

exclamations go for nothing. This is neither better nor worse than calling names.

(4.) Be merciful. When you have gained an advantage over your opponent, do not press it to the uttermost. Remember the honest Quaker's advice to his friend a few years ago: "Art thou not content to lay John Wesley upon his back, but thou wilt tread his guts out?"

(5.) In writing, do not consider yourself as a man of fortune, or take any liberty with others on that account. These distinctions weigh little more in the literary world, than in the world of spirits. Men of sense simply consider what is written; not whether the writer be a lord or a cobbler.

Lastly. Remember, "for every idle word men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment!" Remember, "by thy words shalt thou be justified; or by thy words shalt thou be condemned!"

BRISTOL,
March 14, 1773.

AN ANSWER

TO

MR. ROWLAND HILL'S TRACT, ENTITLED,
"IMPOSTURE DETECTED."

Jealousy, cruel as the grave!—Canticles viii. 6.

Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, durst not bring a railing accusation against him.—Jude 9.

IN a tract just published by Mr. Rowland Hill, there are several assertions which are not true; and the whole pamphlet is wrote in an unchristian and ungentlemanlike manner. I shall first set down the assertions in order, and then proceed to the manner.

I. 1. "Throughout the whole of Paul's Epistles, he can scarcely write a single line without mentioning Christ." (Page 3.) I just opened on the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. In the last thirty verses of this chapter, how often does he mention Christ? In every single line?

2. "In that wretched harangue, which he calls a sermon, he makes himself the only subject of his own panegyrics." (Page 4.)

Being aware of this charge, I have said, "I am, in one respect, an improper person to give this information; as it will oblige me frequently to speak of myself, which may have the appearance of ostentation. But, with regard to this, I can only cast myself upon the candour of my hearers; being persuaded they will put the most favourable construction upon what is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. For there is no other person, if I decline the task, who can supply my place, who has a perfect knowledge of the work in question, from the beginning of it to this day." (*Sermons*, Vol. VII., p. 420.)

I give an account of the rise of this work at Oxford, from 1725 to 1735, pages 421, 422; at London and elsewhere, pages 422, 423. In all this there is not a line of panegyric upon myself, but a naked recital of facts. Nor is there any panegyric on any one in the following pages, but a plain account of the Methodist doctrines.

It may be observed, (if it is worth observing,) that I preached in the open air in October, 1735. Mr. Whitefield was not then ordained.

3. "Not a single line tending to vindicate, or illustrate, any one fundamental doctrine of the gospel appears throughout the whole." (*Imposture Detected*, p. 4.) Yes: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is one fundamental doctrine of the gospel: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is another. And both these are vindicated and illustrated for several pages together.

4. "His sacrilegious hand violates the ashes of the dead, traduces the character of Mr. Whitefield, insinuates that he was the first who preached in the open air; with the greatest bitterness of speech, traduces the dead, as a Dissenter from the Church." (Page 16.)

My words are: "A good man, who met with us at Oxford, while he was absent from us, conversed much with Dissenters,

and contracted a strong prejudice against the Church; and not long after he totally separated from us;" (*Ibid.*, page 429;) from my brother and me. This is every word I say about Mr. Whitefield. And is this "violating the ashes of the dead?" Is this "traducing his character?" Certainly not traducing him as "a Dissenter from the Church," much less "with the greatest bitterness of speech." Where is the bitterness? And this is the whole ground for pouring out such a flood of abuse, obloquy, and calumny! But Mr. Hill goes on: "With ungodly craft he claws up the ashes of the dead. He says Mr. Whitefield, by conversing with the Dissenters," (I mean chiefly the Presbyterians in New-England,) "contracted a strong prejudice against the Church." (*Imposture Detected*, p. 18.) I say so still. And how will Mr. Hill disprove it? Why, "he manifested his strong attachment to the Church, by erecting Tottenham-Court chapel, for the celebration of the Church Service; yea, and reading the Liturgy himself." Nay, if this proved *his* strong attachment to the Church, it will equally prove *mine*; for I have read the Liturgy as often as he; and I am now erecting a chapel (*hinc illæ lachrymæ!*)* for the celebration of the Church Service.

