

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

JOHN GILL AND THE CHARGE OF HYPER-CALVINISM

One of the most successful Baptist contenders for the truth in the eighteenth century was John Gill (1697-1771), a London pastor who was second to none in the kingdom for scholarly learning and prowess as a preacher. Sadly Gill has faded from the reading of most evangelicals, owing to the fact that his successors held to a radically different view of the gospel. Now he is being rediscovered as the number of publications dealing with him over the last few years show.¹ Something, however, is going seriously wrong. Though contemporary American works, such as Thomas J. Nettle's *By His Grace and for His Glory* and Timothy George's essay on Gill in *Baptist Theologians*, show clearly that Gill was no Hyper-Calvinist but a great Reformed, eighteenth-century defender of orthodoxy and Baptist apologist, he is being displayed in modern British evangelical circles as a Hyper-Calvinist heretic with not an ounce of evangelical acumen in him. Jack Hoad in his book, *The Baptists*, maintains that 'Dr John Gill was the prince of the hypercalvinistic preachers',² calling Hyper-Calvinists those whom he believes adopt 'a supralapsarian view that God's decree of election preceded his decree to permit the Fall of man'.³ Hoad is convinced that it was Gill's influence 'which was a major factor in the retention of a High Calvinist theology' in the Baptist churches.

Peter Naylor, in his history of the Particular Baptist churches entitled *Picking Up a Pin for the Lord*,⁴ equates Hyper-Calvinism with High-Calvinism which he defines as being 'more Calvinistic than Calvin himself'. Of this teaching he says:

'High Calvinism' was a theological system which would appear to have coordinated two denials. First, there was the denial that God calls all who hear about Christ to believe in him; no man is obliged as a matter of duty to trust in Christ as a condition of salvation. This denial applied to both the reprobate and to the elect. The 'reprobate' are all those who were not originally chosen in Christ before the world began, for whom Christ did not die, who will be left in their sinful state by God, and who therefore will never repent and believe. The 'elect' are all those who were originally chosen by the Father to form the church of God, for whom Christ did die, and who will certainly come to a living faith in the Saviour. The reasoning was that if God alone can, and sometimes does, give repentance and faith, such should be demanded of no man, whoever he might be; sovereign grace is irresistible. Second, high Calvinism denied that it is the responsibility of the churches to call upon all men indiscriminately to repent and to believe in Christ for the salvation of their souls.⁵

Naylor further maintains, 'high Calvinism denied that a person insensitive to his sinfulness should ever be summoned to conversion' and affirms that, 'This approach rested firmly upon the dogma that fallen humanity is beset by an inability to turn from sin and turn to God. So what men cannot do in their own strength, they need

not do.’⁶

Naylor’s words concerning Gill in relation to High/Hyper-Calvinism are worthy of note. Although he considers a statement by John Ryland, jun., who denied that Brine, Toplady and Gill met Naylor’s definition of a Hyper-Calvinist, and although he quotes the Baptist historian Ivimey who believed that Gill’s ‘correct statements’ were misunderstood by some of his followers, Naylor still holds that, ‘Among the Baptists of the period, John Gill was *without doubt*⁷ the most prominent exponent of high Calvinism’. He then goes on to quote Lewis Weyman and John Brine to prove *their* Hyper-Calvinism, leaving the reader with the impression that Naylor need not quote proof of Gill’s Hyper-Calvinism as no one could possibly doubt it. This approach, which Nettles calls ‘guilt by association’,⁸ is symptomatic of much modern criticism of Gill, as witnessed by articles on Hyper-Calvinism from the pens of Robert Oliver, Robert Sheehan and Peter Toon.⁹ These writers also see Gill as one of the leading exponents of Hyper-Calvinism but they are very sparing in the evidence they produce against him, preferring rather to bundle him with other alleged Hyper-Calvinistic pastors such as John Stevens and W. J. Styles, whom they quote at great length. Toon seems to have especially influenced modern critics of Gill. Michael Watts in *The Dissenters*, for instance, quotes no original documents in his criticism of Gill but relies mainly on twenty pages of information culled from Toon where, again, no works of Gill are dealt with. Toon seeks to prove that Gill is a Hyper-Calvinist because of his, sometimes very scant, association with other writers, including, of all people, Witsius.¹⁰

Naylor regards those whom he takes to be Hyper-Calvinists-cum-High-Calvinists as being suspect of Antinomianism because he believes they incline ‘to the view that repentance is not necessary for salvation; sin does not have to be given up’.¹¹ He argues that they see man’s incapacity to repent as a natural limitation rather than as ‘a culpable evil arising from a perverted and sinful heart’.¹² Naylor admits that there is no strong proof of his inkling that High-Calvinists were Antinomians but says, ‘it is all very suspicious’, obviously believing that, when all is said and done, the cap fits. H. C. Vedder states dogmatically that Gill’s theology can ‘with difficulty be distinguished from fatalism and antinomianism’.¹³

Gill, who always stressed that being justified meant ‘having been accounted righteous’ rather than ‘having attained righteousness’, is often called a Hyper-Calvinist because of his doctrine of the eternal justification of the elect. Naylor, again, comes to the fore here and, in presenting a rather defective view of Gill’s doctrine, he argues that, ‘there were serious defects in this area of Gill’s teaching’.¹⁴ Quoting from *The Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ*,¹⁵ Naylor presents Gill as stressing the activity of God rather than that of man in cold election but fails to highlight Gill’s doctrine of the eternal love of Christ for his Bride which is the essential feature of Gill’s doctrine of justification. This Gill outlined in *The Doctrines of God’s Everlasting Love to His Elect, and Their Eternal Union with Christ* (1732). Nor does Naylor pay due attention to Gill’s doctrine of the two natures of Christian man and the fact that Christ, slain from the

foundation of the world, imputes his own righteousness to his Bride: again, essential factors which must be dealt with in any analysis of Gill's doctrine of justification.

