His Excellency, The Lord Jesus Christ

Excellence excels, and the Lord Jesus Christ excels all others. Can a man love? Christ's love is greater. Is Satan strong? Christ's power excels all others. Do angels minister? Christ's ministry far exceeds the heavenly host.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent name (Hebrews 1:4)
   The Lord Jesus has many, many, names in the Bible. Consider a few. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. And in every name Christ excels. In every office He is first. In every duty He completely satisfies. Every obligation is thoroughly fulfilled. He excels in everything. Therefore, God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
   Many take His name in vain (don’t do that). Someday every knee will bow to His, this most excellent, name.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent power (Job 37:23)
   The Lord Jesus Christ is all powerful. In spiritual matters, in heavenly matters, in every event on this earth. Daniel says, “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”
   The warning is clear. Do not dare to stand against Him. Sue for peace! Be reconciled! Consider your perilous state!

3. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent judgment (Job 37:23)
   Judgment means both knowledge and retribution. Here is the Judge who sees all, knows all and rules with perfect justice. Job asks, “Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?”
   The excellent power and judgment of the Lord Christ ought to make sinners tremble.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent love (Psalm 36:7)
   His love excels all others (see Isaiah 49:15). It is perfect, unconditional, everlasting love. It is active, accomplishing love. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”
   What does excellent love accomplish? It brings every covenant promise to the elect children of God. “He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah” (Psalm 47:4).

5. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent sacrifice (Hebrews 11:4)
   Abel’s sacrifice was more excellent than Cain’s because it was made in faith. He brought blood, confessed sin and looked to a redeemer. True faith looks to Christ, the excellent sacrifice. His precious blood satisfies God’s anger, cleanses from sin, and justifies the ungodly.

6. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent ministry (Hebrews 8:6)
   Christ’s new covenant of promise is better than the old law of duty. Christ excels Moses. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He is an excellent Minister. He administers the new covenant, accomplishes its terms, gathers its beneficiaries, dispenses its gifts.

7. The Lord Jesus Christ's excellent greatness (Psalm 150:2)
   Every excellence in our glorious Saviour leads to His excellent greatness. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth (Psalm 96:8, 9).
TWO THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN ...

When the Gospel is preached, there are two things always taking place (even though most are unaware of it); some are being prepared for glory, others are being hardened. Some are being brought to the light; some are left sitting in darkness. Some see Christ and His glory; others see no beauty about Him. Some who hear the Gospel have their hearts made tender towards sin; others have their hearts hardened in sin. No wonder we say, “Who is sufficient for these things?” The question we should all be asking is, “How is the preaching of the Gospel affecting me?”

Don Bell
Going Home

Images Of Glory

In Revelation chapter twenty-one the Holy Spirit gives us several biblical images representing the present and everlasting state of God’s saints in heaven’s glory. It is not my intention in this study to explain all the mysteries of that chapter. I know the impossibility of that task. We will never know the fulness of the glory awaiting us until we experience it. But the things recorded in those twenty-seven verses do give us some images of the heavenly glory awaiting every believer.

In this series of studies I am trying to describe the glorious state of God’s saints in heaven, a task more fit for an angel than for a man, or for one of the glorified saints in heaven than for a weak, sinful, mortal creature like myself. But it is a task God has, I believe, laid upon my heart and one in which I thoroughly delight. Our conception of heavenly glory and the greatness of it must be formed according to the adjectives used in the Word of God to describe it.

Unseen Glory
It is an unseen glory (1 Corinthians 2:9). The glory of heaven consists of “things not seen” (2 Corinthians 4:18) which are eternal. We look for and have an assured hope of heaven by faith. But no one on earth has ever seen it (1 Corinthians 2:9; Hebrews 11:1.) No one here has ever had so much as a glimpse of heaven but by faith. We live in hope of that which we have not yet seen (Romans 8:24-25).

Future Glory
The glory of heaven is for us a future glory (Romans 8:18; 1 John 3:2). Our friends who have gone before us enjoy the glory of heaven now. But for us, it is altogether a future thing, yet to be revealed. Sometimes we imagine that we have experienced a little foretaste of heaven, or a little of “heaven on earth”, in the worship of our God; but we have never come close. The glory of heaven is a glory yet to be revealed.

Since the last issue of this magazine Pastor Ken Cotty, a minister of the gospel and a good friend of New Focus, passed away. We are pleased to dedicate this article to his memory, for whom we trust these images of heavenly glory are now a present reality.
Incomparable Glory
It is also an incomparable glory (Romans 8:18). There is nothing in this world to be compared to
the glory of heaven. All earthly honour, riches, pleasure, and greatness are trifling and empty
things of vanity, when compared to the glory that awaits us. Even the sufferings of God’s
saints in this world for Christ’s sake, which is the purest and most glorious form of service
to Him, is not worthy to be compared to the glory that awaits us. And if our most glorious
services cannot be compared to the glory of heaven, they certainly cannot be meritorious
of heaven! The very best things we do for our
God, from the purest principles cannot be
compared to heavenly glory. Our afflictions for
Christ are “light afflictions”. Heaven is a weight
of glory. Our afflictions are "but for a moment".
Heavens glory is eternal.
It is the prospect of heavenly glory that
supports believers in their troubles, and makes
them choose to suffer affliction with the people
of God and to esteem the reproach of Christ
greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,
causing them to take joyfully the spoiling of
their goods for Christ’s sake, knowing that in
heaven they have a better and an enduring
substance (Hebrews 11:25, 26; 10:34). If
nothing in this world can be compared to the
poetry that awaits us in heaven, then let us set
our hearts on things above, not on things on
the earth (Colossians 3:1-4; Matthew 6:19-34).
Eternal Glory
The glory awaiting us in heaven is called an
eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10). The glory of this
world passes away very quickly. But the glory
of the world to come never shall. The glory of
this world is fading. The glory of that world is
unending. The glory of this is temporal. The
glory of that world is eternal. The glory of
heaven is an immutable, eternal weight of glory.
All that awaits us on the other side is eternal.
It includes, a crown of glory that fadeth not
away; an inheritance that is eternal; a house,
not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;
a kingdom that is everlasting; a city that abides
and continues forever. John Gill said,
When kingdoms, crowns, and
sceptres are no more, and all that is
great and glorious in this world (has
passed away), this will endure forever,
for it is eternal glory the God of all grace
calls His people to and will put them in
possession of.
Here is the glory of heaven. It is to be
forever with the Lord. It is eternity with Christ!
A Place Of Glory
Add to all this the fact that heaven is a place
of glory (John 14:3). Our Lord said, “I go and
prepare a place for you”. Yes, heaven is a state
and condition of glory. But it is also a place of
joy, a place to which Christ has gone, a place
where He sits in a real body upon a glorious
throne, a place prepared for us.
The glory of that place called heaven is
set forth in the Scriptures under many striking
images, images taken from the most great,
glorious, rich and valuable things known to
men. We know that the imagery used in the
Scriptures to describe heaven is not given
to describe its literal form, size, and shape,
because Paul told us plainly that no tongue
could describe what he saw there and heard
there (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). Those images
drawn of heaven by the inspired writers of
God's Word are intended to show us the
surpassing excellence and infinite glory that
awaits us in heaven. Here are five images
given in the Word of God to show us the
grandeur and greatness of heavenly glory.
A House
Heaven is represented to us in the Scriptures
as a house (2 Corinthians 5:1). It is a house,
but a house incomparable to any house found
in this world. This house is a building of God,
“a house not made with hands, eternal in the
heavens”.
This house of glory is not built by man's
hands. This is a house whose Builder and
Maker is God. There is nothing, not one brick
or piece of timber in that heavenly house
that has been laid in its place by the will of
man, the works of man, or the worship of
man. Our house in heaven is a construction
of grace alone. It is true, the works of God's
saints follow them into their house in heaven
(Revelation 14:13). But they do not go before
them. And they have nothing to do with the
building of that house. It is a building of God.
Its foundation was laid in God's purpose. Its
walls were erected by Christ's obedience. Its
title deed was purchased by Christ's blood.
Its door was opened by Christ's entrance into
heaven.
Solomon built a great temple in Jerusalem.
When it was laid in ruins, Zerubbabel rebuilt
it, and Herod repaired it. It was a grand and
glorious structure in the eyes of men. But
where is it now? Not one stone is left in its place. It was a holy place made with hands. But it was only a temporary, typical house. Our house in heaven is the true holy place. It is the building of God, the work of free, sovereign, effectual grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This house is in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:2). Our present houses of clay, the physical bodies in which we now live, have their foundation in the dust of the earth. Therefore, they must soon crumble. But our house which is from heaven and in heaven is eternal. It will never age, or crumble, or stand in need of repair. Men build their houses on earth and vainly imagine that they will stand forever (Psalm 49:11). But in time they decay, are demolished by the elements, broken down with earthquakes, burned by fire, or destroyed by their enemies. Our heavenly house of glory abides forever. All its apartments are called “everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9).

