called upon to worship; nor of the Spirit, who is equally joined with the Father and Son in baptism, a part of religious worship, and in other parts of it also; but this excludes all creatures, angels, and men, things animate or inanimate, and images of them.”⁷ God is to be worshipped whose essence is “simple, uncompounded, immutable, infinite, eternal” as the “true God, the living God, and the everlasting King.”⁸

Not only are men and women to worship God as the one undivided essence and simple substance, but Gill also argued that we are to worship the one God who subsists in three distinct divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is to be equally worshipped. Gill commented that there is no dispute that the Father is to be worshipped, for our Lord spoke of the hour when people will worship the Father (John 4:21, 23) and

³John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1770; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004), 697.

⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 697.

⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 697.

⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 697.

⁷John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (London, 1746–66; repr., Paris, AR.: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 9:840.

⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 697.

he possess all the perfections of and performs all the works of deity.⁹ Gill explained that the Father is worshipped in various religious acts: (1) in baptism (Matt 28:19), which Gill called a “solemn act of religious worship, (2) in prayer (Eph 3:14–21), which is “another part of divine and religious worship,” (3) in thanksgiving (Eph 5:20), and (4) in “acts of faith, hope, and love, which are acts of worship” (John 14:1; 1 Pet 1:21).¹⁰

With the Father, the Son is also the object of worship. Gill stated that the Son should receive the same religious worship and honor as the Father, since men are called to render the same honor to the Son as to the Father (John 5:23).¹¹ Further, Gill argued that the Son should receive equal worship as the Father because he is called Lord and God by the apostle Thomas (John 20:28) and in Scripture the Son is designated as “the mighty God, the great God, God over all, the true God and eternal life” who has the same attributes as the Father and performs the same works as the Father (Col 2:9; John 5:19).¹² Gill pointed out that just as the Father received various acts of worship, so too did the Son. For example, baptism is offered in the name of the Son (Matt 28:19; Acts 10:48; 19:5),¹³ prayer is made to the Son, for Stephen called upon the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit as he was being stoned to death (Acts 7:59)¹⁴ and Scripture presents doxology offered up to the Son of God (2 Pet 3:18; Rev 1:5–6).¹⁵ Equally important, acts of faith, hope, and love are directed to the Son, just as to the Father. Jesus taught his disciples to believe in God and believe in him (John 14:1).¹⁶ To trust in Christ would not be

⁹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 698.

¹⁰Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 698.

¹¹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

significant, if the Scriptures did not also declare that cursed is the man who trusts in man (Jer 17:5). Thus, to trust in Christ is an act of worship. Jesus is designated as the object of hope for believers (1 Tim 1:1) and the object of their love (1 Pet 1:8).¹⁷ Moreover, the Son received acts of adoration. Christ received worship from magi at his birth, and his disciples worshipped him as he ascended to heaven.¹⁸ Additionally, angels were commanded to worship the Son (Heb 1:6) and do worship him with the living creatures and elders (Rev 5:11–13).¹⁹

Gill asserted that the Holy Spirit is also the object of worship with the Father and the Son, since he is with them the one God.²⁰ The Baptist pastor pointed out that the Holy Spirit possesses all the same perfections and attributes as God and was involved in creation and government of the world.²¹ Just as baptism is offered in the name of the Son, so, too, is baptism offered in the name of the Spirit. Just as prayer is offered to the Son, so, too, is prayer offered to the Spirit (2 Thess 3:5).²²

Knowledge of the Triune God

Moreover, if one is to worship the true God, Gill declared that there must be a knowledge of him.²³ Without a knowledge of God, Gill commented that “there can be no good disposition in the mind towards God; for *ignoti nulla cupido*, there are no affections

¹⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹⁷Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

¹⁹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

²⁰Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

²¹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

²²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 699.

²³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 705.

for, nor desires after an unknown object.”²⁴ Similarly, to fulfill the greatest commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, there must be knowledge of God.²⁵ Such knowledge is not “a mere notional and speculative knowledge” but “spiritual and experimental” that leads “men to mind and savour spiritual things.”²⁶

Furthermore, Gill then applied the knowledge of God distinctly to each of the three persons in the Godhead, observing that believers enjoy fellowship with each person as a result of their distinct knowledge of each person. First, Gill pointed out that true believers have knowledge of God the Father, for John wrote, “I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father” (1 John 2:13). Second, Gill elaborated on the content of this knowledge for believers. He stated that such knowledge consisted of the “love of the Father, which is in them, and which appears in their election, in the gift of Christ to them, and in their adoption, . . . and this is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, and they are led by him into the heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of it; they are warmed by it, and comforted with it; it is a source of joy, peace and comfort to them.”²⁷ The content of the knowledge that believers possess also includes the Father’s election of believers in Christ, his reconciliation of the world to himself, his pardon of transgressions, and his revelation of himself as the God of all grace.²⁸ Such knowledge of the Father should evoke believers, stated Gill, to wonder, awe, and thanks to the Father.²⁹

²⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 705.

²⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 705.

²⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 708.

²⁷Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 709.

²⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 709–710.

²⁹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 709.

Not only did Gill apply the knowledge of God to the Father, but he also applied it distinctly to the Son. Regenerate persons have knowledge of the Son as the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20) who assumed a human nature in time and thus is truly God and truly man in one person.³⁰ They possess knowledge of the Son in his various offices as prophet, priest, and king; they know the Son as their Redeemer and Savior; and they know him as their everlasting Father, their spiritual head, their brother, and their friend.³¹ Such knowledge of the Son by regenerate persons consists of an “affectionate knowledge” in which Christ is precious and prized.³²

Further, believers have knowledge of the Spirit of God. Although the world is ignorant of the Spirit of God, yet, Gill stated, believers know the Spirit because he dwells in them.³³ They know the Spirit as the one who convicts of sin and illuminates their eyes.³⁴ They possess knowledge of the Spirit as the Comforter, “who comforts them by shedding abroad in their hearts the love of the Father and of the Son; by opening and applying the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, and by taking the things of Christ and shewing them to them, and their interest in them.”³⁵ In addition, they not only possess knowledge of the Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, who manifests to them their interest in this blessing, but they also possess knowledge of the Spirit as the “Spirit of grace and of supplication, who first works grace in the soul, and then draws it forth into act and exercise.”³⁶

³⁰Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 710.

³¹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 710.

³²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 710.

³³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 711.

³⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 711.

³⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 711.

³⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 711.

Gill described the believer's knowledge of each person in the Trinity as "distinct, special, and peculiar knowledge of Father, Son, and Spirit, and in that communion with them, which arises from hence, inward experimental religion greatly lies."³⁷ He held that such knowledge of God is ultimately practical, humbling, satisfying, and superlative.³⁸

Perfections of the Triune God

Since a biblical and spiritual knowledge of the triune God is necessary to true worship of the sacred Three who is One, Gill expounded the perfections of God. The perfections of God is foundational to a proper and true knowledge of God, and therefore when Gill examined the perfections, he often considered the perfections or attributes in a trinitarian manner. For instance, he did not merely argue that God is love in his divine being or nature, but he proceeded to show that the love of God manifests within the persons of Trinity and in relation to his people.

Love of God

"The principal object of the love of God," asserted Gill, "is himself. . . . God first and chiefly loves himself."³⁹ This love, argued Gill, is mutually expressed between each person in the Godhead so that "the Father loves the Son and the Spirit, the Son loves the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit loves the Father and the Son."⁴⁰ Gill pointed out that the Father "loves the Son and has given all things into his hand" (John 3:35) and

³⁷Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 711–712.

³⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 713.

³⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 78.

⁴⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 78–79. One may also read the chapter on the "Complacency and Delight God Had in Himself, and the Divine Persons in Each Other, Before Any Creature Was Brought into Being" to see another example of how Gill expounds and applies the mutual delight and satisfaction in the divine Being and between each of divine persons. Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 250–55.

“loves the Spirit who proceeds from the Father” (John 15:26).⁴¹ Similarly, the Son loves the Father because he did what the Father commanded (John 14:31) and loves the Spirit who proceeds from him as well as the Father (John 15:26).⁴² Again, the Spirit loves the Father into whose love he directs the saints (2 Thess 3:5), loves the Son whom he glorifies (John 16:14), and loves the Father and the Son, and “sheds abroad the love of them both in the hearts of his people.”⁴³

Not only did Gill show the mutual love between each person in the Godhead, but he also discussed the astonishing and surpassing love of the Father, Son, and Spirit towards the elect in Christ. He did not content himself merely to illustrate the love of the divine Being toward the elect, but he showed how each person in the Godhead demonstrates their love to those in Christ. First, Gill expounded the matchless love of the Father towards his people:

The love of the Father has appeared in thinking of them, thoughts of peace; in contriving and forming the scheme of their peace and reconciliation in Christ, from eternity, (2 Cor 5:18–19) in choosing them in him from the beginning, even from everlasting, to salvation, by him, (2 Thess 2:13) in putting their persons into the hands of Christ, and securing and preserving them in him, (Deut 33:3; Jude 1:1) in laying up all blessings in him for them, and blessing them with them so early, (Eph 1:3–4) in appointing Christ to be the Saviour of them; in providing, promising, and sending him into the world, to work out their salvation, (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9–10; Titus 3:4–5) in the pardon of their sins through the blood of Christ, (Isa 38:17; Eph 1:7) in their adoption, (1 John 3:1) in their regeneration and conversion, (Jer 31:3; Eph 2:4–5) and in the gift of eternal life unto them (Rom 6:23).⁴⁴

Furthermore, Gill explicated the unrivaled love of the Son towards the elect.

