

## A GRAIN OF GRATITUDE

A SERMON Occasioned by the DEATH of That Venerable, Learned, Pious, and Judicious Divine

MINISTER JOHN GILL, D.D.

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE OCTOBER 14, 1771, Aged Seventy-Four.

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BY THOMAS CRANER.

**How are the mighty fallen!- ([2Sa 1:19](#))**

**He being dead, yet speaketh.- ([Heb 11:4](#))**

**The memory of the just is blessed.- ([Pr 10:7](#))**

**The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken from the evil to come.- ([Isa 57:1-2](#))**

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**([2Sa 3:38](#)) And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Israel?**

In this context, we have a very eloquent oration, which the king of Israel made at the grave of Abner; and the word, I have now read are an expostulatory address to his courtiers, when he was returned from the funeral of that truly noble and great personage, whose death he lamented; and herein he gives a reason why he mourned, **Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Israel?** A prince, being of the royal family; his father was Saul's uncle, and he nearly related to him, being his own cousin. A great man, one of great abilities, a valiant and skilful general, of great wisdom and parts, whose fall was a public loss and matter of lamentation, as is the death of any person, especially such as are useful to society. That it is appointed for all once to die, the oracles of eternal truth declare: yea, and holy Job assures us he certainly knew, **That God would bring him to death and to the house appointed for all living.** Wherefore he saith, **If I wait the grave is my house.** This is the house, the common house appointed for all the apostate sons of Adam, for by **this man Adam, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death is the just wages of sin** - the due deserve thereof. We no sooner begin to live, but we begin to die; and no sooner did sin enter, but death came in with it, and has reigned, O! Reigned indeed, even **over such as have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;** for wheresoever sin has any being, death will have a footing, and tho' the believer, the truly godly and just man,

lives not in sin, but is **dead to sin by the** body of Christ, yet because sin has a being in him, he also, us well as others, must die for there is no getting rid of this troublesome inmate, but by the dissolution of the union between **soul** and body; hereby the relation to the first Adam is broke and entirely dissolved, which being broken, his image is for ever dropped, and never to be taken up more.

While in this present state the Christian groans being burdened with a body of sin, the trials of life, the snares of this world, and the temptations of Satan, whose fiery darts are very troublesome and afflictive: but when death has done its office, the Christian is quite delivered from every burden, freed from every trial, and out of the reach of every temptation, and may with propriety sing, as expressed by the late Dr. WATTS:

**Sin my worst enemy before, Shall vex my eyes and ears no more; My inward foes shall all be slain, Nor Satan break my peace again.**

It is true, death is formidable, and very terrible to some who shudder at the sight of an opened grave, or viewing of a dry skull; yet if we attend unto, and regard the volume of inspiration, there is no occasion for the believer to be afraid of the king of terrors, for their Jesus has ransomed them from the power of the grave, and redeemed them from hell, so that the Christian may triumph over death, the last enemy, saying, **O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**

But the words of our text was spoken by the Israelitish monarch, upon the occasion of the death of one whom he styles a prince and a great man, whose decease being really awful and melancholy, made the royal prophet address his courtiers and his people in this pathetic and plaintive strain. The connection of them, with what goes before, is so very easy to be gathered, it would be an affront to an intelligent and diligent reader, to make any remarks thereon. Therefore, I shall not trouble you therewith, nor with any account of the pedigree, courage, valor, magnanimity, military and great exploits of this great commander, whose death, by the perilous, treacherous and murderous **hands** of Joab, made David express himself saying, **Know ye not that a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel?** But I shall accommodate them to the mournful occurrence which has lately taken place, even the death of the venerable, learned, pious, and judicious Dr. Gill, whose death I esteem a loss, a very great loss, not only to his mourning family, and the church over which the Holy Ghost had made, and continued him, an overseer for so many years, but it is a public loss to the whole interest of a Divine Jesus.

