This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.



https://books.google.com





4106.86.27.

THREE

LETTERS,

Written by RICHARD HILL, Efq.

PRICE SIX-PENCEJ





THREE

LETTERS,

WRITTEN BY

RICHARD HILL, Esq.

TO THE

Rev. J. FLETCHER, Vicar of Madeley.

In the YEAR 1773.

SETTING FORTH

Mr. HILL's Reasons for declining any further Controversy relative to Mr. Wesley's Principles.

I am for peace, but when I speak they are for war. Pfa. cxx. 7.

Behold, for peace I had great bitterness. Ifa. xxxviii. 17.

$SHREWSBUR\Upsilon:$

Printed by T. Wood; Sold by E. and C. DILLY, in the *Poultry*; J. MATTHEWS, in the *Strand*; and all other Bookfellers in Town and Country.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

TIEST MISSER

une des l'ordines. Lordigianis des l'operations de la compartical de la compartical de la compartical de la compartical de la comp

THREE LETTERS, &c.

THE most injurious misrepresentations having been industriously propagated, concerning the reasons of my declining all further controverfy relative to Mr. Wesley's minutes; it having even been affirmed that I had recanted my fentiments, and had begged Mr. Wesley's pardon for having written against his principles; and these reports having been spread with such amazing considence, that, not only many of the friends of truth in general, but my own friends in particular, have been stagger'd at them, I think myself under the difagreeable necessity of appearing once more in public upon the occasion, not to carry on the difpute, for I have not read a fingle page which treats on the subject, fince I wrote my Finishing Stroke, but only to lay before the religious world, my real motives for discontinuing it: And as these will be best

feen

feen by the private letters which I wrote to Mr. Fletcher, I have been prevailed upon to let them go out in their original dress, not having had the least design of publishing them at the time they were written, tho' I judged it prudent to preserve copies of them.

I am told that one Thomas Oliver, (alias Olivers,) a journeyman Cordwainer, has attempted to write a pamphlet against me; which pamphlet, though in itself black of the grain, was afterwards lacquer'd up, new soled, and heel-tapped by his master, before it was exposed to sale. I hear also that the man has begged a Greek motto, being himfelf (if I may credit a particular friend of his,) most profoundly ignorant of the very rudiments of the language, to flick up in his title page; however if this important disciple of St. Crispin was like Pontius Pilate of old, to have prefixed an infcription in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, (and he might as well have borrowed a scrap of all the languages, as of one of them); I should not take the least notice of him, or read a line of his composition, any more than, if I was travelling on the road, I would flop to lash, or even order my footman to lash

lash every impertinent little quadruped f in a village that should come out and bark at me, but would willingly let the contemptible animal have the satisfaction of thinking he had driven me out of sight.—But I ought to implore the kind reader's forgiveness for having dwelt so long upon a subject, as well as upon an object, of such absolute insignish-cance; and shall therefore take my leave of both with recommending the following words to Mr. Oliver's consideration, "Ne Sutor ultra crepidam." In plain English, Sir, "Let not the Cobler go beyond his last."

But my motives for reading no more of Mr. Fletcher's works are very different. This gentleman, I allow, shines conspicuously in the republic of letters. As a man of distinguished parts, lively imagination, and great learning, he is certainly an able defender of the faith adopted by Mr. Wesley; and I consess that it is a mark of his condescension that he ever deigns to take up his pen against so feeble an

[†] I beg to inform Thomas Oliver, (alias Olivers,) that the word
quadruped means having four feet; from two Latin words quatuor pedes.

B 2 antagonist

antagonist as the author of Pietas Oxoniensis: But because I have seen these noble endowments profiituted to the little end of advancing a party; because I have detected fo many mifrepresentations of facts throughout his publications; because I have feen fo many unbecoming artifices in his manner of making quotations, which even in a writer on profane subjects can never be justifiable, and have discovered so much declamation, chicanery, and evafion to throw dust into the eyes of unwary readers; I fay, upon these accounts, I really cannot with any degree of fatisfaction, whilst my mind is fimply and honestly bent in the pursuit of truth, read the works of one, who I am in continual fuspicion is endeavouring to mislead me by false glosses, and pious frauds; and whilft he is unreasonably crying out against the want of candor in the Calvinists, will not even fuffer them to be the explainers of their own doctrines, but in the most unwarrantable manner, draws confequences and conclusions from them which they themselves (as he himself very well knows) detest and abhor. However it is a comfort to reflect, that every cavil which Semipelagians, Papifts, Arminians.

minians, Perfectionists, and the whole body of careless: and formal Clergy now bring against us, were before brought against the Apostle Paul, and these though separately very numerous, yet collectively may all be reduced to two, first that our doctrine makes God unjust; secondly, that it tends to licentiousness; and if it were not liable to the same objections that Paul's was, it could not be the gospel which Paul preached; but Mr. Wesley's gospel is not liable to these objections, ergo Mr. Wesley and St. Paul preach a different gospel; however, to both the one and the other of these trite cavils, we answer as the Apostle has already answered for us, God forbid: and I do not conceive it possible for the Checkist himself to bring a single charge against Calvinism as tending to en-

courage

^{*} That these objections were brought against St. Paul above 1700 years before they were adopted by Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, is clear from the following scriptures:

Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?

