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## SERMONS AND TRACTS OF JOHN GILL

SERMONS PREACHED AT JOHN GILL'S DEATH OR IN  
VINDICATION OF HIS FAITH & PRACTICE

### An Elegy On The Death Of The Rev. John Gill, D.D.

*by Benjamin Francis*

*(London: J. Robinson, 1771)*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth  
— Psalm 60:4*

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AN

ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF THE

REV. JOHN GILL, D.D.,

*Who Departed This Life,  
October 14, 1771.*

BY

BENJAMIN FRANCIS

(1734-1799)

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## AN ELEGY

## ON THE DEATH OF THE

## REV. JOHN GILL, D. D.

WHEN the brave hero in the christian cause,  
 Fir'd with the love of his redeeming Lord,  
 Clad with salvation, arm'd with truth divine,  
 And just embarking on some grand intent,  
 'Midst yawning billows and surrounding death,  
 Bade lasting farewell to his much belov'd  
 Ephesian brethren, on th' Ionian shore;  
 Meanwhile declaring, with prophetic lips,  
 They should no more his face on earth behold:  
 The holy elders, overwhelm'd with grief  
 At final parting with the man of God,  
 Embrac'd him ardent in their throbbing breast,  
 And bath'd with tears his venerable face.  
 Thus the bright flame of sacred christian love,  
 Glow'd in their bosoms; thus their hearts dissolv'd  
 In flowing grief for the departing saint,  
 Stretching his pinions for his native skies.

And thus the grief of weeping Zion flows,  
 For her belov'd, divinely valiant Son,  
 Who long had watch'd upon her tow'ring walls,  
 Timely alarm'd her of approaching foes,  
 And fought her battles with heroic zeal;  
 Whose dreaded fall fair Salem feels around,  
 And Judah mourns through his extensive land.

O kindly aid me, thou celestial muse!  
 Whose inspiration taught the royal breast  
 Of Jesse's son his elevated strains;  
 Aid me, O muse, in solemn notes to sing,  
 A prophet's death, that claims our pious grief.

As from the summit of some trackless hill,  
 Bewilder'd pilgrims, dreading the black shades,  
 And sad inclemence of approaching night,  
 With eager look gaze on the setting sun,  
 And court his guidance to some peaceful cot;  
 So heav'n-born pilgrims, taught by thee, great GILL,  
 The sacred path to Paradise on high,  
 With throbbing bosoms, and with weeping eyes,  
 Saw thee descending, tho' with easy steps,  
 The steep of life, (eternal grace thy stay)  
 Down to the gloomy vale, where grisly death  
 Spreads ten-fold horror, roaring for his prey,  
 Not that we dreaded ought respecting thy  
 Victorious combat with the king of dread:  
 The mighty captain of salvation sought,  
 And, for thee, vanquish'd the alarming foe.  
 Nor was thy calm and steady soul disturb'd  
 By his loud terrors, as she safely pass'd  
 Through his dark borders, to the realms of light.  
 On truth eternal, and unchanging love,  
 Firm stood thy feet, 'midst the cold stream of death,  
 Smit with the mantle thy Redeemer wrought.  
 To part with thee, our ever-watchful guide,  
 To part with thee prompts our succeeding tears,  
 Excites our sorrow, and our fear alarms.  
 No more we see thy venerable face  
 In sacred Zion, at her solemn feasts,  
 Exciting pleasure, reverence and love.  
 No more we hear thy heart-reviving tongue,  
 Touch'd with a coal of bright celestial fire,  
 Unfold the wonders of redeeming grace!  
 No more new streams of truth divine we taste,  
 From thy unwearied and exhaustless quill!  
 Thy learned pen, incessantly employ'd,  
 For half an age, in thy great Master's cause,  
 Thy hand has chang'd for never-fading palms;  
 And thy vast labors in the gospel field,  
 For fifty-five revolving suns, receive  
 The bright reward of an immortal crown.

The radiant orb that brings the welcome day,  
 With chearing light, and genial warmth replete,