And by his death we have a fresh evidence, that however great, learned, and judicious, ever good and gracious, however useful and desirable any person is, he is not exempted from the stroke of death, nor can any deliver himself from the devouring grave; this is our last retreat, therefore the royal psalmist saith, **that liveth and shall not see death! shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?**

And the prophet Zechariah speaking upon the same occasion saith, **Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? Intimating,** that the same might live to at great, to a good old age, as the antediluvian patriarchs and some of the worthies in after

ages since, even to this day, yet when they had done their work, and served the Lord in their generation, they fell asleep, and their souls enter **where the weary are at rest, and where the wicked cease from troubling** of them, and their bodies are committed to the grave, which is a peaceable habitation, a quiet and safe resting-place. Here the minister and the Christian is disburdened of every care, and delivered, yea, completely for free from every care, and receive a final release from every painful affliction. All weakness of every kind is removed from them, there is nothing now can ditch their peace, nothing can annoy them now, for there is no saint in all the heavenly paradise, wherefore the royal preacher saith, **He praised the dead who were already dead more than the living, who are yet alive.** It is certain that the godly, the righteous dead, are those that this noble personage doth praise who are taken away from the evil to come and are free from all the opposition and oppression they met with from their enemies, while here. These that die in the Lord, are much more happy than the living saints, for they are not only delivered from the hand of all their enemies from all kind of trouble no more liable to darkness, desertion, temptation and affliction, and are delivered from all their doubts and fears, but they are with Christ, which is far, very far better; Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

Now as they have no sin within, nor temptation, nor trial without, to disquiet them, all conflicts are eternally over, they may sing and say,

**Thou cruel executioner Vile Satan, what sayest thou? I scorn thy arts, threats, and assaults, Thou canst not reach me now.**

O happy, thrice happy soul, that is safe lodged in Jesus' bosom, that is safe arrived in those blissful regions where they shall for ever enjoy communion with their beloved, and shall see him as he is. O! Who can conceive or image the delight, the heavenly joy it must afford to behold the glory of Christ, in leave dull mortality behind, and quite escape this vale of tears, and get above an ensnaring world, and from all these territories of disquietude, to a paradise of rest, and join the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life, and go **in concert with the spirits of just men made perfect, and join the innumerable company of holy angels,** and rejoice in the fruition of present happiness, and in the assured addition to their bliss, **when their dear Lord Jesus himself shall come in** the clouds, and descend from heaven, and shall break up those treasures and springs, those mines of grace and glory, which he hath in reversion for **all them that love his appearing.** All which was the expectance of this excellent person, this great man of God whose death we lament, who came to his **grave in a full age, like as a stock of corn in his** season; so that we may with the greatest propriety adopt the words of our text, and say, **Know ye not, that a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel!** In discoursing on these words, I shall

I. Consider, what in a gospel-sense we are to understand by **Israel**, and why so called.

II. Consider, what is said to take place in Israel, **viz. That a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel.** I am,

I. To consider what is meant by Israel, for it is a name divinely blessed. This name Israel, is not to be limited to the sons of Jacob, nor confined to the old testament church which is frequently so styled in the scripture of truth, **Behold, he that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber, nor sleep. If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side now may Israel say, As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; but peace shall be upon Israel.** And as it is given and affixed upon the church of God, to distinguish it from the world, so it is in a peculiar manner adopted by the Holy Ghost, in the New Testament, who calls the church in gospel times by the same name, saying, **As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, mercy, on the Israel of God.** Thus the new-testament church being made partaken of, and saved by the same grace, having the same faith, are members of the same body, and heirs of the same salvation, **We believe we shall be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as they;** therefore are called after, and bear the same name Israel. And truly, it is a discriminating name, by which the gospel-church eternally distinguished from the world. But why is the church so called? The church is, and may with propriety be called Israel. Because,

1. Israel was the object of God's love and delight. Moses instructed the people of his care into this doctrine, when he tells, that **The Lord did not sit his love upon them,** for reasons which he assigns, **but because the Lord loved you.** And again, he assured them it was only, **Because the Lord had a delight in their fathers to love them.** And he further informs them, **That he loved the people,** that is, the people of Israel,

And how much more has he manifested his love to his spiritual Israel who are a special people; his church, whom he hath loved with an everlasting love: yea, it is said of Christ, **That he loved the church, and gave himself for it.** This love is free, absolute, and unconditional; therefore we have that doxology, To him that **hath loved us, and** washed us. Love goes before washing, and it is because he loved his church, therefore he cleanses them from all sin. This love of God and Christ is unchangeable, and unmerited; it was not purchased at any rate, no, this love is so free as it was not purchased by the blood, suffering, and righteousness of the redeemer, God's love to his people in Christ, is the original fountain and spring of all grace and glory to the church. He so loved, that he gave, not made an offer, or proposal, or tender of his son, but He **gave his only begotten son,** because of the complacency and delight he had in them; they are his Jedediah's, his Hepzibah's, because of his love to them, and delight he has in them. This love is that by which the church is distinguished; it is ancient and unremitted love, it is love without beginning, or without end; it is inextinguishable, unparalleled love; love not to be matched by men or angels; it is such love as there is, there can be no separation from, nothing, saith the volume of inspiration, can separate God's elect **from his love, I am persuaded there is nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.** The complete fruition of God in endless felicity, as well as communion with him here, cannot proceed from any other cause than divine love. And truly to enjoy God, and drink in the delights of his eternal love, so as to be transformed in to his image by the renewing of the Holy Ghost here, and to behold his glory hereafter, is the higher summit of bliss a finite being can be raised unto. But,