The love of the Son of God appears in espousing the persons of the elect, those sons of men, in whom his delights were before the world was (Prov 8:31; Hos 2:19), in becoming their Surety for good, undertaking their cause, engaging to do the will of God with that cheerfulness he did; which was to work out their salvation (Ps 40:6–8; Heb 7:22), in assuming their nature, in the fullness of time, to redeem them, work out a righteousness, and make reconciliation for them (Gal 4:4–5; Rom 8:3–4; Heb 2:14,17), by giving himself a Sacrifice for them; laying down his life on their

⁴¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 78–79.

⁴²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 79.

⁴³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 79.

⁴⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 79.

account; and shedding his blood for the cleansing of their souls, and the remission of their sins (Eph 5:2,25; Titus 2:14; 1 John 3:16; Rev 1:5).⁴⁵

Third, Gill discussed the superlative love of the Spirit towards those chosen in Christ:

The love of the Spirit, of which mention is made in Rom 15:30 appears in his coming into the hearts of God's elect, to convince them of sin and righteousness, and to comfort them; by showing the grace of the covenant, and the blessings of it to them; by opening and applying the promises of it; and by shedding abroad the love of God and Christ in their hearts; by implanting every grace in them, and drawing them forth into exercise; by witnessing to their spirits their adoption; by assisting them in every duty, particularly in prayer, making intercession for them, according to the will of God; and in being the earnest, pledge, and seal of them to the day of redemption, (John 16:7–8; Rom 8:15–16, 26–27; Eph 1:13–14).

Holiness of God

After demonstrating that the one God is holy in essence and nature and that he alone is “essentially, originally, underivately, perfectly, and immutably holy,”⁴⁶ Gill then contended that the holiness of God applies to each of the three persons and not to one person only in the Godhead to the exclusion of the other two persons.⁴⁷ The Baptist pastor explained that since the one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit “partake of the same common and undivided nature, and the perfections of it,” therefore each person is holy in nature and essence.⁴⁸ Further, the Father is acknowledged as being holy, since all acknowledge his deity, but Gill then reasoned that if the Father is holy, then his Son must be holy, since the Son is of the same nature as the Father (Heb 1:3). Just as the Father is titled “holy Father,” Gill pointed out that the Son is not only called “the holy one of God” (Ps 16:10) and “the holy one of Israel” more than thirty times in Isaiah, but the Son also spoke to the angel of the church of Philadelphia, declaring himself as holy (Rev 3:7), and

⁴⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 79.

⁴⁶Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 103–4.

⁴⁷Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 104.

⁴⁸Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 104.

was acknowledged by a demon as the holy One of God (Luke 2:34).⁴⁹ Similarly, the Holy Spirit is holy, since he, too, partakes of the same nature and essence as the Father and Son.⁵⁰ Gill then proceeded to show that the holiness of each person of the Trinity is displayed in the works of creation, works of providence, and acts of grace.⁵¹

Omnipresence of God

Not only did Gill show the love and holiness of God in one essence and in each of the three divine persons, he also considered the omnipresence of God essentially and personally. Gill reasoned that God is omnipresent because of his general goodness manifested to all creatures, whom he gives testimony of his benevolence by giving them food and clothing, by ruling the universe with his wisdom, and by knowing all things as being naked and bare before him.⁵²

The same truth of omnipresence can be argued for the Lord Jesus in his divine nature, when he promised that he would be with his people in any place where two or three are gathered or be with his disciples to the end of the age. Gill commented that Jesus spoke of his gracious presence, “yet unless he was omnipresent, this could not be vouchsafed to all the saints, and all the churches, in all ages, at different places, at the same time; as when they are worshipping in different parts of the world.”⁵³ Similarly, the Spirit is mentioned as omnipresent based on Psalm 139:7–10.⁵⁴ Again, Gill reasoned that “if there is no going from him [the Holy Spirit], then not from them [Father and Son], since the same nature is in the one as in the other; if there is no going from God,

⁴⁹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 104–5.

⁵⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 105.

⁵¹Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 105–6.

⁵²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 42.

⁵³Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 43.

⁵⁴Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 43.

personally considered, or as in any of the divine persons, then not from him, as essentially considered.”⁵⁵

Graces from the Triune God

When Gill considered the graces of repentance, faith, and hope, he showed how these graces are common to each of the three persons.

Grace of Repentance

Gill asserted that the author of repentance is God—Father, Son, and Spirit. God the Father is the author of repentance because Paul instructed Timothy to be kind to all and patient with those who wrong him with the hope that God may grant repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 2:25).⁵⁶ Christ is the author because he has been exalted to the right hand of God to grant repentance to Israel (Acts 4:25). And the Spirit is the author because he “reproves for sin, convinces of it, and works repentance for it (John 16:8).”⁵⁷

Grace of Faith

According to Gill, “the proper and formal object of faith is twofold, God and Christ; God as the first primary and ultimate object of faith, and Christ as mediator is the mediate object of it.”⁵⁸ Just as it is not sufficient to believe that God is the primary object of faith and that he is one, for the devils believe the same, so it is not sufficient to believe, contended Gill, that there are three persons in the Godhead, but sinners must entrust their souls to the divine persons in matters of life, death, and eternity.⁵⁹ Gill argued that God

⁵⁵Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 43.

⁵⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 721.

⁵⁷Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 721.

⁵⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 732.

⁵⁹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 732.

the Father is the object of faith, for the Lord Jesus said, “believe in God,” (John 14:1) and the Father is the object of faith as the one who forgives iniquity for the sake of Christ and justifies the ungodly.⁶⁰ Christ too is the object of faith, for Jesus said, “believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1). “Christ, as the Son of God, is the true God and eternal life; he is God equal with the Father, and as such is equally the primary object of faith.”⁶¹ Although little is spoken of faith in the Holy Spirit, Gill stated that the Spirit is also the object of faith, reasoning that since he is equally God with the Father and Son, he too is the object of faith.⁶² Gill commented that if we are to believe the Father to keep us through the power of faith, trust Christ for our redemption, then we must have faith to believe the Spirit to finish the work of grace begun in us.⁶³

Grace of Hope

When Gill examined the grace of hope, he asserted that God, essentially considered and personally considered, is the object of hope. God essentially considered, observed Gill, is the object of hope because the psalmist exhorts Israel to “hope in God” (Ps 42:11; 130:7).⁶⁴ God personally considered or each person in the Godhead is the object of hope. Gill noted that God the Father is called the “God of hope” (Rom 15:13) because he is both the author and object of hope. Likewise, Gill pointed out that Christ is called “our hope” and the “hope of glory,” because he is “the object, and ground, and foundation of it.”⁶⁵ Then, Gill stated that the Spirit is also the object of hope because he helps in the “exercise of every grace” and “performance of every duty.”⁶⁶

⁶⁰Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 732–34.

⁶¹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 734.

⁶²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 739–40.

⁶³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 740.

⁶⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 754.

⁶⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 754.

Love to the Triune God

According to the Lord Jesus, the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind (Matt 22:37). As previously explicated, Gill believed that this command to love the Lord your God is to love God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit who are the one true and living God. For anyone to love God, Gill stated, is a gracious work of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, since John acknowledged love is from God (1 John 4:7), Paul wished for love from the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 6:23), and the apostle Paul declared love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23).⁶⁷ Further, if men and women are to love God, they must remember that they love God because he first loved them (1 John 4:19).⁶⁸ Commenting on 1 John 4:19, Gill remarked that “God’s love to us is prior to our love to him. . . . His love shews in the mission and gift of his son was before theirs, and when they had none to him. . . . Nothing more animates and inflames our love to God, than the consideration of the earliness of his love to us, of its being before ours.”⁶⁹ Therefore, since God has loved us first, saints should love the triune God for himself, his nature and his perfections with the “strongest love and affection.”⁷⁰ In addition, saints should love the triune God because he is their “chief good . . . their only good, their ALL in ALL; so to be only loved: there is none good but one, that is, God; God, Father, Son, and Spirit, the one Lord God, the object of his

⁶⁶Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 754.

⁶⁷Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 763–764.

⁶⁸Gill also recorded that “It is the manifestation of Christ’s love to our souls, which causes us to love him again, and in some way or other to show it,” but he the reminded his readers that “Christ’s love is prior to ours, so it far exceeds, and is much superior to it; neither can believers be more desirous of Christ’s company than he is of theirs” John Gill, *Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song, Commonly Called Canticles* (London, 1854; repr., Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2007), 11.

⁶⁹Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 9:650.

⁷⁰Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, 762.

people's love."⁷¹ This love toward God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Gill noted has its seat in "the heart, not the head; nor the tongue, but the heart, it lies not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and true love to God is a love of him with all the heart, soul, and strength."⁷² Such love toward the triune God should be universal embracing all of his attributes and perfections, not only of his "goodness, grace, and mercy," but also of his "holiness, justice, and truth."⁷³ Such love should be supreme, exceeding "all other loves, or love to all other persons and things; . . . not the greatest personages, and those of the most amiable qualities and characters; nor those in the nearest relation, as father, mother, husband, wife."⁷⁴ Again, such love should be constant. Though Gill acknowledged the ebb and flow and inconsistency of the believer to love God constantly, he affirmed that the principle remains.⁷⁵

Prayer to the Triune God

In an address to a gathering of young men for prayer, Gill preached a sermon on prayer based upon 1 Corinthians 14:15. After establishing that men should offer prayer to the one true and living God alone and that within this one God, there is a plurality: Father, Son, and Spirit, Gill asserted that prayer may be offered to each of the divine persons.⁷⁶ Gill then presented Scriptural evidence where prayer is offered directly to the Father alone, though he added not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit (Eph 1:16–17;

⁷¹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 763.