Our Lord Jesus called this house our “Father’s house” (John 14:2). It is His Father’s house. That makes it our Father’s house; and that makes it all the more endearing and glorious. In our Father’s house there are many mansions. Roll this morsel around in your heart. Heaven is called the “Father’s house”. Our Father built it. Our Father dwells there. It is the place where He would have all His children to be. Our Father’s house is a rich, roomy, stately, and well stored house, a place of “many mansions”. These mansions are dwelling places for the King’s sons. They are places of rest, joy, and peace, where the sons and daughters of almighty God want for nothing. And there are “many” of them! “Many” for the many who were ordained to eternal life. The many who have been justified by Christ’s obedience. The many for whom His blood was shed for the remission of sins. And the many sons whom He will bring to glory (Acts 13:48; Romans 5:19; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 2:10). There is room enough and provision enough in the Father’s house for all the innumerable hosts of those men and women out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue chosen, redeemed, and called by almighty grace.

An Inheritance

Heavenly glory is called an inheritance (Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 1:12; Romans 8:17). As Canaan was an inheritance distributed by lot to the children of Israel, so heavenly glory is an inheritance given by lot, by the lot which God Himself arranged (Proverbs 16:33), to the Israel of God. As Canaan is a type of heaven, it should never be forgotten that Moses could never bring Israel into the land. But what Moses through the weakness of the flesh could not do, Joshua did. And the saints of God are brought to heaven not by the works of the law, but by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Joshua, our Deliverer, the Captain of our salvation.

An inheritance is a free gift. It cannot be earned by labour and diligence. It cannot be merited. And it cannot be purchased with money. It is bequeathed from one person to another. Our inheritance in heavenly glory was given by God the Father to His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord. And it is given by Christ to all who trust Him. It is to us a gift of pure, free, sovereign grace. Be sure you understand these things.

Heavenly glory cannot be obtained, in any part or degree, by the works of men. All men by nature vainly imagine that they must do something to inherit eternal life in heaven. But their proud imaginations deceive them. Eternal life is the gift of God (Romans 6:23) in its promise, in its bestowment, in its preservation, and in its everlasting enjoyment. Heavenly glory cannot be purchased by men. If a man should give all his substance for it, the price offered would be utterly despised by God. Heavenly glory is an inheritance bequeathed to chosen sinners by our heavenly Father from eternity. It is the Father’s good pleasure to give His kingdom to His elect. He gives it by His own will, by a testament, through, by, and upon the merits of the sacrificial death of His dear Son, the Testator (Hebrews 9:15-17).

This inheritance belongs only to the children of God (Romans 8:17). It does not belong to His servants, the angels (Hebrews 1:14), nor to the children of the bond-woman (Galatians 4:30), self-righteous, legalistic, works and free-will religionists, but only to those men and women predestinated to adoption in eternity and called to be the sons of God in time. Yet, it is an inheritance that belongs to all the saints of God fully. There are no degrees of glory in heaven. There are no back settlements in the heavenly Canaan! There are no second class citizens in the New Jerusalem!

Our heavenly inheritance is incorruptible. All earthly inheritances are corruptible, subject to change, and unstable. This inheritance cannot be corrupted by us or anyone else. It cannot be changed or altered in any degree. It is as sure as the throne of God. It is an
undefiled inheritance. It is an inheritance that fadeth not away. It is an eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15). It is an inheritance reserved in heaven, immutably and infallibly reserved in heaven for God’s elect (1 Peter 1:4). God keeps the inheritance for us; and God keeps us for the inheritance.

A City
Another familiar image of heaven is that of a city (Hebrews 11:10). Heaven is a large, rich, spacious, fully inhabited city, whose Builder and Maker is God. Like the other images, this word, “city”, is a figurative term, not to be understood in any carnal, earthly, mundane sense. Heaven is a city infinitely beyond anything on this earth.

It is “a city which hath foundations”. Not one foundation, but many, so that it is firm, immovable, and cannot be shaken, thrown down, or dissolved. The foundations upon which this city, this habitation of glory, is built are the everlasting love of God, the unalterable covenant of grace, and the blessed Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The glory of this city cannot be comprehended or described by men upon this earth (2 Corinthians 12:4). The description of the New Jerusalem given by the Apostle John is a hyperbole. It does exactly what it was intended to do. It defies imagination. John saw in his vision a city with walls of jasper, gates of pearl, and streets of pure gold, transparent as glass! What a place of spiritual wealth, abundance, and happiness heaven must be! What a place of spiritual excellence and perfection! There they have no value, absolutely no value, for the most priceless treasures and gems of the world! In that world, where there is no sin, there is no greed, nor covetousness, nor ambition. In that glory land, where there is no sin, material things are looked upon as nothing but useful accommodations. No value is placed upon them. Jasper is nothing but a wall to enclose the church of God. Pearls are nothing but gates to open the kingdom of God. Gold is nothing but pavement upon which men and women walk to the throne of God. May God graciously teach us so to use them now!