2. Because as Israel was chosen of God, to be a peculiar and special people, so saith the word, **For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself.** Thus the church is styled **a chosen generation**, and is said to be chosen **in Christ before the foundation of the world**; loved in Christ, consequently chosen in Christ before the world began. Head and members, Christ and his church, were considered together in the womb of election, were loved alike, **Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me**; and chose together above the consideration of the fall, according to what the Apostle saith, **The children not being yet born, nor having done either good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand.** That the elect were chosen in Christ, as considered in the pure mass, is evident to me; for if head and members were viewed together, and chose together, and Christ's human nature was chosen from among the people, this human nature which was ordained into union with the Son of God, and in the fullness of time assumed by him, was never a part of the fallen race of Adam; therefore, as he the head was, so must the body be; he was the first-born of election, the foundation thereof. But Christ-man-nature was never chosen under the consideration of being a part of the corrupted mass of mankind in any respect, therefore election could not pass upon the corrupt mass, because Christ must then be chosen out of it, and if so, the other elect would not be chosen as such in him. **According as he hath** (not he will) **chosen us in him**; not to be in him, but viewed in him, as having, a being and standing in him in the very act of election.

The doctrine of personal and eternal election, is a doctrine of the old fashioned book the Bible; it is a doctrine which the Old Testament church was well instructed in, and acquainted with. It is a glorious doctrine, which is infixed upon, and most strongly inculcated, in the New Testament; it is a doctrine, that is full of comfort to believers, and however it may be neglected, and the preachers thereof despised, it is **the foundation of God which stands sure**, and will mauger all the opposition it meets with from hell and earth. The purpose of God according to election must stand, let men and devils do their worst. But

3. Israel was a blessed people, therefore the Lord restrained the mad prophet from cursing, and gives this as the reason, **They are blessed**; it is not said, they shall be blessed, but they now are blessed, even at this time, and shall be blessed, and none shall reverse the blessing, for all the blessings bestowed upon Israel were firm and sure, **and not one thing failed of all the good things** which the Lord blessed them with. So is the gospel-church, God's spiritual Israel, **Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ**, and neither sin nor Satan can alter or revoke them; for if sin or Satan could have disinherited the church, she had been disinherited long ago, for she sinned and fell in Adam, as well as the rest, and lost the all she had in his hands, and was deferring of and under the curse of the broken law. But the Lord turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee; **Oh! happy the people who are in such a case, happy the people whose God is the Lord.** And as Israel was blessed with all the immunities of the land of Canaan, for the church of God is blessed with peace and pardon, with a justifying righteousness, and with the non-imputation of sin; **Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputed not iniquity**; it is further added in the scripture, O! My soul, catch the pleasing sound, **He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,**

**neither has he seen perverseness in Israel, because** God's Israel stands under the covert of Christ's godlike righteousness, and is all fair and without spot, being completely justified from all things, and so is without fault before the throne. And truly all spiritual blessings are secured in Christ's hands for his people; whatever they can wish for or want, all that can conduce to make them comfortable in time, and happy everlastingly, happy through the endless ages of eternity; for their dear Lord Jesus will receive them at last with this joyful welcome, **Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

4. Israel was the Lord's peculiar treasure. For **the Lord has chosen Jacob unto himself; and Israel for his peculiar treasure.** And again it is said, **shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.** So the gospel church is styled, because she is his treasure, which he values highly, and prizes at a very great rate. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and filleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field: yea, where the treasure is, there the heart will be also.** Thus God's heart is upon his people, his church, his **saints they are the excellent of the earth, among whom is all his delights;** his heart was engaged for them from of old: yea, it is fixed upon them, for they are his jewels, on whom he loves to manifest the riches of his grace, and to display his power, they are exceeding precious in his sight. No man can delight so much in his treasure, as the Lord doth in his people, his church, his bride; **His delights were with the sons of men.** He esteems his people so greatly, as he has not only exerted the arm of his power, to defend and deliver them from their enemies, but he has expended his blood, his precious God-like blood, to redeem them; therefore he will not part with them at any rate, **None shall pluck them out of his hand;** so they are safe for time, and safe for eternity: for **He that gives grace, will give glory, because whom he loves, he loves to the end.** And he delights to tell them how he loves them; and to let them know, that he accounts them his treasure, and that his heart is so set upon them, as that he rejoices to do them good; therefore he will preserve them from every evil thing to his kingdom and glory. But,