Is there unrighteousness with God?

Shall we continue in fin that grace may abound?

Shall we fin because we are not under the law but under grace?

See also these cavils fully stated and answered by the Apostle, Rom. iii. 5, 6, 7, 8,

courage evil, but what might equally hold good against those words of the beloved Disciple, if any man fin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteour. "Oh! (might an objector fay,) this is fine licentious doctrine! here is the Crispian "Gospel without disguise! sin as much as we will, " the advocacy of Christ still prevails, the covenant " always standeth fast in behalf of the elect. In vain " O John dost thou come in with thy palliating falvo, and fay I write unto you that ye fin not, when with the same breath, thou affirmest that if any " man do fin we have an advocate with the Father. "How dost thou by such unguarded speeches let in "Antinomianism full tide upon the Church! For if the advocacy of Christ still prevails whenever a. " believer fins, he needs not trouble himself what " lengths in wickedness and impiety he may run, but may upon this principle commit adultery and, murder and still continue a pleasant child, a man "after God's own heart?" Thus argues fallen nasure and unenlightened reason, and thus we be Manderousty reported, and some affirm that we say let us that good may come, whose damnation is just. Rut Rom, iii, 8.

But there is no end of reasoning with men of a Pharisaic cast; and indeed I have seen so much of their spirit and tempers, and have experienced such ungenerous treatment from them, when "love! love!" was all their cry, that from hencesorth I desire to say " let me fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of Arminians, Persectionists, and Meritmongers." §

As to what passed between Mr. Wesley and me it was briefly this; Mr. Wesley hearing from Mr.

And whereas Mr. Fletcher produces the authority of one Williams, whom he calls a Puritan Divine, for many of the accufations which he has brought against us, I beg to acquaint the reader, that tho' this Williams was indeed a Puritan Divine, yet his doctrane was protested against by a large number of the sound orthodox men of that time, as rank Neonomianism, between which and Antinomianism, I own I cannot split the hair; for if the latter makes all obedience to the Law needless, the former in a manner annihilates the Law itself.—But Mr. Williams was a Puritan Divine.—And Mr. Fletcher is a Clergyman of the Church of England; but does it follow from thence, that Mr. Fletcher holds the doctrines of that Church? just as necessarily as that Mr. Williams held the doctrines of the Puritans, because he was a Nonconformist.

Fletcher

I effeciment an happiness that my little piece intitled "A Present for your Neighbour" was published at the very time when the try of Antinomianism rang loudest against all those who chose rather to abide by the determinations of our Lord and his Apolles, than by those of Mr. Wesley and his Associates; as I hope it carries with the a standing constitution of the base slanders, with which I and all who believe the same truths have been loaded from a certain quarter.

:Fletcher that I had suppressed the sale of my books, wrote me a short and civil letter, in which he told me that he himself intended to write no more; that he hoped all would be peace for the time to come, and that we should think and let think, bear and forbear with one another; or fomething to that effect. This letter I took kindly of Mr. Wesley, and therefore as I went foon afterwards to London, I embraced the opportunity of going one evening in company with the Reverend Mr. Pentycross to West-Street Chapel, and after service Mr. Pentycross introduced me to Mr. Wesley, when I thanked him for his letter, assured him of my intentions to drop the controverfy, and added that I hoped there would be no more faid upon the subject from any quarter. Mr. Wesley took me by the hand, assured me of his loving pacific disposition, and we parted very good friends. This I declare was in fubstance the whole that passed between Mr. Wesley and me, as he himfelf as well as Mr. Pentycross, can testify: how therefore this could be magnified into a recantation of my principles, or an acknowledgment to Mr. Wesley that I had done wrong in writing against his minutes, let all who read judge. But

But I hasten to transcribe my letters to Mr. Fletcher, from which I hope it will clearly appear from what motives I gave up the controversy, and stopped the sale of my pamphlets concerning it; however, I must first observe, that though I am certainly guilty of no breach of considence in publishing my letters to Mr. Fletcher, yet I should think myself unpardonable in publishing his to me: as therefore I would not on any account betray a private correspondence, I leave it to Mr. Fletcher's discretion whether he chooses to send his answers to me abroad into the world or not; and if he have not reserved copies of them, I am ready to let him have the originals in his own hand writing.

I must also add that though I cannot read any more of Mr. Fletcher's books, for the reasons already given, and consequently cannot write any thing else on the subject, yet after what has happened, I now think it the way of duty to permit the Paris conversation, the sive letters to Mr. Fletcher, the review of Mr. Wesley's doctrines with remarks on the third check annexed, Logica Wesleiensis, or the Farrago double distilled, and the Finishing Stroke,

C

which

which are all I ever wrote on the controversy, to be again sold, in order that both friends and enemies may, if possible, be convinced that though I wished for peace, I never retracted my sentiments.

