

Dr. Gill's Good Wife

Earthen Vessel | Added: Oct 26, 2021 | Category: Biography

Shortly after John Gill's profession of faith and baptism at the age of 19 some of his friends encouraged him to re-locate to Higham-Ferrers a village about six or seven miles from Kettering, England. Nearby, in Higham, was a newly established gospel church. His friends hoped the young man would be able to assist in this new church, and to support and teach the young converts in it, as well as preaching occasionally in other local villages. The following account describes Gill's introduction to his future wife which occurred at this time.

Here he continued the year following: and in this time, and at that place, he contracted acquaintance with a young Gentlewoman of great piety and good sense, whose name was ELIZABETH NEGUS; a member of the new gathered church, and whom he married in 1718. The Doctor was always of opinion, that his marriage with this excellent person, was the principal thing for which God in His providence sent him to that place: and he ever considered his marriage to her, as one of the capital blessings of his life, For she proved affectionate, discreet, and careful: and, by her unremitting prudence, took off from his hands all domestic avocations, so that he could, with more leisure, and greater ease of mind, pursue his studies, and devote himself to his ministerial service.

"his wife of his youth lived with him unto the year 1764, and by her he had many children, all of whom died in their infancy, except three: one of which, whose name was ELIZABETH (a most lovely and desirable child for person, sense, and grace) died May 30, 1738, when she had entered into the thirteenth year of her age, her Funeral Sermon was preached by her father, from 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14, and was printed, with an account of some of her choice experiences. The other two are still living: (as at July, 1772) the one, a son, whose name is JOHN, a goldsmith, who lived in Gracechurch-street, London; since retired from business. The other, a daughter, whose name is MARY, married to Mr. GEORGE KEITH, a Bookseller, in the same street. Both these children have been a great happiness to their parents; and they have always had reason to be thankful to God for their family comfort, peace, and harmony.

With regard to the death of his wife the following extract is taken from the Earthen Vessel Magazine of 1853.

"A sermon (was) preached by Dr. Gill, October 21, 1764, the first time of his appearing in public, after the decease of his beloved wife, Mrs

Elizabeth Gill, 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.' It is indeed a most blessed discourse, in which is set forth,

I. The Saint's future state of happiness.

II. Their particular regard to it, their desire after it, and looking for it.

III. The notice God takes of such persons, and what is said of Him with respect to them.—'He is not ashamed to be called their God. He hath prepared for them a city.'

"At the close of the sermon, the Doctor observes,—'What has been said, may serve to wean us from this world, and draw off our hearts from it, and to cause us to sit loose unto it, and all things in it; since this is not our rest, our house, our home, our native place; that is another country. And this may be of use to quicken our desires after another world, to seek a better country, and to look for it; and this may also point out to us the happiness of those that have gone before us, they are in this better country. But I forbear saying any more.'

"The bereaved husband could say nothing in the pulpit respecting his late partner; but he had written the following character of her, which was afterwards found among his papers. It is indeed a most blessed testimony to the memory of a sterling Believer in Christ.

"'It pleased God to call her by His Grace in the early time of her life, and in a place of great darkness and ignorance; where there were scarce any, or very few Professors of religion; so that when she took up a profession of it, she appeared very singular, and became the object of the scoffs and jeers of her neighbours and former acquaintance; but this did not deter her from pursuing the good ways of God she had entered into, and from persisting in them. She soon drank in the Doctrines of the free Grace of God in the Salvation of men by Christ, of which she had a comfortable experience.

"In the after-time of her life, her afflictions and troubles were many, but under all she was favoured with Divine supports, and was frequently indulged with gracious words on different occasions, and yet often doubting and fearing; for none could have meaner or more humble thoughts of themselves than she always had, looking upon herself as less than the least of all Saints.

"Lord's Days were usually delightful to her; she often met with refreshings from the presence of God in them; which made her earnestly desire the return of them; and when the day drew nigh, longed until the morning was, and the time came to attend public worship. The loss of these precious opportunities, through her long confinement, was greatly lamented by her.

"She was one that greatly feared God, and was ever desirous of having a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, and of doing her duty to both; careful as much as in her lay, to give no offence by word or deed, to the world or to the Church of God, studying the things which make for peace among all with whom she was concerned; as her whole deportment, for the space of between forty and fifty years, has abundantly shewn, of which many here are witnesses.

"Her last affliction, though long, tedious and painful was borne with the greatest patience: that passage in Scripture was truly verified in her,—‘Tribulation works patience;’ and though she was not ‘carried out,’ as her expression was, which she observed some were, on their dying beds, in raptures of Joy, and strong expressions of Faith, yet it pleased God to drop comforts into her Soul at certain times; and sometimes she would be longing to be at home in her Father’s house, saying, ‘Let me go, O let me go to my Father’s house:’ repeating it over and over again.

"The Scripture which has now been discoursed on, was expressed by her as it had been at times before, with great pleasure and delight; and also those words, ‘them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.’ In a view of her own Soul-affairs, and those of her family, those words appeared to be of considerable use, and were quiet and comfortable to her, ‘Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.’

"But a few Lord’s Days ago, as her surviving relative was taking his leave of her, coming hither to preach, she expressed the following words with strong application to herself, ‘Having made peace through the blood of His cross:’ and with the greatest vehemency and eagerness added, ‘AND FOR ME TOO;’ and repeated it, ‘AND FOR ME TOO.’

"One morning, being asked how she did, she declared she had much comfort that night in her meditations on the sufferings of Christ for her, in comparison of which her afflictions, though heavy, were but light. At another time those words were very staying, supporting, and satisfying to her—'Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure;' and very often declared she had comfort, but had not strength to express it; and indeed the enemy of Souls was kept off from her through the whole, and was not suffered, as far as could be discerned, to disturb and distress her in the least. The last words of any moment that were heard from her were, when asked whether she had comfort, she said she had, but not always alike; and added, 'the covenant is sure.' Quickly after this she grew delirious, and slept much, till death seized her; of which she seemed to be sensible by the motions of lifting up her hands, and by the words she uttered, which were, "Lord, Lord!" when something followed not understood by those that stood by, and then drawing her breath quicker, immediately, without a sigh or groan, fell asleep in the arms of Jesus."

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