⁷²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 764.

⁷³Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 765.

⁷⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 765.

⁷⁵Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 765.

⁷⁶John Gill, *A Discourse on Prayer, from 1 Corinthians 14:15. Preached December 25, 1732. To a Society of Young Men, Who Carry on an Exercise of Prayer on Lord's Day Mornings, at a Meeting-House on Horsly-Down, Southwark.* (London: Aaron Ward and H. Whitridge, 1733), 11–14.

3:14, 16–17).⁷⁷ Next, he showed that prayers are offered to the Lord Jesus Christ, such as the frequent request of grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3), prayer to increase and abound in love (1 Thess 3:11–12) and prayer to comfort and strengthen hearts in every good work and word (2 Thess 2:16–17).⁷⁸ Moreover, Gill noted that Stephen prayed to the Lord Jesus before he was martyred (Acts 7:59), and Paul prayed three times for the Lord to remove the thorn in the flesh (2 Cor 12:8–9).⁷⁹ Not only did Gill contend that the Scripture reveals prayers offered directly to the Father and the Son, but he also showed that prayer is offered to the Spirit (2 Thess 3:5).⁸⁰ Gill added that Scripture conjoins the Spirit with the Father and Son in a few places, such as the benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14, as evidence of prayer to the Spirit.⁸¹

Although prayer is offered to all three persons in the Godhead since they are each God, Gill acknowledged that prayer is normally addressed to the Father through the mediation of the Son by the assistance of the Spirit.⁸² Gill explained that prayer is normally offered to the Father in accord with the pattern that our Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray “our Father who art in heaven.”⁸³ Further, Gill indicated that the reason the Father is usually addressed in prayer has to do with the “priority of order,” which is not a priority or superiority of nature in his deity, but rather it is because the Father “bears no office; whereas the other two persons do bear an office, and an office which is

⁷⁷Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 15.

⁷⁸Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 16.

⁷⁹Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 16–17.

⁸⁰Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 17.

⁸¹Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 17–18.

⁸²Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 18–19.

⁸³Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 19.

concerned in the business of prayer.”⁸⁴ Since God is holy and righteous and a consuming fire, sinful man cannot and dare not approach God unless he draws near by the blood and righteousness of the God-man.⁸⁵ Still, even with the perfect sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, Gill showed that the Spirit is necessary in prayer, for he is the “author of prayer, the enditer of, who forms it in our hearts, creates breathings, and desires after spiritual things, stirs us up to prayer, and assists in it.”⁸⁶ Thus, Gill summarized, “Christ is the Mediator, through whom, and the Spirit, the Assister, by whom we have access to the Father.”⁸⁷

Communion with the Triune God

“Communion with God is the top of the saints’ experience in this life,” stated Gill, “it is the height of experimental religion and powerful godliness. This, of all the enjoyments of God’s people on earth, is the nearest to the heavenly bliss.”⁸⁸ Gill then argued that the believers have communion or fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit distinctly.⁸⁹ They have fellowship with God the Father, wrote Gill,

when their faith and hope are exercised on him; and they are affected with his wondrous love in taking them into his family, and putting them among the children, and encouraging them to call him their Father, and not turn away from him; which obliges them to say, ‘What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!’ (1 John 3:1) and when they are sensible of the feelings of his heart for them, his sympathy with them, pity and compassion on them, under all their afflictions, temptations, trials, and exercises, (Isa 63:9; Psa 103:13) then have they fellowship with the Father.

Believers have fellowship also with the Son when they place their

⁸⁴Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 943.

⁸⁵Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 20–21.

⁸⁶Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 21–22.

⁸⁷Gill, *Discourse on Prayer*, 22.

⁸⁸Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 846.

⁸⁹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 849.

faith, hope, love, joy . . . upon his Person, as the Son of God, beholding his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father . . . when he appears to them altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousands, and the only and all sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; and when they are encouraged to look to him and be saved, and live by faith on him, the Son of God, who hath loved them and given himself for them; and when their love is attracted to him, the unseen Saviour, and the desires of their souls are to his name, and to the remembrance of him; and they have hope of eternal life, and an expectation of it, as the free gift of God through him, and rejoice in him, having no confidence in the flesh, then have they fellowship with him.

In addition, redeemed sinners have communion with the Spirit “in the gifts of his grace unto, and which they exercise under his influence,” such as faith, hope, and love.⁹⁰ Further, this fellowship with the Spirit manifests itself in the various offices of grace towards believers, such as “the guide, teacher, and comforter of them; . . . as a Spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirit, that they are the children of God; and as the earnest of the heavenly inheritance to them, and the sealer of them up unto the day of redemption; in whom he dwells, as in his temple, enabling them to exercise every grace and perform every duty.”⁹¹

Gill then exhorted the believer to marvel at such a condescension in God, that the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity condescended to commune with men and women, that “Father, Son, and Spirit should come and make their abode with sinful men, and admit them to the greatest intimacy with them” is an unspeakable privilege.⁹² Gill added that of all the blessings one may enjoy in this life, none can compare with the privilege of communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit. He wrote,

It is beyond all the enjoyments of life, preferable to everything that can be had on earth; the light of God’s countenance, his gracious presence, communion with him, put more joy and gladness into the hearts of his people, than the greatest increase of worldly things; . . . it is this which makes the tabernacles of God amiable and lovely, and a day in his house better than a thousand elsewhere; and because so valuable, hence the apostle John, in an exulting manner, says, “Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ!” (1 John 1:3).

⁹⁰Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 851.

⁹¹Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 851.; Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 851.

⁹²Gill, *Body of Practical Divinity*, 851.

Preaching of the Trinity

Gill was a preacher of the word of God. He preached the word for over fifty years. Therefore, it should be no surprise that he applied the Trinity in his preaching. First, preaching at the ordination of John Reynold, Gill admonished the new minister to hold fast to the form of sound doctrine. The first doctrine he exhorted Reynolds to hold fast to was the doctrine of the Trinity. He reminded him “there is but one God, and that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, Father, Son and holy Spirit, and that they are equally and truly God.”⁹³ After briefly defending the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, Gill urged the new minister to hold fast especially to the doctrine of eternal generation of the Son because the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be maintained without it and then presented a few reasons to affirm the eternal generation of the Son.⁹⁴ He also reminded Reynolds that while the works of God are *ad extra* and “common to all three” and “some works are more peculiarly attributed to one than another,” each person has an interest in them all, but these works cannot be the ground of distinction within the Godhead, since these works are wrought in time and the distinctions are eternal.⁹⁵

Furthermore, preaching a sermon entitled, “The Love of God Considered,” based upon 2 Thess 3:5: “And the Lord God direct your hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ,” Gill argued that the subject of the sentence is the Holy Spirit. He explained that the text distinguishes between God the Father into whose love Paul prayed to be directed and the Lord Jesus into whose patient waiting Paul also prayed for hearts to be directed. Thus, Gill deduced that the passage teaches a Trinity of persons. Further, he observed that prayer is offered to the Spirit, which is a religious act of

⁹³John Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts in Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:55.

⁹⁴Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:55–56.

⁹⁵Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 2:56.

worship, and would never have been offered to the Spirit unless he was fully God. If believers want to increase their love towards God, Gill emphasized nothing can reignite the cold heart of a believer than for the Spirit to direct the heart of a believer into the love of God.

In a sermon entitled, “The Glorious State of the Saints in Heaven,” Gill encouraged the hearts of his auditors by showing them that the soul of the saint in the intermediate state is ravished in the presence of the triune God. He wrote,

if the gracious presence of God is so desirable by his people now, . . . if this gives more joy and gladness than the increase of all worldly enjoyments; what will the glorious presence of the Lord be *in* which “[his] presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore (Ps 16:11)? . . . If the enjoyment of him by his disciples at his transfiguration upon the mount, was such as caused them to say, *it is good for us to be here* (Matt 17:4); how glorious and happy must it be, to be for ever with him in a state where there will be no more a separation from him, nor interruption of communion with him, for in this state the separate soul shall enjoy uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. If fellowship with the Father and with the Son causes saints now to exult and glory when they enjoy it; and if the communion of the Holy Ghost is so desirable, and is prayed and wished for now, what will all this be in a state of perfection?⁹⁶

Speaking of the knowledge saints will enjoy in heaven concerning the sacred three, Gill indicated that believers will have perfect knowledge in their soul of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Believers, he said, will have “perfect knowledge of God in his attributes, persons, and works, so far as a creature is capable of; perfect knowledge of the Son of God in his person, offices, and grace; perfect knowledge of the blessed Spirit.”⁹⁷ Then, he thrilled and comforted the heart, mind, and soul of believers by disclosing what awaits them in the beatific vision: “There will be the vision of God: now we *walk by faith*, then *by sight*; we shall see his *face in righteousness*, yea *face to face*, and even *see him as he is* (2 Cor 5:7; Ps 17:15; 1 Cor 13:12; 1 John 3:2); not his essence and nature, so as to comprehend it; but shall have a clear and unobscured apprehension of his perfections

⁹⁶Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:115.