5. "He cast lots for his creed." (Page 8.) Never in my life. That paltry story is untrue. They who tell it cast no honour upon him who published a private letter, wrote in confidence of friendship.

6. "He gives up the righteousness of Christ." (Page 9.) No more than I give up his Godhead. But I renounce both the phrase and thing, as it is explained by Antinomian writers.

7. "He gives up the atonement of Christ. The atonement and the righteousness of Christ he considers as mere words." (Page 10.) Nothing can be more false. It is not concerning these I advise,

Projicere ampullas, et sesquipedalia verba.†

"But a man cannot fear God, and work righteousness evangelically, without living faith." Most certainly. And who denies this? I have proved it an hundred times.

8. "He renounced the grand Protestant doctrine of justifica-

* Hence proceed those tears.—EDIT.

† This line from Horace's Art of Poetry is thus translated by Roscommon:—

"Forget their swelling and gigantic words."—EDIT.

tion by faith alone, in those horrid Minutes." I never renounced it yet, and I trust never shall. The "horrid Minutes" Mr. Fletcher has so effectually vindicated, that I wonder Mr. Hill should mention them any more.

9. "After all possible candour and forbearance had been shown to him," (By whom? by Mr. Toplady, Mr. Richard Hill, or Mr. Rowland, who has excelled them all?) "this interloper" (a pretty word, but what does it mean?) "has totally renounced the gospel of Christ." (Page 11.) Totally false; unless by the gospel he meant Antinomian Calvinism.

10. "In his last year's Minutes, he speaks of the doctrines of grace" (Calvinism) "with as much venom as ever." Just as much. Let the reader judge. The words occur page 11:—

"Q. 26. Calvinism has been the greatest hinderance of the work of God. What makes men swallow it so greedily?"

"A. Because it is so pleasing to flesh and blood; the doctrine of final perseverance in particular.

"Q. 27. What can be done to stop its progress?"

"A. (1.) Let all our Preachers carefully read our tracts, and Mr. Fletcher's and Sellon's.

"(2.) Let them preach universal redemption frequently and explicitly; but in love and gentleness; taking care never to return railing for railing. Let the Calvinists have all this on their side."

*Ecce signum!**

11. "He is most marvellously curious in forbidding his Preachers to say, My Lady."

Were ever words so distorted and misrepresented! The words in the Minutes are:—

"Do not imitate them (the Calvinists of Trevecka in particular) in screaming, allegorizing, calling themselves ordained, boasting themselves of their learning, the College, or My Lady." (Page 12.)

Is this "forbidding them to say, My Lady?" No more than forbidding them to make a bow.

12. "A vast number of sluts had taken possession of the preaching-houses," (No; the preaching-houses were not in question,) "and female servants, by courtesy called maids," (civil and kind! But neither were servants in question,) "are

* "Behold the token!"—EDIT.

filthy slovens in their persons, dress, and manœuvres." (See, Mr. Hill understands French!) "So Mr. John gives the public to understand." (No, not Mr. John, but Mr. Hill. He goes on:) "And how is this mighty grievance to be redressed? 'Why,' says this Solomon in a cassock," (Is not that witty?) "'sluts are to be kept out, by not letting them in.'" (*Imposture Detected*, p. 12.) And is all this wit bestowed upon three poor lines? The words are just these:—

"Q. Complaint is made that sluts spoil our houses. How then can we prevent this?

"A. Let no known slut live in any of them." (*Minutes*.)

What a colour does Mr. Hill put upon this! But, meantime, where is conscience? Where is honour?

13. "He denies the doctrines of the Church of England;" (page 13;) that is, absolute predestination. Mr. Sellon has abundantly proved, that this is no doctrine of the Church of England. When Mr. Hill has answered his arguments, I will give him some more. The objections against lay Preachers (which come ill from Mr. Hill) I have largely answered in the "Third Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." But I know not that any lay Preachers in connexion with me, either baptize children, or administer the Lord's supper. I never entreated anything of Bishop Erasmus, who had abundant unexceptionable credentials as to his episcopal character. Nor did he "ever reject any overture" made by me. (Page 14.) Herein Mr. Hill has been misinformed. I deny the fact; let him produce his evidence. The perfection I hold is so far from being contrary to the doctrine of our Church, that it is exactly the same which every Clergyman prays for every Sunday: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name." I mean neither more nor less than this. In doctrine, therefore, I do not dissent from the Church of England.