A Kingdom
Heavenly glory is represented to us as a kingdom. A house is great. An inheritance is something greater. A city is something greater still. But the inspired writers seem to stretch for words to describe the heavenly glory, using ever expanding ideas to describe it. What is heaven? It is a glorious house! Yes, but it is more than a house. It is a glorious inheritance! Yes, but it is more than an inheritance. It is a glorious city! Yes, but it is more than a city. It is a glorious kingdom!

God’s saints in this world are kings. We have a kingdom now which cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28). It is a kingdom that lies not in carnal ceremonies, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). And we are heirs of another kingdom, a kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:35). It is a kingdom of glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12). It is an everlasting kingdom. We have been called and born into this kingdom by the almighty, irresistible grace and power of God the Holy Spirit. We have been prepared and fitted for this kingdom by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

The kingdom of glory to which we are heirs is the place where every believer shall be crowned and honoured by God and all the holy angels. In this world there is no honour put upon faith, faithfulness, and commitment to Christ. But in the world to come God Himself and all His holy angels will honour and crown redeemed sinners for the perfection of beauty grace has given them in Christ (Ephesians 1:10; 2:7; Revelation 21:9, cf. Jeremiah
33:16). The Lord God Himself will give us a crown: a crown of life (James 1:12), a crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Corinthians 9:25).

And our great God and Saviour will cause us to sit upon a throne as kings in His glorious kingdom (Revelation 3:21). We have been raised from the dunghill of fallen humanity by His grace. And we shall be raised from the dunghill to a throne of glory in heaven (1 Samuel 2:8). There, in heavenly glory, we shall inherit and sit upon the throne with Christ Himself. This is grace! And this is glory!

**Eternal Pleasure**

Heavenly glory is set before us under the image of infinite, eternal, holy pleasure (Psalm 16:11). Heaven is a house. Heaven is an inheritance. Heaven is a city. Heaven is a kingdom. And heaven is a place of glorious life, fulness of joy, and pleasure forevermore. Everything that is pleasing to the renewed mind, gratifying to the sanctified heart, and desirable to the regenerate soul shall be fully enjoyed to all eternity in heaven’s glory land.

There we shall sit down with Christ at His table and drink new wine with Him in His Father’s kingdom. There we shall pick and eat the fruit of the Tree of Life which stands in the midst of the Paradise of God. There we shall drink of that pure River of The Water of Life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. There we shall see what no eye has seen, hear what no ear has heard, and understand that which has never entered into the heart of man. John Gill said,

> The eye of man has seen many things on earth very grand and illustrious, and what have been very entertaining to it; but it never saw such objects as will be seen in heaven. The ear of man has heard and been entertained with very pleasing sounds, very delightful music, vocal and instrumental; but it never heard such music as will be heard in heaven. The heart of man can conceive of more than it has either seen or heard; but it never conceived of such things as will be enjoyed in the world above.

The door of access to heavenly glory is straight. The way is narrow. We must come in by the Door, Christ Jesus. The only way to God, the only way to heaven, the only way to glory is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Only Way, the Righteous Way, and the Sure Way. Let none be satisfied with merely studying about the glory awaiting God’s saints in heaven. Let us make certain that we are in the Way that brings sinners there. Let us make our calling and election sure. Make certain that you are in Christ.

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If the Gospel is a truth which contains its own evidence how is it that any reject it? Especially, how is it that the great body even of those who profess it, remain ignorant of its true distinguishing character? Might it not be expected that it would command universal acceptance? The answer is anticipated by the Apostle in this passage, and the question, that to ignorance might seem unanswerable, has not the smallest difficulty to the well-instructed. It is answered by asking another—Why do not the blind see the sun? Is there no light in the sun, because the blind do not see it? “If our gospel be hid,” says the Apostle, “it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not”. Here Paul admits that, clear as the Gospel is in its own nature, it is veiled to some. The veil which hides it, however, is not anything in its own nature: it is the veil which enmity to God and prejudice bring over the eyes of all who reject it. Self-evident truth may lie hid from those who hate it.

The persons to whom the Gospel lies hid are “they that are lost”. This is the description of all who reject the Gospel. All the spiritually blind are lost: all the lost are spiritually blind. That men may be turned unto God they must have not only the light of the Gospel laid before them, but their eyes must be opened to perceive the light. “To open their eyes”, says the Apostle, “and turn them from darkness to light”. The Lord, we are told, opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were spoken by the Apostle. No doubt, the blindness of sinners is wilful blindness; but the blindness is not the less intense on that account. It is as complete and as incurable, by all human means, as is external blindness. No man ever knew the Gospel without the

Alexander Carson, born 1776 in Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone, in Northern Ireland, was a Baptist minister best known today for his writings, including *Baptism, its Mode and Subjects*. But it was not always thus. Having studied in Glasgow, Carson had begun his ministry as a Presbyterian in Tobermore, N.I. After a time of disillusionment with that denomination he resigned his pastorate, abandoned Presbyterianism, and published his ‘Reasons for Separating’ in 1804. Part of his congregation followed him and for some years he preached in barns and in the open air. In 1814 a small meeting-house was built in which he laboured for thirty years. He published books on biblical interpretation, Transubstantiation, the Trinity, etc.. In attempting to refute Robert Haldane’s ‘New Views of Baptism’ he became convinced of the Baptist position. He became well known for his gospel ministry and travelled through most of England preaching on behalf of Baptist missions. Returning from a tour to Wales in 1844, he was about to board the steamer at Liverpool for Belfast when he fell over the edge of the quay, dislocated his shoulder, and was nearly drowned. He was rescued by a passerby and placed on the boat but upon his arrival at Belfast he was unable to proceed further, and after eight days illness he died, aged sixty-eight. He was buried near the chapel where he had preached, and where six months before he had buried his wife. A collection of Carson’s works has been printed in six volumes but is now quite rare.
teaching of the Holy Spirit, as well as the external teaching of the Word. Were all the preachers on earth, assisted by the angels in heaven, to spend their whole time during the whole life of an individual, in teaching him the way of salvation, they could not succeed without the teaching of the Spirit. They might clearly present the truth in all its evidence, but all would be in vain, unless the Almighty agency of the Spirit of God would open the eyes to perceive the light.

Satan is here said to blind the mind of them that believe not, to prevent them from receiving the light of the Gospel. Here the Gospel is considered to be light, which could not but be seen unless Satan blinded the eyes. If so, the Gospel must have its own evidence in itself. Light needs nothing else to discover it, or to prove that it is light. Diamonds and precious stones are brilliant when the rays of the sun fall on them. Not so in total darkness. But the feeblest ray of light discovers itself, and needs nothing else to manifest it. Just so with the Gospel: it is a brilliant light without the aid of other light. It is all light in itself. Agreeably to this, the truth that saves the soul is called light and the light of the Gospel. Jesus Himself, whose character is the Gospel, is called the light of the world. When He came to the world, light was said to come into the world, but that men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. The light is said to shine in darkness, but the darkness did not perceive it. He is called the Sun of Righteousness by the prophet. If so, the Gospel in which He shines must be spiritual light, as evidently as the sun is light naturally. No man can look on the sun and say that it is not light: no man can look on Christ without seeing Him to be the light. The man who cannot see light at noonday must be blind: the man who cannot see the evidence of the Gospel in itself must be blinded by Satan, the god of this world.