The terms Hyper-Calvinism and High-Calvinism used by these critics of Gill's preaching and teaching cover a host of ideas, which, if all are true, might substantiate the conclusion of another writer, that Gill's teaching was 'a deviation from biblical Christianity'.¹⁶ If all that they associate with Hyper-Calvinism is taken into account, the subject of this paper, John Gill, was a supralapsarian, who taught that God does not call all who hear about Christ to believe in him. Furthermore he believed that no man, whether elect or reprobate, is obliged as a matter of duty to trust in Christ as a condition of salvation. Moreover, he denied that a person insensitive to his sinfulness should ever be summoned to conversion because fallen humanity is beset by an inability to turn from sin and turn to God. He is also suspected of being an Antinomian, denying that repentance is necessary for salvation and refusing to believe that sin must be given up. Gill is also viewed as a Hyper-Calvinist because his view of justification is defective. All this alleged heresy forced Gill and his flock, it is argued, to lose their evangelistic impulse, resulting in declining vigour in the churches under his influence. These serious accusations must now be looked at in detail and the evidence carefully sifted. Was Gill guilty of unbiblical or, indeed, unchristian teaching or was he God's clarion-caller to his age, as this writer believes?

SUPRALAPSARIANISM

Anyone who accuses anybody of being Hyper-Calvinistic on the grounds of Supralapsarianism is treading on thin ice and leaving solid biblical and even rational reasoning for metaphysical abstractions. The term Supralapsarian, as its supposed opposite Sublapsarianism (also called Infralapsarianism) were coined by Dutch academics during the Arminian Controversy in an attempt to understand the relationship between God's eternal decrees and their outworking in history. The pivoting point appears to be whether the elect and reprobate were ordained as such before the idea of a *lapsus*, i.e. Fall, entered God's mind or whether God ordained the reprobate and elect after taking the Fall into consideration. Supralapsarians, it is alleged, are those who place election as first and foremost in rank and time in God's mind and only subsequently creation and the Fall. Gill's modern critics seem to be indebted to Cramp for the idea that Gill was a supralapsarian as he states that Brine and Gill were, 'Supralapsarians, holding that God's election was irrespective of the fall of man'.¹⁷ Cramp quotes no primary sources to back up his argument.

The Sublapsarians are said to believe that God adjusted his ideas of reprobation and election to tie in with the outcome of the Fall. Critics of these schemes say that the Supralapsarians teach that God thus willed the Fall in order to display his grace in election and his wrath against sin in reprobation, whereas Sublapsarians are accused of teaching that God permitted man to fall, though he could have stopped it. Both the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian schemes have no place for the idea that God ordained sin and is thus its author, though Supralapsarians are accused of

believing so.

It must be stressed that such speculative theology was not intended by the Dutch divines as a yardstick for orthodoxy and certainly not to distinguish Hyper-Calvinism from Calvinism. The Dutchmen simply strove to define what plain, ordinary Calvinism was. If they had stuck to Calvin's *Institutes*, they would have been better served and made better use of their time. Philip Schaff in his eight-volumed *History of the Christian Church* perhaps makes the most sensible comment when he says, 'The difference between the two schools is practically worthless, and only exposes the folly of man's daring to search the secrets of God's eternal counsel'.¹⁸ Apart from the folly of analysing God's pre-creation thoughts, there is the even greater folly of trying to sort them out in a chronological or pre-historical order before time and history began! Thus, whether a person is presumed a Supralapsarian or a Sublapsarian, this has nothing to do with his orthodoxy as a Christian.

Hoad links Hyper-Calvinism closely with Supralapsarianism and seems to suggest that the one is a definition of the other. Whether Gill was a Supralapsarian or not, however, is irrelevant to the question of whether he was a Hyper-Calvinist or not. This is especially the case as many writers look upon Calvin as a Supra-lapsarian himself! Schaff dismisses the relevancy of such theory-building; nevertheless, he argues guardedly that because Calvin taught that the Fall cannot be excluded from God's decrees and that it is futile to distinguish between what God wills and what God permits, Calvin 'must be classed rather with the Supra-lapsarians'.¹⁹ Louis Berkoff, in his standard work *Systematic Theology*, agrees fully with Schaff about the speculative nature of both terms. Berkoff, however, is prepared to state dogmatically that 'Calvin was clearly a Supralapsarian'.²⁰ He says this is because of Calvin's teaching that the Fall was included in the divine decrees. Thus rather than being 'more Calvinistic than Calvin', to use Naylor's definition culled from Fuller, in the point of Supralapsarianism, if Gill were a Supralapsarian he would be quite 'as Calvinistic as Calvin' and because of this could hardly be called a Hyper-Calvinist or even High-Calvinist.

Gill was too experienced a theologian to adopt speculative theories of the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian kind and would certainly never have entered into the debate were he not pulled into it by writers who preferred to speculate about God's pre-creation, extra-biblical thoughts, rather than learn God's will through the Scriptures. In 1736 a man called Job Burt attacked Gill with a pamphlet entitled *Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme Examined*, which did not carry his name. It is clear in Burt's booklet that he views Gill as a Supralapsarian, but it is also very clear that Burt had not the foggiest idea what Supralapsarianism was, confusing it constantly with what was traditionally seen as Sublapsarianism. The main accusation against Gill appears to be that he allegedly refused to pray for the pardon of sin,²¹ thus displaying himself as a Supralapsarian Antinomian.

Gill clearly regarded Burt as a sciolist, but people were reading Burt and as he was spreading unscriptural ideas concerning God's everlasting love for his elect and his plan of justification for man, Gill felt he must reply with a tract called *Truth*

Defended. In it he denies allegations that his denomination has Supralapsarianism as its fundamental article of faith but shows, nevertheless, how both Sublapsarians and Supralapsarians hold to the doctrine of election as ‘an eternal act of God: that it is unconditional, irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works, as causes and conditions of it; and that it entirely springs from the good-will and pleasure of God’. Gill then explains, quoting original sources, that the Dutch Contra-Remonstrants were not all of one mind concerning how Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism were to be defined, nor did they think it of any importance concerning church unity. He argues that we are not to consider God’s plan of salvation, formed in eternity, as a this-happens-before-that event, each event being chronologically and logically subordinate to the preceding event, and decreed because of it, in a cause and effect sequence. God’s plan of salvation is a co-ordinated complete plan made before the foundation of the world, Gill argues, putting his finger on the weaknesses of both systems under dispute.