5. Israel was a poor and an afflicted people: how affectionately doth the Lord speak concerning this people, **"I leave among you a poor and afflicted people;"** and again, **"I have seen, surely seen, the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters: for I know their sorrows."** So the Lord's people, the church, is a poor and an afflicted people, **through manifold afflictions and tribulations they must enter the kingdom.** And truly, as Israel was afflicted by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Amorites, and others, so God's spiritual Israel now are afflicted with a body of sin, that troublesome inmate afflicts them greatly; this plague of the heart sorely grieves them, and is the plague of their lives, oft makes them groan being burdened. O! How are they distressed by the working of indwelling sin, and made to cry out, O wretched man! Yea, to chide themselves, and to say, surely **I am more brutish than any man, yea, even as a very beast before thee;** which is a sore, a very sore affliction to them, and frequently causes them to say, O! **That I had the wings of a dove, then would I fly away, and be at rest!** For here they have no rest, no quiet; tiresome days, and wearisome nights are appointed to them, so as they mourn in their complaint; and make a noise, and are weary with their groaning, so as they long to be delivered from this body of death, this dead

fright which presses them down. Sometimes they are grievously afflicted with the temptations of Satan, his fiery darts are very, yea exceedingly troublesome, the poison thereof drink up their spirits; his wiles are so many, and he so unwearied in his attacks, as frequently makes them to desire to be where the **weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling; Where the inhabitants are not sick, and the people that dwell there have their iniquity freely forgiven them.** At other times the snares of the world, and the trials of life, greatly distress the poor Christian, for many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will support under and deliver out of all. But,

6. Israel was the Lord's inheritance: **Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance, The Lord's people are his portion, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. The Lord will not forsake his inheritance. Blessed be Israel mine inheritance;** and of them it is remarked, **they be thy people, and thine inheritance,** So the church in gospel times is the Lord's inheritance; and as Naboth would not part with his inheritance to Ahab, though he offered either to give him the worth of it in money, or a better vineyard for it; and the reason he assigns for his not parting with it was, because it is the inheritance of his fathers. **And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it: or, if it seem good unto thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.** Just so it is with respect to the church; it is Christ's lot. The people which his father gave to him, they are the lot of his inheritance, the purchased possession, the church which he hath purchased with his own blood, so that they are dear to him. **He hates putting away, nay, he will not cast off his people; he will not forsake his inheritance; he takes pleasure in his people,** and will not reject them; whoever casts them off, he will not, for they are his inheritance: **Israel is the rod of his inheritance,** which he hath chosen and values as a goodly heritage; **The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.** Again,

7. Israel was an holy people. **Thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God: yea, The Lord shall establish thee an holy people to himself;** this is over and over-asserted of Israel in the scriptures, Yea, Israel is called holiness to the Lord; **Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the people of his holiness,** whom he had separated from others, and set apart for himself, to be an holy people above all others. So the spiritual Israel, the church his people, are chosen in Christ to be holy, and he is made sanctification to them; and they are sanctified in him, being chosen unto holiness, **He has given, himself for his church, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word;** that he might present it a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; **but that it should be holy and without blemish.** Accordingly he sends the Holy Ghost into their hearts in regeneration, who implants an holy principle in them, and calls them with an holy calling; yea, calls them unto holiness both in heart, lip, and life: so under his influences they live holy lives and conversations; for the **grace of God teaches, that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;** for without holiness no man can see or enjoy the Lord, either here or hereafter.

8. The gospel church is called Israel, because of her relation to Jesus Christ; for this appellation properly belongs to him, as he is the anti-type of him that was so styled: **Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel.** So of the Messiah, it is said, **Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified:** which was literally fulfilled when Jesus said, **I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.** Wherefore as this name was given to him, and he called by it, as the head and representative of the whole spiritual Israel, the church of God, who bear the same name, because of her marriage-union to him, who as a prince has power with God and men, and doth prevail. Sometimes we find that the church is called by his name, and truly this is no wonder that the bride, the wife, the spouse, should be called by her husband's name: **This is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our righteousness; this is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.** Now, as husband, and wife bear the same name, so does Christ and the church, **so also is Christ.** Christ and his church are one, as head and members are one; the union between Christ and the church is exceeding near, so near, that there is no union to be compared with it; the union between husband and wife, head and members is near, but not so near as that between Christ and the elect. For they are so one, as he is called by the church's name Israel, which is most astonishing; and is to show, that he was her substitute and surety, came into her law-place, and exchanged conditions with her; was made what she was, and she is made what he is. For thus we read, **He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.** But,