The Gospel is here called "the gospel of the glory of Christ," which our excellent translators have not adequately rendered by "the glorious gospel of Christ". The glorious gospel of Christ, and the gospel of the glory of Christ, are not the same thing. The Holy Spirit here speaks not of glory as an attribute of the Gospel, but of Christ in the Gospel. It is called the Gospel of His glory, for a like reason, that it is called the Gospel of His grace. It is called the Gospel of grace, because its end is to exhibit the grace of God. It is for this reason called the Gospel of the glory of Christ, because its end is to proclaim the glory of Christ. It is grace to men; it is glory to God. And it is glory to God by exhibiting the glory of Christ. The glory of Christ is the glory of God. The Gospel manifests the glory of Jesus, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This is wonderful wisdom. Though the Gospel exhibits Christ in His humiliation, yet this humiliation was necessary for the manifestation of His glory. The true glory of God can only be seen in God incarnate. Here the Divine attributes have full scope for their exercise in infinite perfection and harmony. In no other light could they have been so exhibited. While thus the gospel presents to us the Son of God in the lowly state of humanity suffering for sin, yet it presents Him to us as God in the character in which God appears most glorious.

That the Father and the Son are the same God, and that the Father is seen only in the character of His Son, is most beautifully seen in the expression, "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". Where can we see the Divine glory? In the face of Jesus Christ. A person is recognised by his face. The feature and countenance of one man distinguish him from every other. The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. If so, He must be God. The face of Christ, by which He is distinguished from all others, is His character. The glory of God did not shine in His face bodily, so as to distinguish Him from other men. But in His character this glory shone in its full lustre. This was beautifully figured by the glory in the face of Moses, the type of Christ. The glory of God shone externally in the face of Moses; in like manner the glory of God, in
all the attributes of His nature, shone in the face of His Son. Here we see the Divine glory. Nowhere else can it be seen.

In this wonderful account of the manifestation of God in Christ, it is remarkable that the shining of the spiritual light of the Gospel into the hearts of His people, is expressed in language referring to the shining of the light of creation. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”. In creation God said, “Let there be light, and there was light”. Here we see that it requires the same Almighty power to enlighten the darkened mind of man with the knowledge of God in the Gospel, as it did to cause the light of creation to shine on a dark world. Nothing but the power that created light can give the knowledge of God, and this knowledge is given only in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the knowledge of Christ is given only in the Gospel, and the Gospel is understood only by the agency of the Holy Spirit. In the belief of the Gospel God shines into the heart, in every instance, as immediately as He caused the light of creation to shine into the world. The enlightening of the mind by the truth is the work of God. Men often forget this, and instead of using the Gospel as the means through which God enlightens sinners in the knowledge of salvation, they expect to make Christians by the mere process of education. Too much zeal cannot be used in educating the young and the ignorant; the truth cannot be pressed on them too earnestly, nor too frequently; but it ought never to be forgotten, that when we endeavour to hold forth the light of the truth, it is God only who can cause it to shine in the heart. Let zeal in labouring for men’s conversion, then, be always coupled with reliance only on Divine power. But if some look too much to means, without a sufficient impression of the necessity of the accompaniment of Almighty power to make them effectual, others fall into a worse error, when, from a pretence that human teaching can do nothing without the teaching of the Spirit, they excuse themselves for doing nothing at all. These new lights, that value themselves as greatly advanced above others, when they leave their children to live in ignorance and folly, are not the lights of heaven, but meteors of hell. Though it is God only who can shine into the heart, yet He commands us to hold up the light. Nothing but the power of God can make food to nourish our children, yet no parent will on that account withhold the regular support of food. Theories of this kind manifest great ignorance and hardness of heart combined with spiritual pride.

In speaking of the blessings of a Scriptural education, it is too common to consider the reception of the truth by those who read the Scriptures as almost a matter of course. This dishonours God. If every individual in the world had the Bible in his hands, and a teacher along with it, without the teaching of the Spirit, the light would never shine into his heart. Even experience might teach the fallacy of the sentiment. While the Scriptures are blessed to some, they are read by others without a blessing. The light shines before them, but not into their hearts. They have no spiritual eye to discover it. With every means, then, that Christians can employ to enlighten the world, their supreme and ultimate reliance should be on Him who openeth the eyes of the blind. God is a sovereign, even with respect to the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of the Gospel. When even an Apostle spoke, some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not.

In the phraseology of this passage, the Gospel is considered as containing its own evidence. If the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines into the heart as the light at first shined into the world, the beholding of this light will be sufficient proof of its existence and nature. When God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, its shining showed itself in its own proper character. Can anyone who has eyes be incapable of distinguishing light from darkness? When Christ opened the eyes of the blind, do we ever hear of any who doubted whether they saw? The light of the Gospel manifests itself as evidently as the light of the heavens.

Let the Christian, then, study the Gospel, as the surest way to defend it. In it he will find the artillery of heaven. If he has skill to manage it, he may sit as an impregnable tower, and pour down destruction on all the foes of revelation. Every advance which he shall make in the knowledge of God, will in proportion fortify his own faith, and enable him to afford the greater means of conviction to others. No subject will so well reward the attention of the student. There is no end to progress; and temporal and eternal enjoyment will be in proportion to advancement. Let us, then, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Adapted from The Writings Of Alexander Carson with thanks to David Burrows
1. The soul that with sincere desires,
   Seeks after Jesu’s love.
   That soul the Holy Ghost inspires
   With breathings from above.

2. Not ev’ry one, in like degree,
   The Spir’t of God receives;
   The Christian often cannot see
   His faith; and yet believes.

3. So gentle sometimes is the flame,
   That, if we take not heed,
   We may unkindly quench the same;
   We may, my friends, indeed.

4. Blest God, that once in fiery tongues
   Cam’st down in open view,
   Come, visit ev’ry heart that longs
   To entertain Thee, too.

5. And tho’ not like a mighty wind,
   Nor with a rushing noise;
   May we Thy calmer comforts find:
   And hear Thy still small voice.

6. Not for the gift of tongues we pray;
   Nor pow’r the sick to heal:
   Give wisdom to direct our way;
   And strength to do Thy will.

7. We pray to be renewed within,
   And reconcil’d to God;
   To have our conscience wash’d from sin
   In the Redeemer’s blood.

8. We pray to have our faith increas’d
   And, O celestial Dove!
   We pray to be completely blest
   With that rich blessing, Love.
Perhaps you are familiar with the story of the three Hebrew children thrown in the furnace because they refused to bow down to an idol. The verse above recounts what harm came to them in the furnace—none at all. They had been bound and thrown into the furnace. The fire was so hot that the soldiers who threw them were burned to death by merely coming close to the furnace. But, to everyone's great surprise, the three men thrown in were joined in the furnace by Another, a Fourth Man, and they soon came out of that furnace without so much as a smoky smell on them. All that the flames had done to them was burn their bonds and set them free.