⁹⁷Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:116.

and glory.”⁹⁸ Then, Gill proceeded to explicate this vision as it relates to all three persons in the Godhead. First, we will see God the Father: “We shall see the Father of Christ and ours, who loved us with an everlasting love; who chose and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in his Son; who made a covenant with him, and us in him, ordered in all things and sure; who laid help on him the mighty One, and sent him in the fulness of time, to be our Redeemer and Saviour.”⁹⁹ Next, he added,

We shall see the Son of God himself, who became our surety, and is the Mediator between God and man; who assumed our nature, suffered and died in our room and stead; who rose again, ascended to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, and will judge the world in righteousness: we shall see the glory of his divine person, with the eyes of our understanding fully enlightened, and his glory as mediator, of which we have little knowledge now, only believe it, but then we shall have a clear understanding and discernment of it; yea *in our flesh* shall we *see God*, as *Job* says (*Job* 19:26, 27), and with our corporal eyes behold the glory of Christ’s human body; we shall see that beautiful face that was once besmeared with sweat and blood, shine like the sun in its full strength; and those blessed temples that were crowned with thorns, crowned with glory and honour; and him whose hands and feet were pierced with nails, and covered with gore blood, holding the scepter of his kingdom, or walking in stately majesty, or sitting on his throne of glory”¹⁰⁰

Finally, he declared,

We shall see the blessed Spirit, who convinced us of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and was our quickener and comforter; who led us into truth, and took of the things of Christ and shewed them to us; who witnessed to our spirits that we were the children of God, and often assisted us in our prayers to him; was the earnest of our inheritance, and by whom we were sealed unto the day of redemption: we shall see him who began, and carried on, and perfected the work of grace in us; and that with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

Throughout his writings, Gill demonstrated how the doctrine of the Trinity can be applied to various areas in the Christian life. He showed how to apply the Trinity to areas such as, worship and communion, knowledge and graces, prayer and preaching. His

⁹⁸Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:117.

⁹⁹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:117.

¹⁰⁰Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:117.

¹⁰¹Gill, *Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, 1:117.

application of the one true and living God who is three distinct persons illustrates how a Christian and minister should oscillate between the One and Three and thus exemplifies what Gregory Nazianzen wrote in his *Oration on Holy Baptism*: “No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One. When I think of any One of the Three I think of Him as the Whole. . . . When I contemplate the Three together, I see but one torch, and cannot divide or measure out the Undivided Light.”¹⁰²

¹⁰²Oration 40.41; *NPNF* 2.375. “Οὐ φθάνω τὸ ἓν νοῆσαι, καὶ τοῖς τρισὶ περιλάμπομαι· οὐ φθάνω τὰ τρία διελεῖν, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἓν ἀναφέρομαι. Ὅταν ἓν τι τῶν τριῶν φαντασθῶ, τοῦτο νομίζω τὸ πᾶν. . . . Ὅταν τὰ τρία συνέλω τῇ θεωρίᾳ, μίαν ὁρῶ λαμπάδα, οὐκ ἔχων διελεῖν ἢ μετρῆσαι τὸ φῶς ἐνιζόμενον” (PG 36.417b-c).

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

In a circular letter from the Baptist Ministers and Messengers assembled on May 28–29, 1776, Robert Hall commented that he was unaware of any Particular Baptist churches among whom he and others represented had departed from or were opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity.¹ While Hall does not give credit to Gill, it is reasonable to believe that Gill’s defense of the doctrine of the Trinity beginning around 1730, when he began a series of lectures on the Trinity, until his death in 1771, when he had recently published his *Doctrinal and Practical Body of Divinity*, under God played a vital role in preserving Particular Baptists from trinitarian apostasy.

First, the vital role Gill played in preserving Particular Baptists was to state and vindicate the doctrine of the Trinity throughout his ministry. Throughout his ministry, Gill maintained the orthodox view of the Trinity, and his writings evince abundantly that he declared there are three distinct real and proper divine persons who are the one God. By maintaining there are distinct real and proper persons, Gill rejected Sabellianism. By maintaining that God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father, Gill rejected Arianism and its eighteenth-century manifestations. By maintaining that these three distinct divine persons are one God, Gill avoided tritheism. Gill loved the triune God because he believed Scripture clearly revealed there are three

¹Robert Hall Jr., *The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated: In a Circular Letter from the Baptist Ministers and Messengers, Assembled at Olney, Bucks, May 28, 29, 1776*, 2nd ed. (Coventry: G. Robinson, G. Keith, and J. Mathews, 1776), 2.

distinct persons in the Godhead and consequently defended it against all who opposed this truth.

Second, Gill's vital role in preserving Particular Baptists from trinitarian errors is evident from his significance and stature in the trinitarian debates. It is one thing to defend the Trinity, it is another for that defense to be considered of weight and significance. The significance of Gill's defense of the Trinity among the Particular Baptists can be measured by the numerous attacks published against his writings on the Trinity. First, after being ejected by the Calvinistic Baptist Board and by his church for his anti-trinitarian views, Sayer Rudd wrote three major works defending his doctrine, the last work included in the title the following subtitle: *A Particular Reply to all Mr. Gill's Arguments for a Divine Plurality. As also Occasional Remarks on Some Other Extraordinary Parts of His Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity, both with regard to his Divinity and Criticism.*² The author expended much energy attempting to undermine Gill's work on the Trinity, but it was to no avail. Rudd's notion that the human soul of Christ was created in eternity was untenable and unconvincing. Second, a former member of Gill's church Isaac Harman wrote a tract, endeavoring to expose the inconsistencies of those who espouse eternal generation. Although Harman acknowledged in a footnote in his preface that Gill was "a very eminent defender" of the doctrine of the eternal generation, he attempted to show that some of Gill's statements on eternal generation contradicted what other divines had written or are inconsistent in his own writings.³ Almost on every page of this tract, Harman cited from some work of Gill in an effort to

²Sayer Rudd, *The Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pre-Existing His State of Incarnation, as Man and Mediator, the Production of His Human Spirit in Union with the Father, from Everlasting: Being the Substance of Six Sermons, Begun to Be Delivered on the First of August 1739; and Continued for Several Weeks Following... Together with a Particular Reply to All Mr. Gill's Arguments for a Divine Plurality... The Whole Argued on the Principles and Illustrated from the Writings of the Calvinistical Trinitarians* (London: J. Noon, 1740).

³Isaac Harman, *The Creed of the Eternal Generationists. Compiled from the Writings of Some of Those Sensible, Consistent, and Orthodox Gentlemen* (London, 1768), viin.

show his inconsistency with other divines as John Norton (1606–63), Joseph Hussey (1660–1726), and Thomas Goodwin (1600–80). Next, an anonymous author, who called himself Philalethes and was most probably an Anglican, felt compelled to answer in detail Gill’s defense of eternal generation. In fact, he devoted almost thirty pages to rebut Gill’s denial of the Son of God as founded upon his mediatorial office.⁴ Moreover, an author identified as W.K. wrote to defend the writings of a professor of Tubingen by the name of John Jerom Boeswillibald. Of significance is that on the title page of this work, the author addressed his work to the bishops and clergy of the Established Church and then singled out two persons: John Wesley and John Gill.⁵ Evidently, the author thought that Gill was a man of sufficient stature and fame at that time in England, though a member of a small denomination, to single him out concerning three important propositions, one of which was on the Trinity.⁶ In short, Gill was viewed as a person of authority and significance on the Trinity whose arguments and writings needed to be addressed in order for opponents to make progress, for it seems unlikely that persons from different backgrounds would expend such time and energy attempting to refute Gill unless they thought his work on the Trinity sufficiently weighty.

Moreover, some hint of Gill’s trinitarian significance among Particular Baptists can be gleaned from the list of subscribers to his works. Gill published his *Exposition of the New Testament*, which contained many exegetical and theological comments on the Trinity. Subscribers to the *Exposition of the New Testament* included Particular Baptists

⁴Philalethes, *The Divine Personality, and True Sonship of Christ Defended: Or, a Full Consent of Scripture and Reason, to Prove the Absurdity and Inconsistency, of Believing an Eternal, Self-Existent Person to Be Begotten:... In Which is Contain’d, Some Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Gill’s Arguments for Eternal Generation and Essential Filiation, Found in His Treatise on the Trinity* (London: J. Roberts), 38–66.

⁵W. K., *A Very Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Bishops and Clergy of This Kingdom: Particularly to John Wesley, Dr. Gill, and All Who Are Highly Engaged for the Interest of the Protestant Religion...: The Whole is Intended for a Confirmation of the Writings of John Jerom Boeswillibald..* (London: W. Nicoll, 1766).

⁶K., *A Very Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address*, 26–29.

as William Anderson (2 sets), Benjamin Beddome, George Braithwaite, John Brine, Bernard Foskett, Joseph Stennett senior and junior, and Benjamin Wallin.⁷ Subscribers to the *Exposition of the Old Testament* included William Anderson, Benjamin Beddome (2 sets), John Brine, Samuel Dew, Hugh Evans, Caleb Evans,⁸ Bernard Foskett,⁹ Isaac Gould, John Gill, John Ryland, and Benjamin Wallin.¹⁰ If one considers also Gill's *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, which included the substance of his *Treatise on the Trinity*, one will discover that there were over 700 copies requested for printing. Many of these subscribers were Baptist pastors and churches. Hugh Evans and Caleb Evans both ordered six sets each, probably for the Bristol Baptist College. Baptist churches in Arnsby, St. Albans, Sutton, Worcester, Bradford (six sets), and Ryton ordered sets.¹¹ Among the American Baptists, Samuel Stillman ordered twenty-four sets, James Manning six sets, and John Gano six sets.¹² It is true that we cannot be certain of the exact influence of and to what extent each person did read Gill, but one can suggest that given the stature and reputation of Gill during his life, especially regarding the Trinity it is likely that persons who subscribed to Gill, read him and were fortified in their arguments against anti-trinitarianism.

⁷John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament in Three Volumes* (London: Aaron Ward, 1746–48), 1:xix-xxiv.