14. However, "he renounces the discipline of the Church." (Page 15.) This objection too I have answered at large, in my Letters to Dr. Church,—another kind of opponent than Mr. Rowland Hill; a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian; and as such he both spoke and wrote.

15. "He falsely says, Almost all who were educated at Trevecka, except those that were ordained, and some of them too, disclaimed the Church, nay, and spoke of it upon all

occasions with exquisite bitterness and contempt." This is a terrible truth. If Lady Huntingdon requires it, I can procure affidavits, both concerning the time and place.

16. "He professes he stands in no need of Christ's righteousness." (Page 23.) I never professed any such thing. The very sermon referred to, the fifth in the first volume, proves the contrary. But I flatly deny that sense of imputed righteousness which Mr. Hill contends for.

17. "He expressly maintains the merit of good works, in order to justification." (Page 24.) Neither expressly nor implicitly. I hope Mr. Hill has not read Mr. Fletcher's Checks, nor my sermons on the subject. If he has not, he has a poor excuse for this assertion: If he has, he can have no excuse at all.

18. "He contradicts himself concerning Enoch and Elijah. See his Notes, the former edition." (Page 28.) Wisely directed! for Mr. Hill knew the mistake was corrected in the next edition.

19. "He is ever raising malicious accusations against the lives and doctrines of all Calvinists, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, throughout all the kingdom." (Page 29.)

Thousands of Calvinists know the contrary, both Churchmen and Dissenters.

20. "He exerts all his art to irritate the civil powers against all the people of God." (Page 30.) "He says, the Dissenters revile and lightly esteem the sacred person of the King." I answer, (1.) Are the Dissenters, are the Calvinists, "all the people of God?" (2.) If you think they are, do all these defend the American rebels? Who affirms it? I hope not a quarter, not a tenth part, of them. (3.) Do I say, all the Dissenters revile the King? I neither say so, nor think so. Those that do, are guilty of what you impute to me. They "irritate the civil powers" against themselves.

21. "He says he will no more continue in fellowship with Calvinists than with thieves, drunkards, or common swearers." No; I say I will have no fellowship with those who rail at their governors, (be they Calvinists or Arminians,) who speak all manner of evil of them in private, if not in public too. "Such is the character he gives of the Calvinistic Methodists." (Page 31.) I do not; no more than of the Arminians. But I know there have been such among them: If they are

wiser now, I am glad. In the mean time let him wear the cap whom it fits, be it Mr. Wilkes or Mr. Hill himself.

22. "This apostate miscreant" (civil!) "invites the King and his ministers to fall upon"—whom? those who "rail at their governors, who speak all manner of evil of them, in private, if not in public too." I am glad they cry out, though before they are hurt; and I hope they will cease to speak evil of dignities, before those who bear not the sword in vain fall upon them, not for their opinion, but their evil practices.

23. "He says, Calvinists and all Dissenters are rebels." (Page 32.) I never said or thought so. "But a few years ago, he himself thought the Americans were in the right." I did; for then I thought that they sought nothing but legal liberty: But as soon as I was convinced they sought independency, I knew they were in the wrong. Mr. Evans's low and scurrilous tracts have been confuted over and over.

24. "He trumpets himself forth as the greatest man that has ever lived since Constantine the Great." (Page 37.) This too is in italics; it might have been in capitals; but it is an utter falsehood. Mr. Hill might as well have said, "He trumpets himself forth as the King of Great Britain." The passage to which I suppose he alludes, and the only one he can allude to, is this: "When has true religion, since the time of Constantine the Great, made so large a progress within so small a space?" (*Sermons*, Vol. VII., p. 425.) Is this "trumpeting myself forth as the greatest man that has ever lived since" then?

25. "All his disciples are commanded not to read what is wrote against him." (*Imposture Detected*, page 38.) No; it is the Tabernacle disciples are commanded not to read Mr. Fletcher. And reason good; for there is no resisting the force of his arguments. Thousands, if they read them with any candour, would see that "God willeth all men to be saved."