On reading Gill’s meticulous criticism of Burt and his outline of the agreements and disagreements between the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian schemes, it becomes obvious that Gill accepts positions in both at times as being scriptural and rejects positions in both at times as being unscriptural. Contrary to those writers who believe Gill is a Supralapsarian and therefore a Hyper-Calvinist, Gill, at times comes down soundly in the Sublapsarian corner. Burt is obviously under the impression that Supralapsarianism teaches that ‘we were not elected as holy and obedient beings, but to the end we might be such’. Gill, however, accepts this teaching but says of it, ‘I am much mistaken if this is not the settled opinion of all Sublapsarians, except such as are in the Arminian scheme’. Burt had criticized Gill for believing in justification from eternity as if this were a Supralapsarian heresy. To this Gill says, ‘I must confess, I never considered justification from eternity any other than a Sublapsarian doctrine, proceeding upon the suretyship engagements of Christ, and his future satisfaction and righteousness; upon which foot the Old-Testament-saints were openly justified, and went to heaven long before the satisfaction was really made, or the justifying righteousness brought in; and indeed, if the objects of justification are the ungodly, as the scripture presents them to be, they must be considered as fallen creatures’.²²

The above brief account of Gill’s very lengthy exposition of his relationship to Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian beliefs is sufficient to show how wary one must be of putting tags and titles on one’s supposed opponents. Gill was certainly no man’s man and reserved the right to be independent from all cliché attachments whilst being fully dependent on the Scriptures. It is interesting to note that Augustus Toplady, a close friend of Gill’s, was convinced that his friend was a thorough Sublapsarian and this is obviously the conclusion of Gill’s only biographer of note, Dr John Rippon.²³ This being the case, it is obviously as futile to brand Gill a Supralapsarian as it is to consider Supralapsarians as being by their very nature Hyper-Calvinists.

THE GOSPEL CALL AND DUTY FAITH

A Hyper-Calvinist, Gill's major critics say, does not believe that God calls indiscriminately all who hear about Christ to believe in him. They say this, holding that man is obliged as a matter of duty to trust in Christ as a condition of salvation. It is odd that this opinion is often closely associated with Gill for several reasons. First, this view applied to Gill is an anachronism as the idea of saving faith being the known duty and within the natural ability of all men reached its fullest expression in 1785 with the publication of Andrew Fuller's controversial book, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. Gill, however, died in 1771, thus obviously having nothing to do with the debate that tore the Baptist churches apart after the book was published. The second reason is that during the early part of the eighteenth century the view of what came to be called duty-faith, formerly propagated by Anglican Latitudinarians such as Tillotson,²⁴ was gaining ground amongst the Independents, but Gill, a Baptist, maintained that he did not take part in this debate.²⁵ Even Andrew Fuller believed that Gill did not enter into the controversy²⁶ and John Ryland, jun., quoting Gill's *The Cause of God and Truth*, argued that Gill never wrote on the subject of 'the Modern Question'²⁷ and exonerates him from taking the usual Hyper-Calvinist stand.²⁸ John Rippon assumes that Gill did enter the debate in later life because of certain 'corrections' he made to his book, *The Cause of God and Truth*. Rippon, however, does not state what these 'corrections' are and how they might have applied to the debate in question.²⁹

In *The Cause of God* Gill clearly stresses the Christian duty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to call and command sinners to repent.³⁰ All men are naturally bound to repent, argues Gill, because they have naturally broken the law. Commanding them to repent is putting them under the curse of the law which they have broken in their natural state. To Gill, this is a law-ordained need for repentance in the legal sense. What man has broken, he has a duty to mend. This does not mean, however, that man can mend what he has broken and obtain legal righteousness, but he is still a debtor to the law for having broken it. The law forces its demands on every one because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. What Gill calls evangelical repentance is for him another matter. He sees evangelical repentance as a turning from sin to receive pardon in Christ. This kind of turning from sin to Christ can only come about by a sovereign act of God's goodness which leads to true repentance and Gospel righteousness.

Calvin taught likewise that there was an 'antithesis between Legal and Gospel [i.e. evangelical] righteousness'. Quoting Romans 10:5-9, he argues that there is a righteousness which is according to the Law described by Moses, 'that the man who doeth these things shall live by them'. This is quite different from the righteousness of faith which says, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Calvin then adds,

Do you see how he makes the distinction between the Law and the Gospel to

be, that the former gives justification to works, whereas the latter bestows it freely without any help from works? This is a notable passage, and may free us from many difficulties if we understand that the justification which is given to us by the Gospel is free from any terms of Law. It is for this reason he more than once places the promise in diametrical opposition to the Law. 'If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise' (Gal.3.18).³¹

Nevertheless, Gill's teaching was quite misunderstood by Andrew Fuller who drew consequences from it which certainly did not reflect Gill's thoughts when referring to the Christian's duty to evangelize. Writing to John Ryland, jun., in 1809, Fuller says, 'The principle writings with which I was first acquainted, were those of Bunyan, Gill and Brine. I had read pretty much of Dr Gill's Body of Divinity, and from many parts of it had received considerable instruction. I perceived, however, that the system of Bunyan was not the same with his; for that, while he maintained the doctrines of election and predestination, he, nevertheless, held with the free offer of salvation to sinners, without distinction.'³² He goes on to imply that as a result of following Gill rather than Bunyan, 'Those exhortations to repentance and faith, therefore, which are addressed in the New Testament to the unconverted, I supposed to refer only to such external repentance and faith as were within their power, and might be complied with without the grace of God. The effect of these views was, that I had very little to say to the unconverted, indeed nothing in a way of exhortation to things spiritually good, or certainly connected with salvation.'³³ In the same letter, however, Fuller confesses to being positively influenced by John Martin who held very similar views to Gill's. It seems strange that Fuller accepted the Gospel coming from Martin but did not accept Gill's identical picture of it. The rest of the letter discloses possible evidence why. Fuller claims that he had been initially influenced by John Johnson of Liverpool, but then rejected his ideas. Johnson, who became a Modalist, influenced a number of members at Fuller's church in Soham so that several developed Sabellian and Arian doctrines and the Hyper-Calvinistic minister, Mr Eve, a lover of Johnson, had to leave because of his extreme views and fruitless ministry. Johnson was far more severe than Gill regarding the free offer and taught that as faith was a gift and not a duty, unbelief was not a sin. It seems that Fuller confused Johnson's teaching with that of Gill, as was quite common at the time.³⁴ Fuller also confessed to having been influenced in his understanding of the gospel by reading the works of John Edwards of Cambridge (1737-1716), which he found 'good', obviously mistaking the Cambridge man for Jonathan Edwards of New England, who had been recommended to him by his friend, Robert Hall, sen., of Arnesby. One scholarly work links John Edwards with the Cambridge Neo-Platonists.³⁵ This could explain why Fuller emphasizes the figurative nature of penal redemption and imputation in his theology, rather than their historical vicarious aspect, and stresses natural abilities and duties to strive for higher things. It is interesting to note that the modern critics of Gill quoted above invariably follow Fuller's interpretation of Gill's theology of evangelism. A case in point is Robert Oliver's recent censure of Gill where he

states: 'Gill made his own position quite clear in 1752, when he wrote: ". . . that there are universal offers of grace and salvation made to all men, I utterly deny'.³⁶