⁸Caleb Evans did not subscribe for the *Exposition of the Prophets* published in 1757, though his father did subscribe for two sets.

⁹Foskett did not subscribe to the second set of the *Exposition of the Old Testament* published in 1763, since he passed away in 1758.

¹⁰John Gill, *An Exposition of the Books of the Prophets of the Old Testament. Both Larger and Lesser. In Two Volumes* (London: George Keith and John Robinson, 1757–58), xv-xx; John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament in Which Are Recorded the Original of Mankind*, vols. 4 (London: George Keith, 1763–65), ix-xiv.

¹¹John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or, a System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures. In Two Volumes* (London: George Keith, 1769).

¹²Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*. Even the Anglican minister Henry Venn order six sets.

This dissertation has argued that Gill's formulation and defense of the Trinity was not only Scriptural but vital to the preservation of Particular Baptist denomination. Chapter 1 summarized prior research in the works of Gill and concluded that a lacuna exists in the study of his trinitarian theology, stated the thesis of the project, and then noted the method of researched to be pursued. Chapter 2 discussed the context, life, and controversy of Gill. Gill's political, cultural, and theological context was examined and then followed by a short overview of his life and writings.

Beginning with a survey of the trinitarian crisis in Britain in the late seventeenth century, chapter 3 examined the trinitarian crisis in the eighteenth century. The chapter surveyed the crisis in two phases (1688–1711) and (1712–1729), noting that Stephen Nye and Samuel Clarke both played significant roles in trinitarian debates. Chapter 4 argued that Gill should be viewed as a Patristic scholar and then examined how he used his Patristic scholarship in defense of the Trinity.

Chapters 5 through 8 are the heart of Gill's formulation and defense of the Trinity. Chapter five argued that the doctrine of the Trinity was considered a foundational doctrine and can be only known through special revelation. The chapter also defined key trinitarian terms and justified the use of non-biblical terms. Chapter 6 presented Gill's arguments for the unity of God and the plurality in the Godhead. Gill affirmed that the unity of God is a fundamental principle that must not be denied, and he also contended that there is a plurality within the One divine essence. Chapter 7 showed that Gill believed there is a real distinction between the three persons in the Godhead, and what distinguishes the three is nothing less than the paternity of the Father, filiation of the Son, and procession of the Spirit. The chapter also showed that the filiation of the Son or eternal generation was essential to maintain the real and proper distinction between the three. Chapter 8 adduced additional evidence from Gill's writings to show the distinct personality and deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

After showing Gill's doctrine of the Trinity, chapter 9 showed how Gill applied the doctrine to different areas of the Christian life. In this chapter, Gill shows himself to be a pastor who moves back and forth between looking at the One and the Three.

Suggestions for Further Research

Studying Gill on the doctrine of the Trinity has opened up a door for other areas of possible study. While this dissertation has considered the Trinity, there is still more work to be done on Gill's Christology, examining particularly his various sources. For example, researchers should consider studying Gill's use of Reformed orthodox sources in developing his Christology. Moreover, more work can be done on the Particular Baptist's defense of the Trinity in the eighteenth century. Although Gill was the prominent defender of the Trinity in his denomination during his life, other Particular Baptist wrote in defense of the Trinity or upheld the fully deity of Christ, such as Benjamin Wallin and Caleb Evans. There is also a need for a modern treatment of Watts' views on the Trinity, given his several works and aberrant views on the Trinity. Finally, for anyone that is interested in exercising their Hebrew and Rabbinic skills, there is a vast field of work to be done with regard to Gill's use of Jewish sources in his corpus, but be warned it is a real workout, since Gill was a brilliant Hebraist.

Coda

In an elegy written by Mary Bayly, a member of Gill's church since Oct 2, 1715, she penned the following lines that aptly capture the significance of Gill's defense of the doctrine of the Trinity:

The Trinity he boldly did maintain
And fully prov'd that there was Three in One . . .
Sabellian schemes with zeal he did defy,
That robs the Son of his divinity;
Which say, the Father took a human form,
And the eternal Son they hold scorn . . .
He did oppose the Arian heresy,
Who say, Three Gods are in the Trinity;
The one superior, the others are not so,
Only as magistrates are here below.

The Unitarian also doth deny
Three glorious Persons in the Trinity;
'Tis only names and characters in one,
No God the Spirit, nor God the Son.
With all these heretics the valiant Gill
Did fight, did conquer with unequal skill . . .
He liv'd the truth, as well the truth did prize,
Now he's ascended far above the skies . . .
Now the saints loud Hallelujahs sing,
Eternal praises to his God and King!"¹³

Gill concluded *The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated* with the following doxology, which is a fitting way to close this project:

To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
three Persons, but one God
be all honour, glory, and praise,
now and for evermore. Amen.¹⁴

¹³Mary Bayly, *An Elegy on the Much Lamented Death of That Eminent and Faithful Servant of Christ, and Laborious Minister of the Gospel, John Gill D.D* (London: M. Lewis for M. Bayly, 1771).

¹⁴John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject; Reduced Into the Form of a Treatise* (London: Aaron Ward, 1731), 204.

APPENDIX 1

AUGUSTINE'S CITATIONS:
BY GILL'S PUBLICATION DATES

Number	Gill Work	Gill Ref.	Year of Pub.	Augustine Source	Type Q=quotation; P=paraphrase; S=summary; C=comment; R=reference S/C=combination	Topic B=baptism; C=church; E=error/heresy; G=grace and salvation; J = Christ; L=last things; P=predestination; R=resurrection; S=sin and man; T=God; W=worship; M=miscellaneous	Use p=polemical; e=exegetical; h=historical (illustrative)
1728: <i>Exposition of Song of Solomon</i>							
1.	<i>Exp. of Song of Solomon Vol. 1</i>	Title page	1728	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 17. c. 20.	Q	C	E
2.	<i>Exp. of Song of Solomon Vol. 1</i>	p. 67	1728	<i>de Tempore</i> , Sermon 201, p. 354. tom. 10. (spurious sermon)	Q	S	E
3.	<i>Exp. of Song of Solomon Vol. 2</i>	p. 290 (3 rd ed.)	1728	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 13 c. 21.	Q	C	E

4.	<i>Exp. of Song of Solomon Vol. 2</i>	p. 480 (3 rd ed.)	1728	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 22. c. 1.	R	C	H
5.	<i>Exp. of Song of Solomon Vol. 2</i>	p. 480 (3 rd ed.)	1728	<i>Enchirid.</i> c. 29.	R	C	H
1731: <i>The Doctrine Of The Trinity Stated And Vindicated Being The Substance Of Several Discourses On That Important Subject</i>							
6.	<i>Trinity</i>	p. 99 (1731 ed.)	1731	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 1. 2, 3, 4.	R	T	H
7.	<i>Trinity</i>	p. 52 (1731 ed.)	1731	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 36.	R	T	H
1732: <i>Sermon: Doctrine of God's Everlasting Love to his Elect</i>							
8.	<i>Doctrine of God's Everlasting Love to his Elect</i>	p. 11	1732	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 54.	Q	T	P
1732: <i>The Doctrine of the Resurrection Stated & Defended</i>							
9.	<i>The Doctrine of the Resurrection Stated & Defended</i>	6:9	1732	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 22. c. 28.	R	R	P
10.	<i>The Doctrine of the Resurrection Stated & Defended</i>	6:39	1732	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 83.	R	R	P

1733: <i>Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship</i>							
11.	<i>Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship</i>	p. 50 (1734 ed.)	1733	<i>Confess.</i> 9. c. 6. S. 2. and 7. 1. and 1. 10. c. 33. S. 2.	C	W	P
12.	<i>Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship</i>	p. 50 (1734 ed.)	1733	<i>Confess.</i> 9. c. 6. S. 1. And 10. c. 33. S. 3.	C	W	P
1735: <i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>							
13.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 221	1735	<i>Contra. Julian.</i> 1, c. 2	Q	G	P
14.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 317	1735	<i>Contra. Julian. lib.</i> 1. c.11.	R	G	P
15.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 306	1735	<i>de Dono Persever.</i> 2, c. 2 and 21	Q	G	p
16.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 306	1735	<i>de Dono Persever.</i> 2, c. 2 and 21	Q	G	P
17.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 306	1735	<i>de Corrupt. et Gratia,</i> c. 6,	Q	G	p
18.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 51	1735	<i>Enchirid.</i> c. 103	S	G	P
19.	<i>The Cause of</i>	p. 168	1735	None (maybe a	Q	G	P