9. The church is called Israel, because of her weakness. As the church doth, at least it should, consist of spiritual persons, the more spiritual any one is, the more sensible they are of their own weakness and danger, are ready to think that they are liable to be crushed by **every** enemy. The true church has no might, and is so very weak as she many times knows not what to do. Her enemies she finds lively and strong, and she without any strength at all; therefore likened to a woman, and to a woman that is ready to be devoured, crushed and destroyed by her potent and numerous foes, against whom she is no match, no way able to grapple with them, but liable to be trampled upon as a poor contemptible worm; yet, the Lord saith, **fear not:** and assures her, that **no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper,** nor shall any of the counsels of her enemy prevail; for the eye of Christ her Lord is always upon her, and as she is his Beulah, he will exert his power when she is in the greatest trouble. His power shall be made perfect in her weakness, his strength is sufficient to support her, and his grace to supply all her wants; yea, the power of Christ shall so rest upon her, as she shall be **strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might:** therefore he saith, **Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.** Glorious declaration indeed! What can the believer desire more; he has no reason to fear what man or devils can do unto him, for however weak he is in himself, and sensible thereof, so as to be filled with fears, yet he has no reason **to fear man that shall die, or the son of man that shall be as grass,** nor any other enemy whatsoever; for God has laid her help upon, one that is most mighty, and exalted one chosen out of the people, who is able to save to the uttermost; therefore he will perfect that which concerns his church, will carry on the work of faith with power, and cause her to come up out of the wilderness, leaning upon his invincible, his almighty arm, and present her faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy.



10. and lastly. To observe, that Israel was a distinguished people from all the nations of the world. **Lo! the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Israel was distinguished by circumcision, so the spiritual Israel by regeneration; for He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.** As Israel of old was favored with, and distinguished by visible tokens of God's presence; for **He went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way, and by night, in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night.** The pillar departed not from them, but abode on them, and came with them into Canaan's land; so the Lord Jesus Christ, the anti-type of this pillar, is in the midst of his people now, is always with them, even to the end; he will never depart from his people, but will bring them safe to glory. The church is a people called out of the world, to worship God in spirit and in truth, and is separated from the men of the world, to have and hold communion with the Lord; **for what concord hath Christ with Belial?** How is it possible for the quickened members of Christ to have communion with persons dead in trespasses and sins? Nor should they be conformed to the world, nor symbolize with them in doctrine, nor join with them in their worship; but it is the business of all that profess to be the disciples of Christ, the followers of the lamb, the true Israel, to come out from the World, to separate from it, and not to mingle with the people of the world in their worship, nor be joined in affinity unto them, nor conform to the manner of the day. Occasional conformity to the world in religion, is a most destructive thing; wherefore the Lord saith, **Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.** I proceed,

Secondly, To consider what doth constitute a great man in the church or spiritual Israel; I humbly apprehend the following things are requisite, as

1. A great measure of grace. We read in the scripture of great grace; **and to every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;** so some have larger measures of grace than others, and are strong in faith as Abraham, **who was strong in faith and gave glory to God.** Others have a lesser measure, and so are weak in the faith. Wherefore a great man in the church (as true grace is spiritual light in the understanding) is one that has a great insight into the plague of his own heart, the spirituality of the law, and a clear and large view and great knowledge of the person and fullness of Christ; the fullness of fitness and ability to save from sin and wrath, to redeem from the curse of the law, so as he rests the whole weight of his salvation on Christ alone, knowing that there is salvation in no other, nor any other name under heaven by which he can be saved. The person is made alive by grace, for it is life to the soul, as well as light; hence the apostle saith, **You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;** and likewise, **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.** There was a gift of all kind of grace to Christ before the world began, therefore the apostle saith, **Grace was given in Christ,** not only purposed, but purposed and given; so that there was not only a purpose of grace in the heart of God, and a promise of it, but there was a real donation of grace to Christ, and to

the elect in Christ in eternity, for they were represented by him, and, united to him so early; hence the inspired writer, in a kind of rapture, cries out, **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places** (or things) **in Christ**. But,