This short quotation, removed from its contextual and even syntactical position, has been passed on from writer to writer and has been used as the major, and in most cases the only, proof that Gill was a Hyper-Calvinist with a false view of evangelism, causing him never to exhort sinners to repentance and faith. The words so chosen are used to suggest that Gill left possible reprobates out of his general offers of grace but Gill is not arguing in that direction at all. He is claiming that saints and sinners alike are never called universally, *en bloc*, to salvation or judgement but always particularly, in God's good time. Given the wider context, however, Gill's words can hardly be used as evidence that he had left the realms of orthodoxy.³⁷ Rather than denying evangelism, Gill is actually emphasizing evangelism's importance and scope within the world-wide strategy of the Holy Spirit. The pastor-scholar thus says:

The gospel is indeed ordered to be preached to every creature to whom it is sent and comes; but as yet, it has never been brought to all the individuals of human nature; there have been multitudes in all ages that have not heard it. And that there are universal offers of grace and salvation made to all men, I utterly deny; nay, I deny that they are made to any; no, not to God's elect; grace and salvation are provided for them in the everlasting covenant, procured for them by Christ, published and revealed in the gospel, and applied by the Spirit.³⁸

The context here is very important and very particular. Gill is here defending Christ's effectual call of his sheep and writing specifically against Whitby's and Wesley's teaching concerning a universal atonement and their theory that all have been atoned for and thus all are in a position to respond to the gospel when this is indiscriminately offered on a take-it or leave-it basis. Gill rejects this kind of evangelism, saying that though we are ordered to preach the gospel to every creature, the Spirit guides us to his own and these are effectually called. The Spirit speaks to particular sinners, at particular times and in particular places, making them 'sensible' to their lost situation and draws them to himself. The Spirit, however, moves where *he* will at the time *he* determines. This means that even the elect must await their turn before being effectually called.

In *The Cause of God*, Gill makes it quite plain that the gospel is to be preached to all, as the Spirit leads, but it comes as 'a savour of death unto death' for some and 'a savour of life unto life' for Christ's Bride.³⁹ Gill specifically emphasizes that he is not denying the use of 'calls, invitations, and messages of God to men by his ministers', but maintaining that such calls, etc., are 'not sufficient in themselves, without powerful grace, to produce true faith in Christ, evangelical repentance towards God, and new spiritual obedience, in life and conversation'. Gill can argue in this way because he believes that there is a two-fold call in evangelism. First there is the internal effectual call which is the 'powerful operation of the Spirit of

God on the soul', which cannot be resisted, then there is the external call by the ministry of the Word which 'may be resisted, rejected and despised, and become useless'. Such teaching, when compared with Calvin's exposition of God's call in Book II, Chapter XXIV of his *Institutes*, reflects fully the heart of Calvinism. Even Andrew Fuller acknowledged Gill's evangelistic outreach at times; in fact, modern Fullerites tend to be far more critical of Gill than Fuller himself.⁴⁰

THE INSENSITIVITY AND INABILITY OF MAN

Next, the suspicion that Gill denied that a person insensitive to his sinfulness should ever be summoned to conversion, arguing that fallen humanity is beset by an inability to turn from sin and turn to God, must be dealt with, particularly as it is assumed that such a denial reveals a Hyper-Calvinist behind it. One of Gill's earliest writings was a declaration of faith which he drew up and entered into his church-book at the start of his ministry. Paragraph Four of the *Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ in Carter Lane, Southwark* reads:

We believe that God created the first man, Adam, after his image, and in his likeness, an upright, holy, and innocent creature, capable of serving and glorifying him: but he sinning, all his posterity sinned in him, and came short of the glory of God; the guilt of whose sin is imputed; and a corrupt nature derived to all his offspring descending from him by ordinary and natural generation: that they are by their first birth carnal and unclean; averse to all that is good, incapable of doing any, and prone to every sin: and are also by nature children of wrath, and under a sentence of condemnation; and so are subject, not only to a corporal death, and involved in a moral one, commonly called spiritual; but are also liable to an eternal death, as considered in the first Adam, fallen sinners; from all which there is no deliverance, but by Christ, the second Adam.⁴¹

Of special note here is the fact that Gill sees the Fall as permeating the very being and nature of man and not merely his will to believe. Man is physically, spiritually and morally fallen. He cannot serve God of himself either in body, soul, or spirit. Much later in his ministry, Gill had still not moved an inch from this position. Expounding John 5.40, 'And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life', he says:

These words are so far from being expressive of the power and liberty of the will of man to come to Christ,⁴² that they rather declare the perverseness and stubbornness of it; that man has no desire, inclination, or will, to go to Christ for life, but rather go anywhere else, than to him. Man is *stout-hearted*, and *far from the righteousness* of Christ, and submission to it; is not *subject to the law of God*, nor the Gospel of Christ; nor *can he be*, till God works in him both *to will and to do of his good pleasure*; or until he is made *willing in the day of his power*. No one can come to Christ, except the Father draw him; nor has he a will to it, unless it is wrought in him.⁴³

Again of special note here is the fact that man, according to Gill, in spite of his inability to come to Christ because of his sin, is responsible for not doing so. He thus adds:

Though man lies under such a disability, and has neither power nor will of himself to come to Christ, when revealed in the external ministry of the gospel, as God's way of salvation, is criminal and blame-worthy; since the disability and perverseness of his will are not owing to any decree of God, but to the corruption and vitiosity of his nature, through sin; and therefore, since this vitiosity of nature is blame-worthy; for *God made man upright*, though *they have sought out many inventions*, which have corrupted their nature; that which follows upon it, and is the effect of it, must be so too.