	<i>God and Truth</i>			common phrase)			
20.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 254	1735	<i>Confess.</i> 8, c. 2, s. 2.	R	M	H
21.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 236	1735	<i>Contra. duas Epist. Pelag:4, c. 4.</i>	R	P	P
22.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 235-36	1735	<i>de Dono Persever:</i> 2, c. 19.	Q	P	P
23.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 237	1735	<i>De Dono Persever.</i> 2, c. 19.	R	P	P
24.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 231	1735	<i>de Dono Persever</i> 2. c. 14.	Q	P	P
25.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 223	1735	<i>de Dono Persever.</i> c. 19.	R	P	P
26.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 221	1735	<i>De Praedest. Sanct:1, c. 14.</i>	Q	P	P
27.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 34	1735	<i>Commentary on John</i> 12:32	R	S	E
28.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 22	1735	<i>Confess.</i> 10.40	Q	S	P
29.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 196	1735	<i>Contra. duas epist. Pelag. 2, c. 6.</i>	Q	S	P
30.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>Contra. duas Epist. Pelag. 1,</i>	Q	S	P

				c. 5.			
31.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 271	1735	<i>Contra. Duas Ep. Pelag. 4, c. 8.</i>	R	S	P
32.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 194	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei. 5, c. 1.</i>	Q	S	P
33.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei. 5. c. 10.</i>	Q	S	P
34.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei. 5, c. 1;</i>	Q	S	P
35.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei, c. 8, 9.</i>	Q	S	P
36.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 8	1735	None	Q	S	P
37.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 196	1735	None	S	S	P
1736: <i>Truth Defended: Being An Answer To An Anonymous Pamphlet, Entitled, Some Doctrines In The Supralapsarian Scheme Impartially Examined By The Word Of God</i>							
38.	<i>Truth Defended</i>	2:82	1736	<i>Enchirid. c. 41.</i>	Q	J	P
1746 – 1748 <i>New Testament Commentaries</i>							
39.	<i>Commentary on Matthew</i>	Matt. 19:12	1746-48	<i>de Haeres. c. 37.</i>	R	M	H
40.	<i>Commentary on Revelation</i>	Rev. 2:10	1746-48	<i>de Civ. Dei:18. c. 52.</i>	S	L	E

41.	<i>Commentary on Revelation</i>	Rev. 8:9	1746-48	<i>de Civ. Dei: 1. c. 10.</i>	S	M	E
42.	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>	Rom. 11:6	1746-48	<i>Enchirid. c. 32.</i>	P	P	E
43.	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>	Rom. 1:21	1746-48	<i>de Civ. Dei, 6. c. 10.</i>	Q	S	H
<i>1751: Argument from Apostolic Tradition, In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>							
44.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:330	1751	<i>De baptismo, contr. Donat.. 4. c. 23, 24.</i>	S	B	P
45.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:333	1751	<i>Contra. Julian. 3. c 5.</i>	Q	B	P
46.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:330	1751	<i>De Genesi, 10. c. 22.</i>	S	B	P
47.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:328	1751	<i>De peccato originali 2. c. 18.</i>	Q	B	P
48.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:329	1751	<i>De libero Arbitdo, 3. c. 23.</i>	Q	B	P
49.	<i>Argument from Apostolic</i>	2:333	1751	<i>de nupt., & concup. 1. c 20. &</i>	Q	B	P

	<i>Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>			2. c. 18.			
50.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:331	1751	<i>De Peccator. merit. & remiss. c. 20.</i>	Q	B	P
51.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:331	1751	<i>De Peccator. merit. & remiss. c. 24.</i>	P	B	P
52.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:328	1751	<i>De peccator. merit. & remiss. 2. c. 25.</i>	P	B	P
53.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:329	1751	<i>De Peccator. merit. 2. c. 25.</i>	S	B	P
54.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:335	1751	<i>De tempore sermo, 119. c. 8.</i>	Q	B	P
55.	<i>Argument from Apostolic</i>	2:330	1751	<i>De verbis Apostoli, serm 10, c.</i>	Q	B	P

	<i>Tradition, In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>			2.			
56.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:334	1751	<i>Epist. 105. Bonifacio, prope sinem,</i>	Q	B	P
57.	<i>Arg. from Apostolic Tradit., In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:334	1751	<i>Epist. 106. Bonifacio, contr. Pelag.</i>	Q	B	P
<i>1753: Antipaedobaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovation</i>							
58.	<i>Antipaed, or Infant Baptism an Innov.</i>	p. 336	1753	<i>Contr. Epist. Pelag. 4 ch. 8</i>	R	B	P
59.	<i>Antipaed, or Infant Baptism an Innov</i>	2:404	1753	<i>de verb Apostol. Serm. 14.</i>	Q	B	P
60.	<i>Antipaed, or Infant Baptism an Innov</i>	2:406	1753	Not cited but located it in <i>De Peccator. merit. & remiss, c. 24 (PL 44:382)</i>	Q	B	P
61.	<i>Antipaed, or Infant Baptism an Innov</i>	2:385	1753	<i>de Haeres. c. 35.</i>	Q	M	h
<i>1757-58: Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>							
62.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6:212	1757 -58	<i>Contra. Faustum, 23. 100:1-5.</i>	Q	J	P

63.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6: 212	1757 -58	<i>Contra. Felicem c. 11</i>	Q	J	P
64.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6:192	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 44.</i>	R	J	P
65.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6:185	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 7.</i>	R	J	P
66.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	p. 179	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 1.</i>	R	T	P
67.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	p. 192	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 36, 41.</i>	R	T	P
68.	<i>Diss. Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	p. 10	1763-66	<i>de Tempore, serm. 201. p. 354. tom. 10. (spurious sermon)</i>	Q	S	E
<i>1763-66: Commentary on Old Testament</i>							
69.	<i>Commentary on 2 Samuel</i>	2 Sam. 1:30	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei 5. c. 23</i>	R	M	H
70.	<i>Commentary on Esther</i>	Introduction	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei : 18. c. 36.</i>	C	M	H
71.	<i>Commentary on Genesis</i>	Gen. 30:39	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei, 18. c. 5.</i>	R	M	H

72.	<i>Commentary on Genesis</i>	Gen. 25:30	1763-66	<i>Enarrat in Psal. xlvii. tom. 8. p. 174.</i>	R	M	H
73.	<i>Commentary on Genesis</i>	Gen. 50:10	1763-66	<i>Quaest. in Gen. l. 1. p. 54.</i>	R	M	H
74.	<i>Commentary on Isaiah</i>	Isa. 3:21	1763-66	Unknown	R	M	H
75.	<i>Commentary on Job</i>	Job 31:24	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 4. c. 21.	R	M	H
76.	<i>Commentary on Joshua</i>	Introduction	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 18. c. 11.	R	M	H
77.	<i>Commentary on Leviticus</i>	Lev. 11:21	1763-66	<i>Retract. 2. c. 15.</i>	R	M	H
78.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Ps. 102	1763-66	<i>Enarrat Psalm 102 (Latin Ps. 101)</i>	C	C	E
79.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Ps. 103:5	1763-66	<i>Enarrat in Psalm; Opera, tom. 8. in Psal. 102. fol. 474. c. (Psalm 103 in English)</i>	R	M	E
80.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Ps. 121:8	1763-66	<i>Epist. 44</i>	R	M	E
81.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Psalm 39:9	1763-66	<i>Enarrat in Psalm 39:9</i>	C	M	E
82.	<i>Commentary of Song of Solomon</i>	p. 10	1763-66	<i>de Tempore, serm. 201. p. 354. tom. 10. (spurious sermon)</i>	Q	S	E

<i>1765: A Reply to a Defence of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism</i>							
83.	<i>A Reply to a Defence of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism</i>	2:426	1765	<i>De peccator, merit. 2. c. 25. Ep. ad Laetam. 1. 1.</i>	P	B	P
<i>1767: A Dissertation Concerning The Antiquity Of The Hebrew-Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, And Accents</i>							
84.	<i>A Diss. Concern. The Antiquity</i>	p. 21	1767	<i>de Civ. Dei : 16, c. 11</i>	R	M	H
85.	<i>A Diss. Concern. The Antiquity</i>	p. 51	1767	<i>de Civ. Dei, 18. c. 39.</i>	R	M	H
86.	<i>A Dissertation Concerning The Antiquity Of The Hebrew-Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, And Accents</i>	p. 110	1767	<i>Contra Litteras Petiliani 2. p. 123. Tom. 7</i>	Q	M	H
87.	<i>A Dissertation Concerning The Antiquity Of The Hebrew-Language, Letters,</i>	p. 111	1767	<i>Ioannem, Tr. 15. p. 58. Tom. 9.</i>	S	M	H

	<i>Vowel-Points, And Accents</i>						
88.	<i>A Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew-Languag e, Letters, Vowel-Points, And Accents</i>	p. 109	1767	<i>Expos. Romans Tom. 7. p. 363.</i>	P	M	H
89.	<i>A Diss. Concern. The Antiquity</i>	p. 207	1767	<i>Opera T. 6. contr. Adversar. Legis. et Proph. 1. 2. c. 1. p. 256.</i>	R	M	H
<i>1769: A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>							
90.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 82	1769	<i>Contra. Pelag. de Peccat. Original. 2.</i>	Q	G	P
91.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 75	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:13. c. 18.</i>	R	G	P
92.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 509	1769	No reference	S	G	P
93.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 633	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20, c. 18, 24.</i>	R	L	E
94.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 634	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20, c. 18.</i>	P	L	E
95.	<i>A Body of</i>	p. 631	1769	<i>de Civ.</i>	Q	L	E

	<i>Doctrinal Divinity</i>			Dei:20. c. 21.			
96.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 638	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei : 20. c. 16.</i>	Q	L	E
97.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 652	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei, 20. c. 5.</i>	P	L	E
98.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 659	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei: 20. c. 7.</i>	R	L	E
99.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 682	1769	No reference	S	L	E
100.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 630	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei: 20. c. 24.</i>	R	L	H
101.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 609	1769	<i>de Haeres. c. 83</i>	R	L	H
102.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 634	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 10.</i>	Q	L	P
103.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 608	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 23</i>	R	L	P
104.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 634	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei: 20. c. 24.</i>	Q	L	P
105.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 644	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 7.</i>	R	L	P
106.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 334	1769	No reference	S	M	H
107.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	Xxxvi (introduction)	1769	No reference	C	M	H
108.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 336	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei, 11. c. 9¹</i>	S	S	P
109.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal</i>	p. xlix (introdu	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei, 50:4.</i>	R	T	H

¹ Originally not cited but located citation.