2. He is one not only that is a partaker of great grace, but has great light into, and a good understanding of the great things of God's law, the great and glorious doctrines of the everlasting gospel. And truly the venerable person, to whose memory this discourse is sacred, was favored with great light indeed into the great doctrines of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and steadily adhered to them, and abode firm by them to his death, like a brazen wall and pillar, and earnestly contend for them, and would not give place to an adversary one hair's breadth. The great doctrines which this great man particularly maintained, were the foundation-doctrines of the gospel, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, of the true proper and real Sonship of Christ; the doctrine of God's everlasting love to Christ and his people in Christ, and as he loved them early, so he loved them always, and there never was a vacuity or want of love in his heart to them from everlasting to everlasting, for they were the objects of his eternal complacency and delight; the doctrine of particular and eternal election, and that the objects of election were considered in the pure mass of creatureship in the act of election; also the doctrine of the elect's eternal union unto Christ; the great doctrine of the everlasting covenant, **which covenant is ordered in all things, and sure**; the precious and glorious doctrine of eternal justification by the righteousness of Christ; of the incarnation of the Son of God; of the free, full, and eternal redemption by the blood of Christ; of peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement through him; the great doctrine of efficacious grace in regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and the final perseverance of the saints; the doctrines of special faith and good works, as a fruit of that **faith which is of the operation of God**; the absolute necessity of the Holy Ghost's work in the application of salvation, to make believers meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; the doctrine of the resurrection, eternal judgment, and final glorification, and eternal salvation of all the elect of God; these, together with the several doctrines depending thereon, and flowing from them, were what this eminent man of God did take pleasure to defend and maintain. He was one that was valiant for these precious truths of Christ, as his printed works do show, for by them, though he is no more, he speaketh, and will speak to the latest ages of time; and I doubt not but people yet unborn will arise and bless God for his works.

3. Great gifts, and a large measure of the Spirit of God, furnishing one with ability to hand out the mysteries of divine grace to the edification of the church of God, and the conversion of sinners, are requisite to constitute a great man in Israel. When Christ ascended up on high he received gifts for men, **Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men**. And as he received them for men, he being exalted at the right hand of God, he gives them to the men for whom he did receive them. **Therefore being at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which you see and hear**.

By these spiritual gifts, I mean a peculiar, spiritual power, endowment, skill, and ability, wisely to manage the gospel, in the administration thereof, unto the advantage and

furtherance of the truth, especially in the preaching and defense of it when called thereunto. Thus some are extraordinary, and others are ordinary, and some are set in the church for the defense of the gospel, as the apostle to the Gentiles' saith he was, **I am set for the defense of the gospel.** This great man of God, Paul, was in an eminent manner qualified to maintain the doctrines of Christ, both by preaching, disputing, and writing in the defense thereof. How laborious and assiduous was this champion in his master's work, is evident to all that are acquainted with the New Testament; from thence it appears, that **He had both a mouth and wisdom, which all his adversaries were not able to gain-say, or resist.** And with such a large measure, of gifts and spiritual abilities, was the late Dr. Gill favored, as rendered him capable of striving for the faith of the gospel for more than fifty years, in a firm and uniform way. He was in no wise ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but stood his ground with the greatest intrepidity against the many adversaries of the truth against whom he drew his pen. His many voluminous writings, especially his exposition both of the Old and New Testament, show, that he was such a workman, as, I think, I may venture to say, without any disparagement to any either dead or living, who have done excellently, that he has excelled them all. His Body of Divinity, both doctrinal and practical, shows he was well skilled in the word of righteousness. How judiciously, how solidly doth he explain the extent and the intent of the divine law, and show its use to both believer and unbeliever, maintain its authority over every descendant of apostate Adam; and declare, **That whatsoever the law saith, it is to them that are under it.** He boldly asserted, that the moral law was a standing and eternal rule of righteousness, and that believers **are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ;** therefore though he preached the great doctrine of sovereign grace, and published the glad tidings of free, full, and eternal salvation, as flowing from the grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that sinners are saved alone by grace; he also maintained, and strenuously asserted, that the law in the hand of Christ, is a rule of life and conversation to the saints, and so did not make void the law, but established it upon a right foundation. His gifts greatly shone with peculiar luster in preaching the word. How wisely, how accurately was he wont to distinguish between the law and the gospel; he did not blend law and gospel together, nor was he yea, and nay, but did **rightly divide the word of truth, giving to every one their portion in due season.** He did not give the saint the sinner's portion, making the hearts of the righteous sad, nor did he give the sinner the saint's part, but the gospel-trumpet by him gave a certain distinct sound, which plainly showed he was a great man. **But, alas! how are the mighty fallen!**