In the fair east, begins, with early dawn,  
 His rapid journey to the distant west; —  
 Spreads gladness round the gloomy beds of pain,  
 Bids sorrow smile, and melancholy sing; —  
 Invites the lab'rer to his various toil,  
 And guides the trav'ller in the dubious road; —  
 Succors each tribe of every growth and kind,  
 To life produc'd by his prolific beams; —  
 The russet plains with cheerful green adorns,  
 And barren hills cloaths with abounding corn; —  
 Warms the cold regions near the northern pole,  
 Thaws isles of ice, the frozen sea unbinds; —  
 Soars far above each interposing cloud,  
 And walks serene beyond the raging storm; —  
 When gently down the distant hill he slides,  
 And seems extinguish'd in the western sea,  
 He rides aloft still in the blaze of day,  
 Pursues unwearied his diurnal course,  
 And rises glorious in the crimson east.  
 So, heav'n-taught GILL! shone thy transparent breast,  
 With light divine, imbib'd from the sole fount  
 Of evangelic and celestial truth:  
 So glow'd thy bosom with the sacred fire  
 Of love supreme to thy redeeming God,  
 Divinely kindl'd in thy tender mind,  
 Nor ought abated with advancing age:  
 Hence thy loud praises for abounding grace,  
 Thy deep concern for never-dying souls,  
 And tender feelings for each brother's woe:  
 Hence, for thy Savior, thy unwearied zeal,  
 Thy various labors, and incessant toil:  
 And hence, thy relish and supreme esteem  
 For ev'ry stream of sacred truth, that flows  
 From revelation's hallow'd spring, unmix'd  
 With muddy error, and insipid forms.

Soon in the morning of thy days, began  
 Thy willing feet, with pleasing haste, to tread  
 The sacred paths of wisdom, peace, and joy:  
 Soon did thy tongue, in evangelic strains,  
 Begin to found the great Redeemer's name,  
 That brought salvation to a dying world:

And soon thy quill, dipt in atoning blood,  
 Began to paint the beauties of thy Lord,  
 His glorious features, and surprising love.  
 As the nice labors of the pencil grow  
 More fair and precious, with improving time;  
 So the productions of thy able pen,  
 Where attributes and truths divine are seen  
 In beauteous order, and engaging light,  
 Shall unborn ages lastingly admire.  
 Thy various volumes shall instruction yield,  
 To sons of learning, and to sons of grace;  
 Shall teach the pastor how the flock to feed,  
 And guide the footsteps of his willing charge.  
 When the late day of glorious grace shall dawn,  
 The impious Gentile and blaspheming Jew  
 Shall read, believing, thy prophetic page,  
 With deep repentance, and exalted joy.

Celestial truth display'd her beauteous charms  
 And radiant crown, to thy admiring eyes,  
 Engag'd thee early in her sacred cause,  
 And fir'd thy soul with ardor from above.  
 Pleas'd and resolv'd the heavenly fair to serve,  
 And combat error with undaunted zeal,  
 Thy stripling hand began to wield the sword  
 Divinely temper'd, with amazing skill.  
 Sword of the Spirit! piercing through the soul!  
 With this brave weapon thy heroic arm  
 Nobly defended evangelic truth,  
 And pierc'd the heart of heresy and sin:  
 On either side gigantic errors fell,  
 And Satan trembled for his dark domain.  
 Through the wide field of science intricate,  
 Where oft proud error his tall standard rears,  
 The vet'ran foe thou closely didst pursue,  
 And drive him headlong from his boasted ground.

With ceaseless ardor and progressive steps,  
 Thy nimble feet trod the extensive field  
 Of human knowledge, and her paths explor'd:  
 There thrives improvement; there religion reaps  
 Abundant fruit, though of terrestrial growth,  
 Sweet to the taste, and wholesome to the mind;

And there thou gather'dst a surprising fund  
 Of solid learning, sown, from age to age,  
 In foreign lands, Chaldea, Palestine,  
 Arabia, Egypt, Italy, and Greece.  
 Thy application, how intensely great!  
 Early and constant as the morning star:  
 Strong smells the lamp in all thy learned page.  
 How warm thy zeal for every truth divine!  
 How vast the toil of thy laborious pen!  
 Kind Heav'n be prais'd for such extensive grace,  
 And splendid gifts, bestow'd on mortal man.

Thus fraught thy mind, and thus enflam'd thy breast,  
 With heavenly wisdom, and seraphic love;  
 Bright didst thou shine in thy extensive sphere,  
 And light celestial round the nation spread:  
 Fair light divine, that penetrates the deep  
 Benighted caverns of the human mind;  
 The ransom'd tribes in paths of pleasure guides,  
 Through vales of sorrow, to the realms of joy;  
 Gilds the black horror of indignant death;  
 Sheds a bright luster on the gloomy grave;  
 And paints upon the ravish'd eye of faith,  
 The glorious image of eternal things.

Nor light alone springs from thy splendent page;  
 A genial warmth glows in each sacred line,  
 And thaws the center of the frozen soul;  
 From living faith's deep penetrating root,  
 Extracts obedience, purity, and joy;  
 Cheers the fair shoots of growing hope; and dyes  
 The golden produce of unfading love.

Sad and alarming, that pernicious weeds  
 Of vice and error should, in Zion, thrive  
 Beneath the rays of evangelic truth;  
 While not the rays of evangelic truth  
 Contain the poison, but the noxious weeds.  
 So, wanton minds, in former ages, turn'd  
 Heav'n's purest mercy into foulest crimes.