	<i>Divinity</i>	ction)		c. 27.			
110.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. xlix (introduction)	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 6. c. 5.	R	T	H
111.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 128	1769	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 1	R	T	H
112.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 128	1769	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 36.	R	T	H
113.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 169	1769	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 52	R	T	H
114.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 298	1769	No reference	S	T	H
115.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	pp. 107-08	1769	<i>Enarrat. in Psalm cix.</i> tom. 8. p. 521.	Q	T	P
1770: <i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>							
116.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 896	1770	<i>De Doctrina Christian:</i> 3, c. 9.	R	B	H
117.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 869	1770	<i>De baptismo, contr. Donat.</i> 50:3. c. 16.	Q	C	E
118.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 812	1770	None	R	G	H
119.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 980	1770	<i>de Civ. Dei:</i> 19. c. 15.	Q	M	E
120.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 988	1770	None	R	S	H
121.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 963	1770	<i>Confess.</i> 50:9. c. 6.	Q	W	H

122.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 969	1770	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 50:6. c. 11.	R	W	H
123.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 946	1770	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 57	R	W	H
Date: (Unknown): <i>Baptism A Public Ordinance of Divine Worship</i>							
124.	<i>Baptism A Public Ordinance of Divine Worship</i>	p. 2	unknown	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> 3, c. 9.	R	B	H
Date (unknown) <i>Christ a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek</i>							
125.	<i>Christ a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek</i>	1:157	unknown	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 34	R	E	H
126.	<i>Christ a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek</i>	1:157	unknown	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 47	R	E	H
Date: (Unknown) <i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>							
127.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>De cura pro mortuis</i>	Q	E	P
128.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>De octo Quaestiones ex veteri Test. qu. 123.</i>	Q	E	P
129.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and</i>	2:575	unknown	<i>De peccator. merit. &</i>	C	E	P

	<i>Progress of Popery</i>			<i>remiss. 3, c. 7.</i>			
130.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>Enchirid. ad Laurent. c. 110.</i>	Q	E	P
131.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>Enchirid. c. 69.</i>	Q	E	P
132.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:577	unknown	<i>Epist. 119. c. 15.</i>	Q	E	P
133.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:572	unknown	<i>Epist. 121. c. 9.</i>	Q	E	P
134.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:577	unknown	<i>Epist. 86. &</i>	Q	E	P
135.	<i>Dissert. on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:578	unknown	<i>Epist. 19. c. 2.</i>	R	M (easter)	P

APPENDIX 2

AUGUSTINE'S CITATIONS: BY TOPIC

Number	Gill Work	Gill Ref.	Year of Pub.	Augustine Source	Type Q=quotation; P=paraphrase; S=summary; C=comment; R=reference S/C=combination	Topic B=baptism; C=church; E=error/heresy; G=grace and salvation; J = Christ; L=last things; P=predestination; R=resurrection; S=sin and man; T=God; W=worship; M=miscellaneous	Use p=polemical; e=exegetical; h=historical (illustrative)
1.	<i>Baptism A Public Ordinance of Divine Worship</i>	p. 2	unknown	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> 3, c. 9.	R	B	H
2.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition, In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:330	1751	<i>De baptismo, contr. Donat..</i> 4. c. 23, 24.	S	B	P
3.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:333	1751	<i>Contra. Julian.</i> 3. c 5.	Q	B	P

4.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:330	1751	<i>De Genesi,</i> 10. c. 22.	S	B	P
5.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:328	1751	<i>De peccato originali</i> 2. c. 18.	Q	B	P
6.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:329	1751	<i>De libero Arbitdo,</i> 3. c. 23.	Q	B	P
7.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:333	1751	<i>de nupt., & concup.</i> 1. c 20. & 2. c. 18.	Q	B	P
8.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:331	1751	<i>De Peccator. merit. & remiss.</i> 1. c. 20.	Q	B	P

9.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:331	1751	<i>De Peccator. merit. & remiss. 1. c. 24.</i>	P	B	P
10.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:328	1751	<i>De peccator. merit. & remiss. 2. c. 25.</i>	P	B	P
11.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:329	1751	<i>De Peccator. merit. 2. c. 25.</i>	S	B	P
12.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:335	1751	<i>De tempore sermo, 119. c. 8.</i>	Q	B	P
13.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:330	1751	<i>De verbis Apostoli, serm 10, c. 2.</i>	Q	B	P

14.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:334	1751	<i>Epist. 105. Bonifacio, prope sinem,</i>	Q	B	P
15.	<i>Argument from Apostolic Tradition , In Favor of Infant Baptism</i>	2:334	1751	<i>Epist. 106. Bonifacio, contr. Pelag.</i>	Q	B	P
16.	<i>Antipaed obaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovatio n</i>	p. 336	1753	<i>Contr. Epist. Pelag. 4 ch. 8</i>	R	B	P
17.	<i>Antipaed obaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovatio n</i>	2:404	1753	<i>de verb Apostol. Serm. 14.</i>	Q	B	P
18.	<i>Antipaed obaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovatio n</i>	2:406	1753	Not cited but located it in <i>De Peccator. merit. & remiss, c. 24 (PL 44:382)</i>	Q	B	P
19.	<i>A Reply to a Defence of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism</i>	2:426	1765	<i>De peccator, merit. 2. c. 25. Ep. ad Laetam. 1. 1.</i>	P	B	P

20.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 896	1770	<i>De Doctrina Christiana: 3, c. 9.</i>	R	B	H
21.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Ps. 102	1763-66	<i>Enarrat Psalm 102 (Latin Ps. 101)</i>	C	C	E
22.	<i>Exposition of Song of Solomon Vol. 1</i>	Title page	1728	<i>de Civ. Dei, 17. c. 20.</i>	Q	C	E
23.	<i>Exposition of Song of Solomon Vol. 2</i>	p. 290 (3 rd ed.)	1728	<i>de Civ. Dei: 13 c. 21.</i>	Q	C	E
24.	<i>Exposition of Song of Solomon Vol. 2</i>	p. 480 (3 rd ed.)	1728	<i>de Civ. Dei: 22. c. 1.</i>	R	C	H
25.	<i>Exposition of Song of Solomon Vol. 2</i>	p. 480 (3 rd ed.)	1728	<i>Enchirid. c. 29.</i>	R	C	H
26.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 869	1770	<i>De baptismo, contr. Donat. 3. c. 16.</i>	Q	C	E
27.	<i>Christ a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek</i>	1:157	unknown	<i>de Haeres. c. 34</i>	R	E	H
28.	<i>Christ a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek</i>	1:157	unknown	<i>de Haeres. c. 47</i>	R	E	H

29.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>De cura pro mortuis</i>	Q	E	P
30.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>De octo Quaestionibus ex veteri Test. qu. 123.</i>	Q	E	P
31.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:575	unknown	<i>De peccator. merit. & remiss. 3, c. 7.</i>	C	E	P
32.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>Enchirid. ad Laurent. c. 110.</i>	Q	E	P
33.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:581	unknown	<i>Enchirid. c. 69.</i>	Q	E	P
34.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:577	unknown	<i>Epist. 119. c. 15.</i>	Q	E	P
35.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:572	unknown	<i>Epist. 121. c. 9.</i>	Q	E	P
36.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:577	unknown	<i>Epist. 86. &</i>	Q	E	P
37.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 221	1735	<i>Contra. Julian. 1, c. 2</i>	Q	G	P

38.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 317	1735	<i>Contra. Julian. lib. 1. c.11.</i>	R	G	P
39.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 306	1735	<i>de Dono Persever. 2, c. 2 and 21</i>	Q	G	p
40.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 306	1735	<i>de Dono Persever. 2, c. 2 and 21</i>	Q	G	P
41.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 306	1735	<i>de Corrupt. et Gratia, c. 6,</i>	Q	G	p
42.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 51	1735	<i>Enchirid. c. 103</i>	S	G	P
43.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 168	1735	None (maybe a common phrase)	Q	G	P
44.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 82	1769	<i>Contra. Pelag. de Peccat. Original. 2.</i>	Q	G	P
45.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 75	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:13. c. 18.</i>	R	G	P
46.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 509	1769	No reference	S	G	P
47.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 812	1770	None	R	G	H
48.	<i>Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6:212	1757 -58	<i>Contra. Faustum, 23. 100:1-5.</i>	Q	J	P

49.	<i>Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6: 212	1757 -58	<i>Contra. Felicem c. 11</i>	Q	J	P
50.	<i>Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6:192	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 44.</i>	R	J	P
51.	<i>Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	6:185	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 7.</i>	R	J	P
52.	<i>Truth Defended</i>	2:82	1736	<i>Enchirid. c. 41.</i>	Q	J	P
53.	<i>Commentary on Revelation</i>	Rev. 2:10	1746-48	<i>de Civ. Dei:18. c. 52.</i>	S	L	E
54.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 633	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20, c. 18, 24.</i>	R	L	E
55.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 634	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20, c. 18.</i>	P	L	E
56.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 631	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 21.</i>	Q	L	E
57.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 638	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei : 20. c. 16.</i>	Q	L	E
58.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 652	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei, 20. c. 5.</i>	P	L	E
59.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 659	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei: 20. c. 7.</i>	R	L	E