4. A great and gracious experience of the power of the great doctrines of the everlasting gospel upon his own soul, is requisite to constitute a great man in the church. Some in the gospel-church, both in a public and private character, have a larger experience of the sweetness and efficacy of divine truth than others, and find the great doctrines of the Bible, the food of their souls, the strength of their hearts, and the joy of their lives. What comfort, what satisfaction, what pleasure, what delight, do some enjoy when the Holy Ghost directs their hearts into the antiquity, freeness, fullness, immutability, and duration of divine love, and gives them to see their interest therein; and that this love of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Divine Spirit, is the sole cause, the only, the original fountain of eternal glory to the church. To have this unparalleled love, which is not to be matched by men or angels, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost; what sweet work doth it make, what gracious experience doth it afford of the Lord's loving kindness, who hath **commended his love to us, in that**

**while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** To be led into the doctrine of eternal election, and the elect's everlasting union to Christ; the ancientness of the covenant, in which provision was made for the bringing of the **many sons to glory**, and that the Spirit should be given in consequence of the filial relation of God's elect to him, to take up his abode in the hearts of his people, for **it is because they were sons, therefore God sent the Spirit of his son into their hearts**, by whose gracious operation alone they receive all spiritual blessings, and have an experience of the love of God, and enjoy communion with the Father and Christ; what pleasure! What delight must this afford! These great and precious doctrines have been found to be soul-quickenings to others. Accordingly we find the excellent Mr. Hussey saith, "How graciously have I felt it, (it is none of my notions or opinion, but my faith, my very life to God,) in those times which the Lord hath seasoned for beholding it! What encouragements! What experiences! What sweetening views of the King in his beauty have I enjoyed, through the fleeting moments of presenting it, and that under gospel seals of the Lord the Spirit, and this through faith receiving what was a certain thing before it." And truly, these great and glorious doctrines, these foundation truths of the gospel, the great man whose works will praise him in the gates of Zion, had a large and rich experience of. They were the stay of his soul, and the comfort of his heart when living, and afforded him everlasting consolation in the view of death and eternity. He was directed by the Divine Comforter into the love of the Father and Son, and found Christ to be his life, and exceeding precious to him; the ancient things of God's counsel, covenant, and love, even these precious truths which are derided by some, and he was peculiarly strenuous in defending, he told me were the comfort of his soul, and the foundation of his hope; and being thus blessed with the enjoyment of spiritual union with Christ, and a full assurance of hope, his consolation was so strong, as he dreaded not any storm or tempest which the fury of hell might raise to make death appear the king of terrors to him; but his mind was calm and serene, his comfort strong, and his joy sincere, and all arising from a gracious experience of the power of the doctrine of the gospel in the hand of the blessed Spirit; **For he knew whom he had believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which he had committed to him against that day**; as he himself declared, and his printed works do show, especially his last, I mean his Body of Practical Divinity, which is full fraught with spiritual and Christian experience of the power of those doctrines he had before asserted, so that doctrine and practice are sweetly joined together, which will make his memory precious to the saints, till sun and moon are no more.

To a spiritual experience, I may add, He was blessed with ready utterance and great volubility of speech, so that he was apt to teach. With what gravity and majesty had he used to stand and feed the church of God! How did his listening audience hang as it were upon his lips, while evangelic truth did sweetly drop from his mellifluous tongue! What an amazing measure of spiritual experience was he favored with, as rendered him capable of speaking a word in season to weary souls. Again,

5. To be well versed in the scriptures and a partaker of a good gift in prayer, **to pray in prayer, to be fervent therein, watching thereunto with all perseverance**, is another prerequisite to the great man in Israel, And, truly, what is said of Apollos, may be said of this man of God whose death we lament; **He was mighty in the scriptures, and from a child**, as it is said of Timothy, **he knew the holy Scriptures**, and had a good understanding and

spiritual insight into them, and a tenacious memory to retain them, so as he was thoroughly furnished to every good work. And as to prayer, with what fervency, with what importunity, would he pour out his soul to the Lord, and with what familiarity, freedom, and liberty, would he plead with his God! Which showed he was highly favored in being admitted to such nearness to the Lord. How would he, Jacob like, wrestle with God, and, under the Spirit's-influence, he was wont to be very urgent for poor Zion, for the peace and prosperity thereof. The edification of saints, and the conversion of sinners, was his great concern.