Deep didst thou dig in revelation's mine,  
 For soul-adorning truths, which far excel

The glowing rubies of the Persian court,  
 And shine transparent through thy golden page.  
 Close was thy converse, intimate and sweet,  
 For half a cent'ry, with the men of God,  
 Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, priests, and kings,  
 Who, from the mouth of inspiration, wrote  
 The sacred volume, thy industrious pen,  
 With arduous toil, and skill profound, explain'd.  
 The peerless glories of thy bleeding Lord,  
 Seen through creation, Providence, and grace;  
 The bright displays of everlasting love,  
 To all the heirs of never-fading bliss;  
 The awful wonders of the mystic cross;  
 And the vast joys of the celestial world, —  
 Were thy exalted and thy darling theme.  
 Thy nervous pen describ'd th' eternal hills,  
 Where the clear stream of full salvation springs,  
 The spreading tree of life immortal grows,  
 And golden mines of saving grace are found;  
 And how that stream of full salvation flows,  
 In vast meanders, down to earth and time,  
 At Calvary the guilt of Salem drowns,  
 Removes her stains, her fainting mind revives,  
 And fills her sons with never-ending joy.

Nor error's cloud, nor envy's baleful mist,  
 Can veil the splendor of thy radiant page.  
 Thy radiant page *harmonious* truth displays,  
 Deep penetration, and seraphic love.  
 Nor will it cease to shine from age to age,  
 Till the bright dawn of everlasting day.

Nought dead of thee, but thy dissolving clay,  
 Thy mental sorrows, and corporeal pains:  
 Here live thy labors to the end of time,  
 The monument of thy renowned name,  
 While thy bless'd soul in realms celestial dwells.  
 Sweet realms celestial! far beyond the reach  
 Of satan, sin, temptation, grief, and death:  
 Where fair perfection round each angel shines;  
 Where glory blazes on seraphic eyes;  
 Where crystal joy in streams eternal glides;  
 And endless life smiles in unfading bloom.



Oft to those realms, while yet to earth confin'd,  
 On faith's swift pinions, soar'd thy heav'n-born-soul;  
 With transport view'd the everlasting hills,  
 Bright with the sunshine of Jehovah's love;  
 And wish'd to tread the goodly mount of God.  
 But now, thy spirit, O immortal GILL,  
 Is thither wasted on angelic wings,  
 And plac'd among thy kindred saints on high.

Now thou beholdest with ecstatic joy,  
 And tearless eyes, that glorious face divine  
 We love unseen, whose beatific smiles  
 Shed endless bliss on heav'n's triumphant host.  
 Now thou unitest with the countless throng,  
 In ceaseless praises to the Lamb that died  
 His foes to conquer, and his friends to save.  
 Now thou communest, on exalted themes,  
 With saints and angels of superior size;  
 With Gabriel, Enoch, Abr'am, Moses, Paul,  
 Brine, Stennett, Wilson, and each bosom friend.  
 Now thou perusest with supreme delight,  
 The num'rous volumes of surprising grace,  
 Wherein are found the everlasting plan  
 Of new creation, infinitely fair, —  
 The matchless wonders of redeeming love, —  
 The fresh achievements of victorious truth, —  
 And growing list of spirits glorified:  
 Expecting, joyful, when thy slumb'ring dust,  
 Shall hear the trump of the arch-angel sound,  
 In thy Redeemer's glorious image rise  
 To life immortal, and thy soul rejoin.

Thus, while our tears bedew thy sleeping clay,  
 And trembling Zion thy departure mourns,  
 Thy deathless mind incessant joy imbibes,  
 In the bless'd presence of the God of love;  
 While flaming seraphs and triumphant saints,  
 Joy to behold thee in the realms of bliss.

Nor long our feet this howling desert tread,  
 Amidst the footsteps of voracious death,  
 Ere we ascend the everlasting mount,  
 Where all the ransom'd of the Lamb shall meet,

Behold his glory with immortal eyes,  
And sing his love in high seraphic strains.  
There would we join thee in harmonious praise,  
To HIM that reigns on heav'n's eternal throne,  
Dispensing bliss. And while we wishful gaze  
On the bright hills beyond the vale of woe,  
And view thee sitting, with perfection clad,  
On shining Tabor at thy Savior's side;  
We cease to weep around thy peaceful tomb,  
And bless thy exit to the world of joy.

O kind Redeemer, fain would we exchange  
These parched deserts, these annoying thorns,  
For the sweet streams and never-fading flow'rs,  
That glide and blossom in Emmanuel's land!  
Fain would we see thy long expected reign  
On the new earth, and for a thousand years:  
When the bless'd subjects of thy peerless crown,  
Shall round thee sit on their resplendent thrones;  
When death shall die; when grief shall ever cease,  
And bliss and glory in perfection bloom!

**FINIS.**