Perhaps the strongest biblical argument for the insensitiveness and inability of fallen man to understand the gospel is I Corinthians 2.14, which Gill expounded in his *Cause of God and Truth*. 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'.⁴⁴ It is clear to Gill that this proves conclusively that the gospel of Christ can only be a stumbling block and foolishness to unconverted ears unless they are attended with a demonstration of the Spirit and power such as is shown when Christ's elect hear his voice and follow him.

Seeing that such writers as Naylor maintain that a Hyper-Calvinist is one who views man's incapacity to repent as a natural limitation rather than as 'a culpable evil arising from a perverted and sinful heart', there are no grounds for calling Gill a Hyper-Calvinist on this count as the Baptist scholar's views were fully orthodox. Concerning Gill's position reflected in his 1729 statement of faith, Timothy George writes, 'Bunyan and Keach before him, and Fuller and Spurgeon after him, could have embraced without reservation Gill's congregational confession which, in reality, was merely an abstract of the 1689 Second London Confession'.⁴⁵ Nettles even argues that Gill was less radical in certain points of theology than Bunyan and Keach!⁴⁶

ANTINOMIANISM

Most of Gill's critics have difficulty in demonstrating outright that Gill was an Antinomian but they nevertheless link him strongly with that faction. Hoad connects Antinomianism directly with the Particular Baptists and says that it was Gill's 'influence which was a major factor in the retention of a "High Calvinist theology" of a substantial part of those churches'.⁴⁷ Naylor maintains that Hyper-Calvinism is a 'benign form of Antinomianism' and quotes Augustus Montague Toplady in his definition of what an Antinomian believes, i.e.

That believers are released from all obligation to observe the moral law as a rule of external obedience: That, in consequence of Christ's having wrought out a justifying righteousness for us, we have nothing to do, but to sit down, eat, drink, and be merry; that the Messiah's merits supersede the necessity of

personal inherent sanctification.⁴⁸

Naylor's choice of Toplady in defining Antinomianism is most odd. Toplady was one of John Gill's most intimate friends and regarded Gill as a pastor, scholar and brother in Christ *par excellence*. Furthermore, Toplady stressed that Gill was the one person who, in face of the perpetual Arminian accusation of being an Antinomian, had shown that 'the Doctrine of Grace does not lead to Licentiousness'⁴⁹ and that 'his moral demeanour was more than blameless'.⁵⁰ As Naylor accepts Toplady's definition of Antinomians uncritically, one would have expected him to have also respected Toplady's view of who was morally blameless.

Gill was often maliciously accused of Antinomianism, especially by the Arminians, throughout his Christian life. One of his most prolific antagonists in this matter was Dr Abraham Taylor, an Independent pastor and college lecturer. Taylor had continually accused Gill of being against good works and thus an Antinomian, and Gill had written a long letter to him explaining that he was nothing of the kind. Taylor never replied to this letter. Six years later a work was published which Taylor thought showed severe signs of Antinomianism. Though the work bore the name of the author, which was not Gill, Taylor immediately associated Gill with the work, claiming that he was the author under an assumed name. Without checking his suspicions, Taylor produced a pamphlet which he named *An Address to young Students of Divinity, by way of Caution against some Paradoxes, which lead to Doctrinal Antinomianism*. The work was a monstrous display of abuse in which no vulgarism was considered too low to be levelled at Gill. The Calvinist, faced with the Arminian's dirt-throwing, could only say, 'When these ill names and hard words are taken out, there is very little left for me to reply to'. Nevertheless, Gill replied as Taylor's message in his pamphlet made true holiness an impossibility and attributed to man what only God can provide.

In his reply, entitled *The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation Considered*, Gill opens by disclaiming any connection whatsoever with the work Taylor assumed was his, stating that there is not a line in it from his pen and that he did not know of the book until it appeared in print. Regarding Antinomianism, Gill defines it as 'a denying, or setting aside the law of God, as a rule of life, action, or conversation'. As Taylor is obviously calling Gill an Antinomian because he does not believe that good works move God to save the good worker, Gill protests:

Though we say, that works are not necessary to salvation; do we say, that they are not necessary to anything else? Do we say, that they are not necessary to be done in obedience to the law of God? Do we say, that the commands of the law are not to be regarded by men? That they are things indifferent, that may be done, or not done? No; we say none of these things, but all the reverse. Do we make void the law through this doctrine? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law, as it is in the hands of Christ our Lawgiver; to which we desire to yield a cheerful obedience; to show our subjection to him as King of saints, and to testify our gratitude for the many

blessings of every kind we receive from him.⁵¹

Regarding good works, Gill tells Taylor:

That they are necessary to be done, or ought to be done, by all that hope to be saved by the grace of our lord Jesus Christ, is readily granted; but not in point of salvation, in order to that, or with a view to obtain it. Good works are necessary to be done, on account of the divine ordination and appointment; for such as are the *workmanship* of God are *created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that they should walk in them*. They are necessary, *necessitate precepti & debiti*, on account of the will and command of God, and of that obedience we owe to God, both as creatures, and as new creatures. They are necessary upon the score of obligation we lie under to him, and in point of gratitude for the numerous mercies we receive from him, and that by them both we and others may glorify him our father which is in heaven. They are necessary to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, to recommend religion to others, to testify the truth of our faith, and give evidence of the reality of internal holiness. They are necessary for the good of our neighbours, and for the stopping of the mouths of our enemies.⁵²

After such a testimony, it would seem a sheer impossibility to accuse Gill of being an Antinomian who saw no need for good works. This is also the conclusion of Timothy George who emphasizes that ‘Anyone who has examined Gill’s *Body of Practical Divinity* or looked at his sermons on *The Law Established by the Gospel* (1756) and *The Law in the Hand of Christ* (1761) will know how spurious is the charge of antinomianism against him.’⁵³

ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION

Gill’s doctrine of eternal justification was rejected by the Fuller-Hall school of later years as being a product of a Hyper-Calvinistic, Particular Baptist era in which Gill’s teaching had ‘almost oracular quality’.⁵⁴ Fuller, as Graham Harrison shows in his *Dr Gill and his teaching*, looked upon what he called ‘the sentence of justification’ as being merely ‘the voice of God in the Gospel, declaring that whosoever believeth shall be saved’. Justification has thus nothing to do with ‘a purpose in the Divine mind’.⁵⁵ Now justification, for Gill, was certainly something far greater and more specific than a general invitation to believe with no fixed purpose involved in the Divine mind. It was the gracious lifting of the sentence of certain death on certain individuals and the salvation of certain souls which had been God’s fixed purpose since before the world began, motivated by ‘the going forth of his heart in love to them, and thereby uniting them to himself’.⁵⁶ This ‘going out in love’ resulted in ‘The union of God’s elect unto him, their adoption by him, justification before him, and acceptance with him, being eternal, internal and immanent acts in God.’⁵⁷

Justification with regards to the eternal mind of God was not Gill’s full teaching on the subject. He argued, in his treatise entitled *Of other and immanent Acts in*

God, particularly Adoption and Justification, that both adoption and justification are enacted in 'a variety of degrees', namely in divine predestination, in Christ and then in believers themselves.⁵⁸ These varieties display God's activity in what he calls 'active justification', i.e. 'it is God that justifies', and what he calls 'passive justification', which is 'the act of God, terminating on the conscience of the believer'. Faith for Gill has no causal part in justification but is 'a transient declarative act terminating on the conscience of the believer', calling him to the knowledge and comfort of what God has pre-ordained for him.' Thus, although Gill insists that justification is eternal, in that it is eternally in the divine will, he can also argue that faith is 'a pre-requisite to the knowledge and comfort of it, and to a claim of interest in it; and this is readily allowed, that no man is evidently and declaratively justified until he believes.'⁵⁹

Here, as in the question of Antinomianism, Gill's main contemporary antagonist was Abraham Taylor who argued that Gill, because of his doctrine of eternal justification, taught that Christ always regarded his Bride as sinless and was thus never angry with her because of her sin. Gill confesses to believing absolutely that Christ saw no sin in his Bride and claims that it is one of the most comforting of his beliefs and is what makes the Gospel good news to him. This, however, does not mean that there is no sin in believers and God was thus never angry with them. In his *God's Everlasting love to His Elect and their Eternal Union with Christ*, Gill deals with this problem under four heads, arguing first that sin is in all believers and if a man says he has no sin, he deceives himself.⁶⁰ Second, sin is not only in the saints but is sadly actively committed by them as 'there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not'.⁶¹ In conjunction with this second point Gill admits that the Bible also says that 'whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, because he is born of God';⁶² Gill explains this apparent contradiction by outlining the Biblical teaching of the two Adams, the New Adam, who does not commit sin, indwelling the old creature in Adam who cannot but commit sin. This doctrine of the two Adams is at the heart of Pauline teaching and very much Gill's but it is overlooked by the bulk of Gill's critics, as is also his doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness, which is so closely allied to it.⁶³ For Gill, no holiness was possible without the perfect indwelling Christ in the new creature which was the outcome and outworking of Christ's imputing his own righteousness in his otherwise unrighteous Bride.

Thirdly, Gill argues that, though believers are justified from all sin by Christ's righteousness imputed to them, sin is still in their old nature and will remain there until death and the putting on of the resurrection body. Fourthly, Gill explains that the work of sanctification will thus never be complete in this life, which is a life of grace and would not be such if the old man had become perfect.

Next, Gill challenges the idea of God behind any human statement that God *could not* see the sin of his people. Quoting Job 34.21-22, 'His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings; there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves', he shows that God's not seeing is with

the eye of justice as he no longer has cause to punish his people. This does not mean that God deals with his children like an over-indulgent Father with spoilt brats. Whom he loves, he chastens and makes it quite clear that, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgements; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.'⁶⁴ Thus no one, not even God himself, can lay anything to the charge of God's elect as God himself has justified them in Christ. Their trespasses have been laid to Christ's charge and he has made satisfaction for them, sinners as they still are. This does not mean that God is not angry when his children sin and closes his eyes to rid himself of the responsibility. There will always be a need for his chastening rod, Gill argues, until the elect are gathered in at the end of time.

Taylor, striving to place Gill in the Antinomian camp, argued that those of a former century who allegedly believed in eternal justification were Antinomians, therefore Gill must be one too. Gill had no difficulty in showing Taylor that such alleged Antinomians as Eaton, Saltmarsh and Crisp did not hold to the doctrine of eternal justification at all, whereas Taylor's own father, Richard Taylor, a theologian of no mean moral calibre, did!

Gill, no 'lone-runner' by any means in his doctrine of eternal justification, follows Witsius, Macovius, Ames, Hoornbeck and Goodwin closely. Because of this support from other completely orthodox men, Harrison warns against dismissing this doctrine 'with a contemptuous wave of the theological hand', also pointing out that Gill's 'desire was to give to the Lord all the glory and the credit that was due to His most holy name'.⁶⁵ George also gives Gill a fair hearing here and realizes that the doctrine was safe in Gill's balanced hands but finds it 'perilous' for those who might misuse it to believe that they are justified irrespective of their personal response to Christ.

GILL'S PRESUMED LACK OF VIGOUR IN EVANGELISM

It is very difficult to conceive that anyone familiar with the ministry of John Gill could accuse him of being without vigour in preaching the Gospel to sinful man. Gill's church in Carter Lane was renowned throughout the country for the power of gospel preaching which was maintained in it and John Rippon, who succeeded Gill in the pastorate, and William Button, who published his sermons, tell of the influence of his message of joyful Christian experience which spread far and wide amongst the Baptists and influenced 'all the evangelical denominations at home and abroad'. Furthermore, Gill was one of the very few Baptist preachers who took a very active part in working with Anglican Calvinists who were pioneering the Great Awakening in the middle eighteenth century. James Hervey, who is attributed with pastoring the first evangelical Anglican parish in the Midlands, received ever new impulses from Gill's sermons and theological works and snatched up his books with the print fresh on them whenever he could. To him, Gill's message was 'such a rich and charming

display of the glories 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'.⁶⁶ Hervey highlights the beauty of Gill's language in spreading the good news of Christ's love for sinners. Judging by the way modern writers speak of Gill, one would imagine that he was as dry as dust and boringly analytical and systematic. Nothing could be further from the truth! Gill's language is indeed often a warm, even poetic, appeal to the heart. Reading his exposition of the Song of Solomon is a transportation into the heavenly language of true love, full of vigour and commitment.