6. A great insight into, and a good understanding of the order and discipline of the church, with magnanimity and courage to see that the laws of Christ, as Zion's King, are duly executed, are likewise necessary. He is not only one that labors in word and doctrine, but one that rules well in the house of God. And really there is a great glory, a very great beauty in a church, when persons, whose business it is to go before the church, have a good understanding and a solid judgment of what ought to be done in the house of God, and have knowledge of the laws and ordinances which Christ, as King of his church, has appointed for his followers to observe, and to be found in the practice of: **To know the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof;** so as to instruct others, and to see that they keep to the pattern and the ordinances thereof, agreeable to the written word, is another prerequisite to a great man in the church of God.

7. To be rich in faith, and good works, and of an unblemished character in life and conversation. To be rich towards God, and strong in faith, is the privilege of some. Abraham, it is said, was **strong in faith, giving glory to God;** and when that is the case, strong faith will be productive of good works, for it worketh by love, and love to the Lord constrains to a practical observance of his law, and every duty it requires, so as to lead an holy life, in all godliness and honesty, and to have a conversation agreeable to our profession, and to live as becomes the gospel.

To be carried through life creditably and honorably, and not to soil the waters of the sanctuary with the feet, or an unbecoming conversation and walk, is a very great mercy; a mercy which our honored father in the Lord was favored with. He so adorned the doctrine which he preached, and so well defended, as he gave no just occasion of offense to either Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God. And when I saw him last, I observed to him what a mercy it was that through such a course of years in which he had contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, he had been kept faithful, and his walk had been such as none of his adversaries could impeach his character; he said with tears, **It is not I, but the Grace of God that has been with me.**

Lastly, and to add no more, Wisdom, prudence, and a good share of natural and acquired abilities, intrepidity, resolution, firmness, and courage, as not to be soon dismayed, discouraged, and daunted, but to be enabled to manage all his affairs, both civil and religious, to walk wisely towards them that are without; all this, and much more, was to be found in our Christian hero. He may with propriety be called one of the valiant men of Israel: he was valiant for truth upon earth, and now he is gone to receive the reward of the

eternal inheritance; and though the loss is great to the family, the church, and the interest of Christ, yet it is his gain, for now he sees all things as they are; here he saw through a glass darkly, but now face to face; here he knew only in part, but now he knows all things perfectly. All I shall further say, and I am not afraid of exceeding in what I say about the deceased, but rather fear lest what I shall speak be too little; is, in the first place, to take notice of his early piety; for it pleased God who separated him from his mother's womb, to call him by his grace in his youthful days, and made Christ precious to him; and in the early part of his life, he gave himself to a church of Christ, who soon after called him to exercise his gifts, which being approved of, he was by the church sent forth into the work of the ministry, in which he was very diligent and laborious, and showed himself **a workman prepared to every good work, one that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

2. His inclination for learning was very strong, his industry and diligence was exceeding great; he was indefatigable in his studies, so as it became a common saying with some, that a thing was true as sure as Dr. Gill was in his study. His capacity was equal to whatever he undertook, and engaged in, so that his attainments in literature were very great, especially in that part of learning which he apprehended most necessary to his sacred work and character. For the Scriptures in the original languages in which they were written were very familiar to him, and he acquired through the blessing of God such accurate skill in all the oriental tongues, that rendered him very useful and acceptable in his station; and though his knowledge and understanding was great, and his learning so very extensive, it did not puff him up, nor make him high-minded.

3. His preaching was plain, his reasoning nervous and strong, his language expressive, and his doctrine was the doctrine according to Godliness, the truth as it is in Jesus. But, alas! He is no more! The place which knew him for so many years, knows him no more; for he has finished his course, and kept the faith, and is entered into the joy of his Lord, to partake of those rivers of pleasure, which are everlastingly at his right hand. May this mournful providence be a happy means of awakening us in the sacred work to be more assiduous, more diligent, more laborious for the good of souls, that whenever we shall have served the Lord, and shall have finished our course, and be called from this vain world, we may hear the sentence, **Well done good and faithful servants:** and to find the days of our mourning to be ended.

In a word, let us all be concerned to be looking to the Lord, to be fervent in prayer to him that is the repairer of breaches, that an abundant unction of the same Spirit may be given to, and rest upon those that survive, that they may stand fast in one Spirit; yea, let us wrestle and be very importunate with the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth more laborers into his vineyard, for the residue of the Spirit is with him, who has said, **That he will never leave, nor forsake his people, because it pleased the Lord to make them his people.**

FINIS.