This same truth applies to eternal salvation. We are just like those men in the furnace; we are in trouble beyond our means to remedy. Our sins have merited us eternal woe in the fires of God's hell. No amount of our works, be they ever so good, can remove the awful judgment that awaits every man and woman at the end of life. But, for some, there is a “Fourth Man” in the furnace of God's wrath—the Son of God, Himself.

By God’s sovereign election and purpose, a chosen race was predestined to grace and glory in Christ Jesus. In order to carry out His just sentence of eternal wrath against them without killing them in the process, God sent His Son into the world; and in Him, all God's elect entered the fiery furnace of God's wrath at Calvary.

But, behold what wonder! All the children of God come out of the furnace, and even though the full satisfaction of divine justice has burned against them, there is not so much as the smell of smoke upon them, for the Son of God, “the Fourth Man” was in the furnace with them. All that their passage through God's wrath worked on them was to consume their bonds and set them free. It is impossible that any who were in the furnace of judgment with Christ at Calvary shall ever suffer the least punishment for their sin! As Paul later wrote, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Not even the smell of smoke!

And what of our temporal troubles—those times of testing, chastening and discipline that come to us from the hand of the Father? Shall we conclude that the One who entered the fiery furnace of Divine Wrath—a furnace that must have been seven times hotter than any furnace of temporal affliction—shall He in these lesser troubles withdraw His presence and not go with us? Is there no “Fourth Man” with us in our daily struggles? And shall not these lesser flames still work with wondrous power to set us free from some bondage?

We can confidently say that, at all times and in all circumstances, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid” (Hebrews 13:6). The flame of trouble may cause pain but it will do no damage and in the end, we will come out of the furnace freed from the fleshly bondage that sent us there and without so much as the smell of smoke upon us! All praise be to “The Fourth Man” who goes with us in all our troubles and sanctifies them to our good and protects us from all real harm!
A PRAYER
UPON THE DEATH OF
A DEAR FRIEND

GREAT GOD, the Lord of all; Thou dost whatsoever Thou pleasest in heaven and in earth: Thou givest, and Thou takest away; Thou raisest up, and Thou easiest down: nor can any stay thy hand, or say unto Thee, What doest Thou? But in all that Thou doest Thou art wise, and righteous, and good. Thou art just in depriving us of those enjoyments which we have unworthily idolized or ungratefully abused. Blessed be thy name, therefore, as well when Thou takest away, as when Thou givest. Yet, O Lord, in mercy turn these losses to the advantage of my soul; and grant me such abundant supplies out of thine own fulness, that I may find in Thee infinitely more than in all earthly friends and comforts. They were but instruments and means of conveyance; Thou, who art the eternal spring and fountain of all good, art still the same; and amidst all these changes changest not. O let me find, though bereft of the creature, I am not forsaken of my God; and that, though I have nothing, I am really possessed of all things.

O my heavenly Father, take my eyes off from such poor dying comforts, to fix them upon the only satisfying good; in the enjoyment of which consists all my true life, and peace, and happiness. And let the frequent disappointments that I find in all the enjoyments of the world, teach me more wisdom than to place my affections upon them. Help me to disengage and loosen my heart from them: and raise up my desires and hopes to those glorious objects, which are so infinitely to be preferred before them. O let me be more crucified to the world, where is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; and may I have my conversation more in heaven; where my blessed Lord is, and all His happy followers, of whom the world was not worthy; and where there is every thing that the soul of man can want or wish. O God of the spirits of all flesh, and especially of the just made perfect, help me so to follow Thy servants who are departed in the Lord, that I with them may be counted worthy to live in Thy presence, and to spend an eternity in the love and praises, the fellowship and enjoyment, of Thee, my God, who art blessed for evermore. Amen.

Courtesy GalleryWall

BENJAMIN JENKS
The Soul Sufferings Of Christ

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Isaiah 53:10

It was said by Thomas Goodwin, relative to Christ’s soul sufferings, that the soul of His sufferings were His soul sufferings. The atonement was not confined to any one type or degree of sufferings. However, to overlook any one aspect of Christ’s sufferings is not man’s prerogative. The bodily sufferings of Christ were great, but the agonies of His holy soul were great as well, perhaps even greater as Thomas Goodwin declared. Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg in his Christology Of The Old Testament noted, ‘In the case of sacrifices, it is just the soul upon which everything depends; so that if the soul be mentioned in a context which treats of sacrifices, it is, a priori, probable that it will be the object offered up.’

The reality of the sacrifice of the soul is evident in Christ’s teaching. ‘I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life (literally soul) for the sheep ... I lay down my life (lit. the soul) for the sheep ... I lay down my life (lit. the soul of me), that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again’ (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18). ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life (soul) for his friends’ (John 15:13). Note the usage of psyche which is translated personal soul, breath soul, breath of life, soul and life. The soul is referred to as the essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death. Death is when the soul and body are separated. The soul distinguishes the living creature from dead matter.

The Bible is not a silent book about the soul sufferings of Christ. The prophetic Word addressed the subject (Isaiah 53:10-12; Psalms 16:9, 10; 22:20; 88:3, 14-16; 69:1). And the fulfilment of the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament are recorded in the New Testament (Matthew 26:36-38; John 12:27, 28). Isaiah recorded, ‘Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin’, ‘He shall see of the travail of his soul’, and ‘He hath poured out his soul unto death’. The Psalmist in Messianic song sang, ‘For my soul is full of troubles’, ‘Why casteth thou off my soul’, and ‘Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul’. The New Testament records Christ’s fulfilment of the Old Testament utterances. Jesus said, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death’, and ‘Now is my soul troubled’.

How can we adequately express what Christ Jesus our Surety suffered in His soul? The subject is as enormous as is the Person of whom it speaks. The language of Scripture, as we have just noted, reveals the intensity in His soul sufferings. How can we grasp the agony of soul of One who was perfectly sinless and infinitely holy? His soul was ‘exceedingly sorrowful’. Many sorrows pierced the soul of Christ. ‘He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.’ He experienced great heaviness. And ‘he was sore amazed’. The horrors of sin upon an infinitely holy soul cannot be measured, or explained fully at least, by or to finite creatures. Who really knows what is fully meant by ‘his soul was troubled?’ The gloom of the midnight of hell with its fiends and the drink of the cup filled with the gall of bitterness is not in the scope of our experience, but He was ‘exceedingly sorrowful’ of soul.