26. Mr. Hill concludes: "I should have been glad to have addressed him in the softest and most tender style. But those are weapons he turns to ridicule." (Page 39.) When? Show me a single instance. Indeed I never was tried. What Calvinist ever addressed me in a soft and tender style? And which of them did I turn to ridicule? I am utterly guiltless in this matter.

II. 1. I have now done with the merits of the cause, having refuted the charge in every article. And as to the manner, let any man of candour judge, whether I have not spoken the

truth in love. I proceed now to take some notice of the manner wherein Mr. Hill speaks: To illustrate which, I need only present a few of his flowers to the impartial reader.

2. "All the divinity we find in this wretched harangue which he calls a sermon, are a few bungling scraps of the religion of nature, namely, love to God and love to man, which an Heathen might have preached as well as Mr. John;" (polite!) "and probably in a much better manner. Erase half a dozen lines, and I defy any one to discover whether the lying apostle of the Foundery be a Jew, a Papist, a Pagan, or a Turk." (Page 4.)

"Else I should have treated his trumpery with the silence and contempt it deserves. But to see Mr. Whitefield scratched out of his grave by the claws of this *designing wolf*," (there is a metaphor for you!) "is enough to make the very stones cry out, or (which would be a greater miracle still) redden even a Wesley's forehead with a blush." (Page 5.) I think it would be a greater miracle still to make a wolf blush.

"The dictatorial Mr. John lyingly maintains argument enough for the gaping dupes whom he leads by the nose." (Page 6.)

"He and his lay lubbers go forth to poison the minds of men." (Page 11.) Are not then the lay lubbers and the gaping dupes just fit for each other?

But who are these lay lubbers? They are "Wesley's ragged legion of preaching tinkers, scavengers, draymen, and chimney-sweepers." (Page 21.)

3. "No man would do this, unless he were as unprincipled as a rook, and as silly as a jackdaw."

"His own people say, 'He is a very poor preacher;' and that most of his laymen, raw and ignorant as they are, preach much more to the purpose. Indeed, the old gentleman has lost his teeth. But should he not then cease mumbling with his gums?" (Page 25.)

"Why do they not keep the shatter-brained old gentleman locked up in a garret?" (Page 36.)

4. "I doubt not but for profit' sake he would profess himself a stanch Calvinist." (Page 16.)

"The Rev. Mr. John, Mr. Whitefield's *quondam* understrapper." (*Ibid.*) How sadly then did he mistake, when he so often subscribed himself, "Your dutiful, your obliged and affectionate, son!"

"Mark the venom that now distils from his graceless pen."
 "The venomous quill of this gray-headed enemy to all righteousness." (Pages 17, 19.)

5. "The wretch thought himself safe, but the crafty slanderer is taken in his own net." (Page 20.)

"This truly Socinian, truly heathen, truly infernal, passage is found in that heretic's sermon." (Page 23.)

"The most rancorous pretences that ever actuated the prostituted pen of a venal profligate." (Page 30.)

"With him devils and Dissenters are terms synonymous. If so, what a devil must he be!" (*Ibid.*)

"The sole merit of the disappointed Orlando Furioso" (how pretty and quaint that is!) "is, seeking to enkindle a flame of ecclesiastical and civil discord:" (No; to put it out; which, I bless God, is done already, to a great degree:). "And his sole perfection consists in perfect hatred of all goodness and all good men." (Page 31.)

Now, let all the world judge between Mr. Hill and me. I do not say all the religious world; but all that have the smallest portion of common sense and common humanity. Setting every thing else aside, suppose him to be my superior in rank, fortune, learning, and understanding: Is this treatment for a young man to give to an old one, who, at least, is no fool, and who, before Mr. Hill was born, was in a more honourable employ than he is ever likely to be? What can inspire this young hero with such a spirit, and fill his mouth with such language? Is it any credit to his person, or to his cause? What can men think either of one or the other? If he does not reverence me, or common decency, should he not reverence himself? Why should he place himself on a level with "the ragged legion of tinkers, scavengers, draymen, chimney-sweepers?" Nay, there are many of these who would be ashamed to let such language come out of their mouth. If he writes any more, let him resume the scholar, the gentleman, and the Christian. Let him remember Him who "left us an example, that we might tread in his steps: In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, peradventure God may bring them to the knowledge of the truth."

LONDON,
 June 28, 1777.