Augustus Montague Toplady also found none in England to challenge Gill as a scholar-pastor and preacher. The huge list of subscribers to Gill's books bears the names of many evangelical leaders in a good number of Christian denominations. Furthermore, Gill stands alone in the Baptist denominations as one who wrote extensively on almost every branch of evangelical theology and these works - almost in their massive entirety - are still in print today and still available to lovers of true evangelistic theology.

Those critics who imagine that Gill refused to preach repentance and conversion need take note of what Gill actually did preach and teach on the subject. Two of Gill's favourite texts were Isaiah 24.16, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth', and II Chronicles 16.9, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him'. Time and time again he refers to his duty to gather together Christ's sheep who were scattered abroad. Preaching at the induction of John Davis, Gill told him, 'Souls sensible to sin and danger, and who are crying out, What shall we do to be saved? you are to observe, and point out Christ the tree of life to them; and say, . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'. He goes on to stress, 'Your work is to lead men, under a sense of sin and guilt, to the blood of Christ, shed for many for the remission of sin, and in his name you are to preach the forgiveness of them'. Who can mistake his evangelical objectives when he urges the Gospel minister to 'Be faithful, labour to shew the one and the other their wretched state by nature; the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in his blood, righteousness, and atoning sacrifice, for peace, pardon, justification, and salvation'?

At the ordination of George Braithwaite of Devonshire Square, Gill says solemnly, 'Ministers are Instruments by whom Souls believe, and so are saved; the Word preached by them being by the Grace of the Spirit, an engrafted Word, is able to save them; and the Gospel being attended with the Demonstration of the Spirit, is the Power of God unto Salvation. What can, or does, more strongly engage Ministers to take heed to themselves, to their Doctrine, and abide therein, than this? That they may be useful in the Conversion, and so the Salvation of precious and immortal Souls. 'He that converteth a Sinner from the Error of His Ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins (James 5:20).'⁶⁷

Preaching to his congregation, which often included some hundreds of

unconverted 'hearers', Gill could plead from Matthew 11.28:

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 vi.35. Those who come to Christ aright, 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.⁶⁸

Ardent critics may not be impressed by the above as they miss the direct end-of-sermon-appeal in the 'you' form to listening sinners. Gill has many such direct addresses to sinful man, as in his sermon on *The Character and End of the Wicked* where he closes with the exhortation, 'There is no way of escaping the wrath to come, due to the sons of Belial, but by fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you in the everlasting gospel; by fleeing to Christ, turning to him, the strong hold, as prisoners of hope; and, being justified by his blood, you shall be saved from wrath, through him. It is he, and he only, who delivers from wrath to come.'⁶⁹

Gill had a powerful message for the eighteenth century. His contemporary, James Hervey, was convinced that Gill's teaching, under God, would also be especially relevant to the generations to come. Toplady expressed the same conviction in his typical forthright way, saying,

His Doctrinal and Practical Writings will live, and be admired, and be a standing blessing to posterity, when their opposers are forgotten, or only remembered by the refutations he has given them. While true Religion, and sound Learning have a single friend remaining in the British Empire, the works and name of Gill will be precious and revered.⁷⁰

It was full agreement with this conclusion that gave rise to this paper.

NOTES

- Amongst more positive criticisms are: Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory*, Baker 1990; Alan Sell, *The Great Debate*, Walker 1982; George Ella, 'John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth', *Evangelical Times*, April 1994; Graham Harrison, *Dr John Gill and His Teaching*, Evangelical Library, 1971; John R. Broome, *Dr John Gill*, Gospel Standard Publications, 1991; Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, BHS 1986; K. B. Manley, 'John Rippon and Baptist Historiography', *BQ* 28 (3), 1979, pp.109-208; B. R. White, 'Thomas Crosby, Baptist Historian', *BQ* 21, 1965-6, pp.154-68, 219-34; B. R. White, 'John Gill in London 1719-1729', *BQ* 22, 1967, pp.72-91. More negative works, which would not be in agreement with this article, are Peter Naylor, *Picking up a Pin for the Lord*, Grace Publications, 1992; Jack Hoad, *The Baptists*, Grace Publications 1986; Peter Toon, *Hyper-Calvinism*, Olive Tree, 1967; Robert Oliver, *By His Grace and for His Glory* (Review: Nettles, *BOT* 284, 1987, pp.30-2; Robert Oliver, 'Historical Survey of English Hyper-Calvinism', *Foundations* (Engl.), 7, 1981, pp.8-18; Robert Oliver, 'Significance of Strict Baptists' Attitudes to Duty-Faith', *SBHSB*, 20, 1993, pp.3-26; Iain Murray, 'The Forgotten Spurgeon', *BOT*, 1986; Seymour Price, 'Dr John Gill and the Confession of 1729', *BQ* 4, 1928, pp.366-71; O. C. Robinson, 'The Legacy of John Gill', *BQ* 26, 1971, pp.111-25; Robert J. Sheehan, 'The Presentation of the Gospel amongst Hyper-Calvinists: A Critique', *Foundations* (Engl.), 9, 1982, pp.42-6; Curt Daniel, 'Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill', Edinburgh PhD thesis 1983 (published privately, Dallas 1984), R. E. Seymour, 'John Gill: Baptist Theologian, 1697-1771', Edinburgh PhD thesis, 1954.
- 2 Grace Publications, 1986, p.114.
 - 3 *ibid.*, p.112.
 - 4 Grace Publications, 1992.
 - 5 p.145.
 - 6 *ibid.*, p.146.
 - 7 My emphasis. *ibid.*, p.147.
 - 8 *op.cit.*, p.86.
 - 9 See Oliver's 'Historical Survey of English Hyper-Calvinism', *Foundations* 7, 1981; Sheehan's articles, 'The Presentation of the Gospel amongst "Hyper-Calvinists"', *Foundations* 8 and 9, 1982; see also Toon's *Hyper-Calvinism*, Olive Tree, 1967.
 - 10 Michael Watts, *The Dissenters*, Clarendon 1978. Watts gives Toon, *op.cit.*, pp.70-88, 97-90 as his sources.
 - 11 *ibid.*, p.146.
 - 12 *ibid.*, p.147.
 - 13 *A Short History of the Baptists*, Judson Press, 1907, p.240.
 - 14 See Chapter X, John Gill and Eternal Justification in Picking up a Pin.
 - 15 *Sermons and Tracts*, vol.ii, pp.455-508.
 - 16 John Dogget's review of *Picking Up a Pin for the Lord*, *Evangelical Times*, August 1993, p.20.
 - 17 J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, London 1871, p.435. Whitely took over Cramp's view uncritically in his Calvinism and Evangelicalism (p.27) and a number of subsequent historians have carried on the tradition.
 - 18 Vol.VIII, §113 Predestination, p.553.
 - 19 *ibid.*
 - 20 *The Doctrine of Predestination*, p.118.
 - 21 Gill strongly denies that he teaches any such thing in *Truth Defended*, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol.iii, p.422, Primitive Baptist Reprint.
 - 22 See Job Burt's *Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme Impartially Examined*, 1736, and John Gill's *Truth Defended, being an Answer to an Anonymous Pamphlet, intituled, Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme impartially examined by the Word of God*, 1736, also published in *Sermons and Tracts*, vol.iii, pp.403-63.
 - 23 See John Rippon, *Life and Writings of Dr John Gill*, pp.48-51.
 - 24 See *The Wisdom of Being Religious in The Worlds of the Most Reverend Dr John Tillotson*, 1704, p.1ff (esp. p.5). For Tillotson, true religion or faith was a coming to God through a feeling of duty.
 - 25 See *The Necessity of good Works Unto Salvation Considered*, *Sermons and Tracts*, Vol.3, p.492.
 - 26 *Works*, vol.iii, p.422.
 - 27 The question whether it is the duty of sinners to believe in Christ when the Gospel comes to them.
 - 28 See Ryland's *Memoir of Mr Fuller*, 1818, p.6 n.
 - 29 See John Rippon, *Life and Writings of the Rev. John Gill, D.D.*, Gano Books Reprint, 1992, pp.43-48.
 - 30 *The Cause of God and Truth*, Section XXXII,