60.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 682	1769	No reference	S	L	E
61.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 630	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei: 20. c. 24.</i>	R	L	H
62.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 609	1769	<i>de Haeres. c. 83</i>	R	L	H
63.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 634	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 10.</i>	Q	L	P
64.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 608	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 23</i>	R	L	P
65.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 634	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei: 20. c. 24.</i>	Q	L	P
66.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 644	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei:20. c. 7.</i>	R	L	P
67.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Ps. 103:5	1763-66	<i>Enarrat in Psalm; Opera, tom. 8. in Psal. 102. fol. 474. c. (Psalm 103 in English)</i>	R	M	E
68.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Ps. 121:8	1763-66	<i>Epist. 44</i>	R	M	E
69.	<i>Commentary on Psalms</i>	Psalms 39:9	1763-66	<i>Enarrat in Psalm 39:9</i>	C	M	E (disagreement with Augustine)
70.	<i>Commentary on 2 Samuel</i>	2 Sam. 1:30	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei 5. c. 23</i>	R	M	H
71.	<i>Commentary on Esther</i>	Introduction	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei : 18. c. 36.</i>	C	M	H

72.	<i>Commentary on Genesis</i>	Gen. 30:39	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 18. c. 5.	R	M	H
73.	<i>Commentary on Genesis</i>	Gen. 25:30	1763-66	<i>Enarrat in Psal.</i> xlvi. tom. 8. p. 174.	R	M	H
74.	<i>Commentary on Genesis</i>	Gen. 50:10	1763-66	<i>Quaest. in Gen.</i> 1. 1. p. 54.	R	M	H
75.	<i>Commentary on Isaiah</i>	Isa. 3:21	1763-66	Unknown	R	M	H
76.	<i>Commentary on Job</i>	Job 31:24	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 4. c. 21.	R	M	H
77.	<i>Commentary on Joshua</i>	Introduction	1763-66	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 18. c. 11.	R	M	H
78.	<i>Commentary on Leviticus</i>	Lev. 11:21	1763-66	<i>Retract.</i> 2. c. 15.	R	M	H
79.	<i>Commentary on Revelation</i>	Rev. 8:9	1746-48	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 1. c. 10.	S	M	E
80.	<i>Commentary on Matthew</i>	Matt. 19:12	1746-48	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 37.	R	M	H
81.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 254	1735	<i>Confess.</i> 8, c. 2, s. 2.	R	M	H
82.	<i>Antipaedobaptism, or Infant Baptism an Innovation</i>	2:385	1753	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 35.	Q	M	h

83.	A <i>Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew- Languag e, Letters, Vowel- Points, And Accents</i>	p. 51	1765	<i>de Civ. Dei, 18. c. 39.</i>	R	M	H
84.	A <i>Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew- Languag e, Letters, Vowel- Points, And Accents</i>	p. 110	1767	<i>Contra Litteras Petiliani 2. p. 123. Tom. 7</i>	Q	M	H
85.	A <i>Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew- Languag e, Letters, Vowel- Points, And Accents</i>	p. 21	1767	<i>de Civ. Dei : 16, c. 11</i>	R	M	H

86.	<i>A Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew- Languag e, Letters, Vowel- Points, And Accents</i>	p. 109	1767	<i>Expos. Romans Tom. 7. p. 363.</i>	P	M	H
87.	<i>A Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew- Languag e, Letters, Vowel- Points, And Accents</i>	p. 111	1767	<i>Ioannem, Tr. 15. p. 58. Tom. 9.</i>	S	M	H
88.	<i>A Dissertati on Concerni ng The Antiquity Of The Hebrew- Languag e, Letters, Vowel- Points, And Accents</i>	p. 207	1767	<i>Opera T. 6. contr. Adversar. Legis. et Proph. 1. 2. c. 1. p. 256.</i>	R	M	H
89.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 334	1769	No reference	S	M	H

90.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	Xxxvi (introduction)	1769	No reference	C	M	H
91.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 980	1770	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> :19. c. 15.	Q	M	E
92.	<i>Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Popery</i>	2:578	unknown	<i>Epist.</i> 19. c. 2.	R	M (easter)	P
93.	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>	Rom. 11:6	1746-48	<i>Enchirid.</i> c. 32.	P	P	E
94.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 236	1735	<i>Contra. duas Epist. Pelag</i> : 4, c. 4.	R	P	P
95.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 235-36	1735	<i>de Dono Persever</i> : 2, c. 19.	Q	P	P
96.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 237	1735	<i>De Dono Persever.</i> 2, c. 19.	R	P	P
97.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 231	1735	<i>de Dono Persever</i> : 2. c. 14.	Q	P	P
98.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 223	1735	<i>de Dono Persever.</i> c. 19.	R	P	P
99.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 221	1735	<i>De Praedest. Sanct</i> :1 , c. 14.	Q	P	P
100.	<i>The Doctrine of the Resurrection Stated & Defended</i>	6:9	1732	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> : 22. c. 28.	R	R	P

101.	<i>The Doctrine of the Resurrection Stated & Defended</i>	6:39	1732	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 83.	R	R	P
102.	<i>Commentary of Song of Solomon</i>	p. 10	1763-66	<i>de Tempore,</i> <i>serm.</i> 201. p. 354. tom. 10. (spurious sermon)	Q	S	E
103.	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>	Rom. 1:21	1746-48	<i>de Civ.</i> Dei, 6. c. 10.	Q	S	H
104.	<i>Exposition of Song of Solomon Vol. 1</i>	p. 67	1728	<i>de Tempore,</i> Serm. 201, p. 354. tom. 10. (spurious sermon)	Q	S	E
105.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 34	1735	<i>Commentary on John</i> 12:32	R	S	E
106.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 22	1735	<i>Confess.</i> 10.40	Q	S	P
107.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 196	1735	<i>Contra.</i> <i>duas epist.</i> <i>Pelag. 2,</i> c. 6.	Q	S	P
108.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>Contra.</i> <i>duas</i> <i>Epist.</i> <i>Pelag. 1,</i> c. 5.	Q	S	P

109.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 271	1735	<i>Contra. Duas Ep. Pelag. 4, c. 8.</i>	R	S	P
110.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 194	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei. 5, c. 1.</i>	Q	S	P
111.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei. 5. c. 10.</i>	Q	S	P
112.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei. 5, c. 1;</i>	Q	S	P
113.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 192	1735	<i>de Civ. Dei, c. 8, 9.</i>	Q	S	P
114.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 8	1735	None	Q	S	P
115.	<i>The Cause of God and Truth</i>	p. 196	1735	None	S	S	P
116.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 336	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei, 11. c. 9²</i>	S	S	P
117.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 988	1770	None	R	S	H
118.	<i>Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	p. 179	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres. c. 1.</i>	R	T	P

² Originally not cited but located citation.

119.	<i>Dissertation Concerning Eternal Sonship</i>	p. 192	1757 -58	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 36, 41.	R	T	P
120.	<i>Trinity</i>	p. 99 (1731 ed.)	1731	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 1. 2, 3, 4.	R	T	H
121.	<i>Trinity</i>	p. 52 (1731 ed.)	1731	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 36.	R	T	H
122.	<i>Doctrine of God's Everlasting Love to his Elect</i>	p. 11	1732	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 54.	Q	T	P
123.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. xlix (introduction)	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 4. c. 27.	R	T	H
124.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. xlix (introduction)	1769	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 6. c. 5.	R	T	H
125.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 128	1769	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 1	R	T	H
126.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 128	1769	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 36.	R	T	H
127.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 169	1769	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 52	R	T	H
128.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	p. 298	1769	No reference	S	T	H
129.	<i>A Body of Doctrinal Divinity</i>	pp. 107-08	1769	<i>Enarrat. in Psalm cix.</i> tom. 8. p. 521.	Q	T	P

130.	<i>Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship</i>	p. 50 (1734 ed.)	1733	<i>Confess.</i> 9. c. 6. S. 2. and 7. 1. and 1. 10. c. 33. S. 2.	C	W	P
131.	<i>Discourse on Singing of Psalms as Part of Divine Worship</i>	p. 50 (1734 ed.)	1733	<i>Confess.</i> 9. c. 6. S. 1. and 10. c. 33. S. 3.	C	W	P
132.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 963	1770	<i>Confess.</i> 9. c. 6.	Q	W	H
133.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 969	1770	<i>de Civ. Dei</i> , 6. c. 11.	R	W	H
134.	<i>A Body of Practical Divinity</i>	p. 946	1770	<i>de Haeres.</i> c. 57	R	W	H

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ABSTRACT

THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF JOHN GILL (1697–1771): CONTEXT, SOURCES, AND CONTROVERSY

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In the eighteenth century in Britain, a major controversy arose over the doctrine of the Trinity. This controversy embroiled both the Established Church and Dissenters. One of the champions among the Dissenters was John Gill, a Particular Baptist minister. This dissertation will examine how Gill defended the doctrine of the Trinity against various unorthodox views. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, history of research, and methodology. Chapter 2 examines the political, cultural, and theological context of John Gill and then surveys his life and works. Chapter 3 examines the trinitarian crisis in two phases: phase 1 (1688–1711) and phase 2 (1712–29). Chapter 4 surveys Gill as a Patristic scholar and analyzes his use of Patristic sources in the debate over the Trinity. Chapter 5–8 introduces Gill’s doctrine of Trinity. Chapter 5 defines Gill’s key trinitarian terms while also considering the importance, revelation, and mystery of the Trinity. Chapter 6 seeks to understand Gill’s defense of the unity of God and plurality of the Godhead. Chapters 7 and 8 examine the distinction of the three persons in the Godhead and the distinct personality and deity of the three persons who are one God. Chapter 9 considers how Gill applied the doctrine of the Trinity to several areas of the Christian life. Chapter 10 summarizes the main arguments and suggests some areas of future study in Gill.

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