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Part Four:
Preacher, Pastor And Scholar

The wider call
A sound Confession of Faith can only serve as a hand-maid to sound exegetical preaching and Gill sought to preach both systematically and doctrinally to his people. Sunday mornings usually found Gill expounding a book from first to last, whereas his Sunday-afternoon and mid-week sermons were taken up with doctrinal preaching on given issues. This was also chiefly the case with Gill’s lectures and sermons given regularly in the neighbourhood, such as at Cripplegate, Lime Street and Great Eastcheap. Though Gill is called Mr. Voluminous because of the number of his books, he was in no way a theorist or even what might be called a professional writer. The tens of thousands of pages he wrote are mostly recordings of the sermons he preached. Indeed, his short works compiled solely for publication are not amongst his most well-known and are chiefly apologetic discourses arising from clashes with non-Baptists.

One verse sermons were a rarity with Gill, though he was known at times to paraphrase a large portion of Scripture and then draw out the implications of a single verse under several headings. He never read from a manuscript, always entering the pulpit with an outline in his pocket. His hearers thus never had the impression that they were receiving a dissertation but were given good tidings straight from the preacher’s heart. Thomas Wright called Gill ‘the profoundest preacher’, claiming that his voice ‘rose clear and distinct above the babblement of the day.” and that Gill, Berridge,
Hervey and Brine “were baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire, setting their faces as a flint—men with whom religion was a transporting passion”1.

**Pleading with sinners in deep emotion**

Far from being ‘high and dry’ when preaching, Gill was very emotional and full of pleading in his urgent delivery. He gave himself to the utmost, often descending the pulpit stairs in exhaustion after his sermon was over. His kind hearers in the pews nearest the pulpit always took a supply of large handkerchiefs with them to the services. As their pastor warmed to the subject, he would sweat profusely and then his hearers would pass handkerchief after handkerchief up to the pulpit so that Gill could wipe his brow and face. A ‘normal’ sermon would be accompanied by three or four handkerchiefs being put to this use. Funeral services tried Gill the most and these were occasions for much laundering after the service!

Gill never preached as if his audience was composed of the perfected saints. His preaching bow was always busy aiming arrows at men in all sorts and conditions of life, now addressing saints and now addressing sinners. He was so proficient at both these tasks that he was regularly chosen as a speaker at ordination services so that he could fit budding preachers out with a deep knowledge of their Great Commission. Gill watched his own pulpit with the eye of an eagle. If he needed a supply preacher, or as in the last two years of his life, someone to take over the task of preaching on account of his failing health, he would scrutinise candidates almost ruthlessly. He would sound them out on the Trinity, especially on their doctrine of Christ. Even if preachers did not pray in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Gill would become suspicious. There were a number of Sabellians, Arians and Socinians who regularly preached in Baptist churches but they soon learnt that Goat Yard, and later Carter Lane were closed to them. This specific care on Gill’s part often made him feel as lonely as Elijah after God’s revelation to him on Carmel and before the prophet heard God’s ‘still small voice’. Writing in 1750 when church growth seemed to have stagnated amongst the Baptists and gospel-preachers were comparatively rare, Gill says:

> The harvest is great, and faithful and painful ministers are few. There are scarcely any that naturally care for the estate and souls of men, and who are heartily concerned for their spiritual welfare: all comparatively seek their own things, their honour and applause from men, their ease, reputation, and riches; and none or few the things that are Jesus Christ’s, or, which relate to His honour, glory, kingdom, and interest in the world. And what adds to the sorrow is, that there are so few rising to fill the places of those that are removed; few that come forth with the same spirit, and are zealously attached to the truths of the everlasting gospel. Blessed be God, there is here and there one that promises usefulness, or otherwise the sorrow and grief at the loss of gospel ministers would be insupportable.2

These words, expressing a longing for labourers to take part in the heavenly harvest, were preached at a funeral service commemorating the life of Samuel Wilson who had represented the Baptists with Gill at the Lime Street lectures.

**The external and the efficacious call**

It was customary for Calvinistic preachers in Gill’s day to distinguish carefully between an external call of the gospel which went out to all men and an effectual call which was for the elect only. Some less experimental preachers confuse this teaching by thinking that the external call provides one gospel for the reprobate, giving them certain secondary privileges worked out by Christ and the effectual call provides gospel for the elect only, conveying to them the full privileges of salvation. This gave rise to the false conception that the full gospel was for already-believers only and thus only believers need hear it. Gill could not accept this two gospel teaching in any way as it ignored completely God’s method of changing sinners into believers which is through preaching world-wide the only gospel entrusted to us. He knew of one full gospel, including all its benefits such as election and preservation which is to be preached to all men, not indiscriminately, but as the Spirit leads. In volume II, Book III, of his *Body of Divinity*, Gill devotes chapter 12 to

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1 See Wright’s *The Life of Augustus M. Toplady* for details of Gill’s influence over the author of Rock of Ages.

2 Taken from a longer extract in Ivimey’s *History of the English Baptists*, vol. 3, 277, 278.
JOHN GILL

the doctrine of the Effectual Call. Embodied in this chapter, Gill gives a three-page definition of the external call, showing that there is, in reality, only one call, the purpose of which is to seek out and save Christ's sheep. He argues in Sermons and Tracts, vol. 3, The Doctrine of Predestination Stated, and The Cause of God and Truth, Section X that this one call comes as a savour of life unto life for those whose time for it to work effectually has come and a savour of death unto death for those who are not, or not yet, chosen to be given faith. Even the elect must wait their turn as the Spirit moves as He will, Gill argues. Thus, though we find Gill speaking of gospel invitations and calls, we never find him using the term 'universal offer' regarding the Gospel as the effectual call is the 'powerful operation of the Spirit on the soul' and is never provided for all men at all times universally. This would indicate a universal view of the atonement quite contrary to Biblical teaching and render the winnowing effect of gospel-preaching superfluous.  

Gill often compared preaching with throwing in the net after the manner described in the account of the miraculous draught of fishes found in John 21. Christ knew where the fish were to be found and the disciples discovered that throwing the net where the risen Lord commanded caught them. The preacher's duty was to fish in the right places, leaving all the success to the Lord. Thus we find Gill throwing in his net and preaching on Matthew 11:28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' and proclaiming freely the Gospel exhortation to come to Christ:

Christ having signified, that the knowledge of God, and the mysteries of grace, are only to be come at through Him, and that He has all things relating to the peace, comfort, happiness, and salvation of men in His hands, kindly invites and encourages souls to come unto Him for the same: by which is meant, not a local coming, or a coming to hear Him preach; for so His hearers, to whom He more immediately directed His speech, were come already; and many of them did, as multitudes may, and do, in this sense, come to Christ, who never knew Him, nor receive any spiritual benefit by Him: nor is it a bare coming under the ordinances of Christ, submission to baptism, or an attendance at the Lord's supper, the latter of which was not yet instituted; and both may be performed by men, who are not yet come to Christ: but it is to be understood of believing in Christ, the going of the soul to Him, in the exercise of grace on Him, of desire after Him, love to Him, faith and hope in Him: believing in Christ, and coming to Him, are terms synonymous, John 6:35. Those who come to Christ aight, come as sinners, to a full, suitable, and able, and willing Saviour; venture their souls upon Him, and trust in Him for righteousness, life, and salvation, which they are encouraged to do, by this kind invitation; which shows His willingness to save, and His readiness to give relief to distressed minds.