- pp.34ff.
- 31 *Institutes*, Book III, Chapter XI, pp.52-4.
- 32 See letter quoted in Ryland's *The Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller*, Button, 1818, pp.36ff.
- 33 See also *Memoir*, Fuller's Works, I, pp.14,-15.
- 34 Underwood also confuses Gill with Johnson, claiming that, like Johnson, Gill 'never addressed the ungodly', *A History of the English Baptists*, p.135.
- 35 Arthur Kirkby, Edinburgh PhD thesis, 'The Theology of Andrew Fuller and its Relation to Calvinism', 1956.
- 36 The Strict Baptist Historical Society Bulletin, No.20, 1993, p.7.
- 37 Curt Daniel, Edinburgh PhD thesis, 'Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill', 1983, claims the use of the term 'free offer' is the watershed between Hyper-Calvinists and Calvinists. The fact that those he mentions as 'free-offer men' hold quite different positions regarding what the offer is and how free it is does not seem to affect his judgement.
- 38 *Sermons and Tracts*, III, p.117, Primitive Baptist Library reprint.
- 39 *The Cause of God and Truth*, Baker Bookhouse Reprint, 1980, Section X, p.15.
- 40 See Fuller's 'Reply to Mr Button', *Works*, 3, p.422 n.
- 41 See *Sermons and Tracts*, vol.3, p.560 for a profusion of Bible texts to back up this statement of faith.
- 42 Gill is dealing with the false teaching that this verse applies that every man could come to Christ if he only exercised his will.
- 43 *The Cause of God*, Section XXX, p.33.
- 44 *ibid.*, p.109.
- 45 *op.cit.*, p.91.
- 46 *op.cit.*, p.84.
- 47 pp.114-5. Hoad is referring here to the Strict Baptist churches.
- 48 *op.cit.*, p.146.
- 49 Gill wrote a pamphlet under that title.
- 50 See Toplady's appendix to John Rippon, *The Life and Writings of the Late John Gill, D.D.*, Gano Books reprint 1992.
- 51 *The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation Considered*, p.510.
- 52 *ibid.*, pp.494 -5.
- 53 *op.cit.*, p.92.
- 54 See Graham Harrison, *Dr John Gill and his Teaching*, Evangelical Library, 1971, pp.15-23. Annual Lecture, 1.
- 55 *ibid.*, pp.18-19. Here Harrison claims that 'Fuller advances a very considerable theological case against Gill'.
- 56 *Body of Divinity*, vol.i, p.324.
- 57 *ibid.*, p.323.
- 58 *ibid.*, p.331.
- 59 *ibid.*, pp.338-9.
- 60 I John 1.8.
- 61 Eccl. 7.20.
- 62 I John 3.9.
- 63 Prof. Donald MacLeod broke a lance against this doctrine some years ago and his subsequent writings shows how his development of this doctrine have taken him away from traditional Calvinism. See his 'Paul's Use of the Term "The Old Man"', *Banner of Truth Magazine*, 92, pp.13-19, *Behold Your God*, Christian Focus Publications 1990. See also David J. Engelsma, 'The Death of Confessional Calvinism in Scottish Presbyterianism', *The Standard Bearer*, 68-69, 1992. In the *Banner* article, MacLeod bases his argument on the supposition that he has discovered a new interpretation which has been missed since biblical times, and the relevant texts have been wrongly translated by the AV scholars.
- 64 Psalm 89.30-33.
- 65 *op.cit.*, p.17.
- 66 Works of James Hervey, *Theron and Aspasio*, Letter IX, p.380, 1837.
- 67 *The Doctrine of the Cherubim Opened and Explained*, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol.ii, pp.517-9.
- 68 *The Mutual Duty of Pastor and People*, 28 March 1734, pp.26-7.
- 69 *Commentary*, vol.vii, p.124.
- 70 *Sermons and Tracts*, vol.ii, p.126.
- 71 Quoted in John Rippon, *Life and Writings of Dr John Gill*, p.140.

GEORGE M. ELLA, *Formerly Oberstudienrat in the German Senior Civil Service and Chairman of the Board of Examiners at Duisburg University, English Department*