An entry in a Marischal College ledger at Aberdeen University shows the record of Mr John Gill's doctorate given and payment of £10 and 10 shillings for the diploma in the year from March 1747 to March 1748.
Preaching and teaching outside of the Baptist churches

By 1729 Gill's fame had spread throughout all Bible-loving churches in all denominations and had reached the Continent and the New World. This caused a number of non-Baptists to argue that Gill's ministry was too good to be restricted to one group of believers and seekers alone. They thus asked Gill if he would be willing to preach weekly at inter-denominational gatherings in halls financed by sponsors. Gill agreed to the proposal and a lecture hall, large enough for the purpose, was found in Great Eastcheap. Here Gill commenced a ministry to the 'other sheep' that was to continue uninterrupted for over twenty-six years. Gill opened the lectures by expounding Psalm 71:16, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness," explaining that he stood there, not in his own strength but in the strength of his Lord, assisted by the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God. His main concern, he argued, was to preach the free justification of sinners by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. This he believed, was the central theme of the Bible as it had been the central theme of the Reformation and was the doctrine by which the Church either stood or fell. This doctrine, to Gill, was the main arch of the bridge over which a burdened sinner must go in his pilgrim's progress from sin to salvation. Gill's words of exhortation in expounding this passage are a passionate plea to 'look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our Faith'. Only when one sees the pure, perfect and spotless righteousness of Christ can one see one's own state and be moved to 'put on Christ' to put on His 'robes of righteousness' which is "better than the best of man's, better than Adam's innocence, or than the angels in heaven." Such a righteousness, he maintains, is "the only law-honouring, justice-satisfying, everlasting one," and is the only righteousness that a child of God can plead before the judgement throne.

Efforts were made to organise further lectures but Gill had little time to concede to all the demands placed upon him as he felt called to a pastoral ministry and not that of an itinerant preacher. Nevertheless, he promised to give a series of lectures at various places on a regular basis, either once a month, twice a year or annually. Most of these lectures provided material for his numerous publications. Gill's work on God's Everlasting Love to His Elect, and their Eternal Union with Christ, originated through the exchange of ideas with Abraham Taylor, a fellow Great Eastcheap lecturer. Gill's perhaps most famous book, The Cause of God and Truth developed from Gill's Wednesday evening lectures. The book, however, would never have been published if it were not for Arminian-cum-Arian Daniel Whitby's book Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points. In 1733 Gill was approached by many friends to answer Whitby's attack on Calvinism and his boast that his arguments were irrefutable, informing him that it was to be reprinted the following year. Gill always maintained that it was Arminianism that was re-opening the doors of Popery in England so he took up the challenge to refute Whitby. In his Foreword to later editions to The Cause of God and Truth, Gill tells his readers:

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increases of Popery was greatly owing to Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

Battling with popish Arminianism

The view that Arminianism gave rise to Popery had not only been shared by the Reformers and the Puritans but also by the pioneers of the Evangelical Awakening such as Toplady and Hervey⁴. Of course this view was not shared by the arch-Arminian Wesley whose statements often show how close he really was to Romanish views. On reading Dr. Stuart's History of Scotland, Wesley proclaimed enthusiastically "He proves beyond all possibility of doubt, that the charges against Queen Mary were totally groundless; that she was betrayed basely by

⁴ See Toplady's article Arminianism charged and proved on the Church of Rome, and Hervey's Eleven Letters against Wesley's attack on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ.
her own servants, from the beginning to the end; and that she was not only one of the best Princesses then in Europe, but one of the most blameless, yea, and the most pious woman”.

It is no wonder that Wesley was called both a Papist and a Jacobite by his opponents for these and many similar remarks!

**Apologetic works**

Gill’s apologetic work on behalf of the Baptists was enormous at this time. Only a few generations before Gill took up his pastorate, the Baptists had been a much despised, misrepresented and even persecuted group and they had rarely had the chance to consolidate themselves as a legal and respectable religious community. They were still finding their feet after generations of suppression and had no framework of a traditional denominational background to support them. Gill marked out, defined and systematised all that modern Baptists take for granted such as the meaning and methods of baptism (The Ancient Mode of Baptism by Immersion, Plunging, or Dipping into Water Maintained and Vindicated, 1726), the Baptists relationship to other Christian bodies and to the state (The Dissenters Reasons for Separating from the Church of England, 1763). As an expert in Hebrew and ancient Jewish writings he was almost without parallel and his work entitled A Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes, 1770 forced the Paedobaptists to completely rethink their position. Other larger works on Baptist principles from Gill’s pen are The divine Right of Infant-Baptism examined and disproved, written against the New-England writer Jonathan Dickinson in 1749; The Arguments from apostolic Tradition in favour of infant-Baptism, 1751; Antipædobaptism: or, Infant-sprinkling an innovation published in 1753; A Reply to Mr Clark ‘s Defence of the Divine right of Infant-Baptism; Baptism a divine commandment to be observed and Infant-Baptism a part and pillar of Popery, all published in 1765. Other fine defences of the faith are found in The Doctrine of the Saints’ Final Perseverance against John Wesley’s Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints and his The Doctrine of Predestination, Stated and Set in the Scripture Light in answer to Wesley’s Predestination calmly considered, which were all published around 1752. The faculty of Marischal College, University of Aberdeen, had long been interested in Gill’s publications and followed the development of his scholarly progress with great interest. This led the Principal, Professor Osborn, encouraged by Prof. Pollock, the Professor of Divinity, to award Gill the degree of Doctor of Divinity in the year 1748. When his Deacons congratulated him on the award, Gill commented, “I never thought it, nor bought it, nor sought it.”

**The move to Carter Lane**

In 1756, the old Goat Yard lease was running out so a church meeting was called on December 20, to seek the Lord’s guidance regarding a new chapel as the aged wooden building was in such a poor state and its enclosed site made necessary extensions impossible. Agreement was quickly reached and by the autumn of the following year the Goat Yard congregation had become the Carter Lane church, occupying a specially-built, tall utility-type chapel not far from their old place of worship. The church was confident that they had a permanent witness to make in the neighbourhood, so they took out a lease for ninety-nine and a quarter years. The new premises surpassed the old by far as the former had been a mere four walls, with not even a vestry. The new chapel had a hall with extensive galleries for the worshippers a separate vestry for the minister and meeting rooms for smaller gatherings. Unlike Goat Yard, Carter Lane had pews fitted almost throughout, except in the immediate pulpit area but the galleries were completely fitted out with pews. There were also a number of rooms under the chapel which could be let out to help finance church affairs. Finding burial facilities for Dissenters was always an embarrassing and expensive business as few Anglican ministers were prepared to open their churchyards to those of other denominational persuasions. Thus an important feature of the chapel construction was special and extensive vault facilities below ground-level where members could be buried.

On the opening day, October 9, Gill preached on Exodus 20:24, “In all places, where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee,” outlining the main points of the Gospel and his calling as pastor. He told his flock:

As we have now opened a new place of worship, we enter upon it, recording the name of the Lord, by preaching the doctrines of the grace of God, and of free and full salvation by Jesus Christ; and by the administration of gospel ordinances,

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5 Ibid., Feb. 5, 1786.
as they have been delivered to us. What doctrines may be taught in this place, after I am gone, is not for me to know; but, as for my own part, I am at a point; I am determined, and have been long ago, what to make the subject of my ministry. It is now upwards of forty years since I entered into the arduous work, and the first sermon I ever preached was from the words of the apostle: ‘For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.’ Through the grace of God, I have been enabled, in some good measure, to abide by the same resolution hitherto, as many of you here are my witnesses; and I hope, through Divine assistance, I ever shall, as long as I am in this tabernacle, and engaged in such work.

After preaching the terrors of the Law in the sermon, Gill goes on to display “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” He then goes on to point his hearers’ gaze to Jesus and exclaims, “What a glorious display of thy perfections is made in the earth, through the preaching of the gospel whereby, in the first times of it, to which this passage belongs, was given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face, or person of Jesus Christ? that is, of the glorious perfections of God, as they are set forth in the person of Christ, and in the work of redemption: and so in the latter day, by the same means, will the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Gill could rarely preach without emphasising the world-wide scope of the Gospel.

Forty years in the same occupation and not tired of it one bit! Yet Gill was to serve the church for another 14 years and when he then told his flock that he must retire and they should find a new pastor, the church became quite alarmed and asked Gill how a loving father could possibly think of giving up his children and how could loving children possibly wish to give up their father.

Opposition from within and without
Not everyone was satisfied with Gill’s ministry. The ‘hyper’ sort of critics called him an Arminian because of his forthright gospel preaching to sinners; others thought he was all too ‘priestly’ in his office. One sister felt ‘called’ to approach her pastor when dressed in gown and bibs and cut off the latter. One old man decided to show his contempt for Gill’s preaching by sitting opposite him in the gallery, grinning in a provocative way to put him off his preaching. When Gill descended the pulpit steps, this old man would rush to meet him, repeating the question for all to hear, “Is this preaching? Is this preaching?” Once when Gill found himself confronted by the old man at the bottom of the pulpit stairs, he decided he had to retaliate. The heckler cried out, “Is this the great Doctor Gill? Is this the great Doctor Gill?” Looking the man straight in the face and pointing to the pulpit, Gill said in a strong and stern voice, “Go up, and do better. Go up, and do better.” The man did not go up, nor did he do better, but he left his pastor in peace ever afterwards.
Sovereign means “supreme in power, independent of and unlimited by any other” (Webster’s dictionary). Is there any we can attribute this to but God?

We have been considering God’s Word and noting the many, many references to God’s choice of sinners in election and His divine call of grace. The verses which follow, indisputably show God as Sovereign, not only in salvation but in all things and in all His ways.

Romans 9:22 “What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.”

Romans 9:13 “As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (v. 11).

Romans 9:21 “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (cp. Isaiah 45:9).

Isaiah 64:8 “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”

Isaiah 45:9 “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! ... Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?”

Isaiah 43:7 “Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him” (v. 21).

Isaiah 45:7 “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things” (v. 12).

Jeremiah 27:5 “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.”

Psalm 100:3 “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.”

Psalm 33:11 “The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (v. 12; Acts 4:27,28).

Luke 4:25-29 (Note in verses 26, 27 “unto none of them”, etc.. Have we not a glimpse of God’s Sovereignty in these verses, in doing according as He wills? Note verses 28, 29; the same thing happens today when God’s Sovereignty is preached).

John 12:39, 40 “Therefore they could not believe ... He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart.”

Romans 11:8 “(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear); unto this day” (v. 7).

Matthew 11:25 “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Luke 10:21, 22).

Matthew 11:27 “… neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”
THE BIBLE TEACHES DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

John 9:39 “And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.”

Romans 9:18 “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”

Proverbs 16:4 “The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil” (Romans 9:22; Job 21:30).

Romans 9:23, 24 “And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called” (v. 29).

Matthew 19:25, 26 “Who then can be saved?... With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Mark 10:26, 27; Luke 18:26, 27).

Romans 9:16 “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

Luke 1:17 “... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (What does this mean? When were they prepared? Look again at Ephesians 1:4).

Matthew 15:13 “But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matthew 16:17).

2 Peter 2:12 “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed” (contrast 1:3).

2 Thessalonians 2:11,12 “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned.” (Is God changeable? James 1:17. Are not God’s decrees all made in eternity and, like God himself, unchangeable? Malachi 3:6. “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him” (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

Hebrews 2:13 “And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” (If God had given all without exception to Christ, then all must or will be saved. Read again John 6:37; 10:29).

Philippians 1:29 “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

Colossians 1:12 “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Hebrews 2:10 “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory.”

Hebrews 6:17 “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel.”

Ephesians 3:11 “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 9:20 “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?”

Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

Matthew 20:23 “But it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

Matthew 16:17 “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

Mark 10:26, 27 “Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith. With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Isaiah 14:24 “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (v 27).

Isaiah 43:21 “This people have I formed for myself” vv. 1, 13; 8:18).

Isaiah 44:24 “Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things” (vv. 1, 2, 18).
New Focus Conference 2015

Datchworth Village Hall
Datchworth Green
Knebworth, Hertfordshire SG3 6TL

Preachers:
Don Fortner (Danville, USA)
Angus Fisher (Shoalhaven, AUS)
Allan Jellett (Knebworth, UK)
Peter Meney (Egglesburn, UK)

TIMES ... CATERING ... NEW & SECONDHAND BOOKS
Services at 7.00pm on Friday 22nd, 2.00pm on Saturday 23rd and 10:30am on Sunday 24th May. Following Sunday morning’s sermon there will be a communion service. There is no charge for the conference. Refreshments on Friday evening, Saturday evening and prior to departure on Sunday are courtesy of Knebworth Grace Church. To assist us with catering we request all those planning to attend to contact 01833 650797 or email: peter@go-newfocus.co.uk. A new and secondhand book stall will be provided by Lorna and Jeremy Roe from Christian Bookshop Ossett.

DIRECTIONS FOR TRAVEL
The B197 runs between Stevenage and Welwyn. From either direction (e.g. A1(M) Jn 7 at Stevenage or A1(M) Jn 6 at Welwyn) follow signs for Knebworth (from Jn 7 follow Ware, then Knebworth signs; from Jn 6 follow Stevenage A1(M) North until you see Knebworth signs but do not re-join A1(M)). In Woolmer Green about a mile south of Knebworth on the B197 take the road signposted Datchworth and Watton (Mardleybury Rd) opposite The Chequers public house. Follow the road for less than a mile into Datchworth. About 150yds after the Datchworth name sign, just past a small triangle junction on the left, the entrance to the village hall is on your left. For Satnav use the postcode or co-ordinates 51.8501N and -0.1638E.

Friday 22nd - Sunday 24th May 2015