LETTER I

Occasioned by my hearing (tho' it appears the report was ill-grounded,) that Mr. Fletcher had done with the controversy.

Rev. and Dear Sir, Hawkstone, July 31, 1773:

Am credibly informed that you wish to have done with controversy, and that you are resolved to publish nothing more on the subject of the late disputes. Upon the strength of this information, as well as to maintain my own desire of promoting peace, I shall write to my bookseller in London, to sell no more of any of my pamphlets which relate to the minutes; and for whatever may have savor'd too much of my own spirit, either in my answers to you, or to Mr. Wesley, I sincerely crave the forgiveness of you both, and should be most heartily glad.

glad if no person whatever, were to add another word to what has been already faid on either fide. And permit me to hint, that if some restraint could be laid upon feveral of Mr. Wesley's preachers, particularly upon one Peronet (of whose superlatively abusive and insolent little piece. I believe Mr. Charles Welley testified his abhorrence from the Pulpit.) I think (under God) it might be a falutary means of preventing the poison of vain janglings, from spreading any further. But the it is the defire of my foul, to live in harmony, love, and friendship, with you, dear fir, yet if God has ever shewn me any thing of my own heart, or of the truths of his own word, I must and still do think that your principles are exceedingly erroneous; and of this I ever cherish a fecret hope that God will convince you, in the course of his dealings with your foul.

Wishing you an abundance of grace, mercy and peace, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Rev. and dear fir,

Your fincere friend in the Gospel of Emmanual,

R. HILL.

C 2

P. S.

P. S. I wish, dear fir, you would make Mr. Wesley acquainted with the contents of this letter, and if I stop the sale of my books, I hope that of the sour Checks, will be stopped also.

L E T T E R II.

The copy of this letter bears no date, but I conclude by the contents, that it was written in August 1773.

Rev. and dear Sir,

A Ttendance at the affizes, and multiplicity of business in my office as a justice of the peace, have prevented my returning a more speedy answer to your letter, in which I find you complain of my having treated you with severity; this obliges me to request you to call to mind the sour checks, and then to say what right the author of them has to complain of severity: read over the sneering mock proclamation given by the sour secretaries of state of the predestinarian department; read the charges

brought



^{*} Fourth Check, p. 188.

brought against our celebrated pulpits; and if you can still justify what you have advanced, you may then with better reason accuse me of severity. It now pains me to bring these things to your remembrance, as I was determined, when I wrote last, to avoid every shadow of an accusation against you for what was passed, and I think you must acknowledge, that my letter was friendly: but your introduction of the subject obliges me to say what I have.

I wish I had any grounds to recal what I have faid concerning your having laid very great misre-presentations before the public, in your quotations from Mr. Wesley's Minutes, and in the harmony you would make your readers believe, there is between the Resormers and Puritans, and Mr. Wesley and yourself; for it is most sure that your principles and theirs are as wide as east from west.

How far it may be fair to alter the title of your fermon, from what it stands in the manuscript, must be left to yourself: however, I am sure, I have no objection to it as you propose to print it. As to your explanatory notes, and additions in brakets, you know, Sir, that by these you may easi-

fee proper. Clarke and Prieftly by explanatory notes and additions in brackets, can explain away the divinity of Christ, Socious his attonement, &c. &c. Teyler the corruption of human nature. As you intend to introduce my worthless name into your next publication, I must beg to decline the obliging offer you make of my perusing your M.S.S. and ann, Rev. and dear Sir,

earl ! Your fincere friend for Christ's fake.

· 1. 111 .

RICH HILL

P.S. As you have composed some creeds for the calvinists, (particularly that contained in the proclamation of the sour predestinarian secretaries) I have also composed one from the sentiments of arminians and persectionists, and though I can scarcely read it without horror, yet it is such as your principles must unavoidable end in; however I hope I shall not publish it.‡

LET-

[†] Mr. Fletcher's continuation of the controverfy with so much warmth, seems now to call for this creed, and therefore the reader wall find it at the end of the piece.

LETTER HE

Rev. and dear Sir,

Hawkstone, Dec. 23, 1773

Take the liberty of requesting you, to distribute among the poor of Madely, the inclosed two guineas, in such way and manner as you shall judge sit and proper.

I fent your last letter to my Brother Rowland, who is now at Tottenham Court Chapel, and suppose he received it. However, I wave saying any thing of the subject of it, as it is my design to have totally done with the controversy, which I am sirmly personated has not done me any good, (excuse me if I say "I wish you to examine closely whether it has done you any") and therefore for my own part I desire to be humbled before God, as well as to ask your forgiveness and Mr. Wesley's, (to whom I purpose making a visit of peace and love when I go to London,) for every thing that has savor'd of irony or of my own spirit, in what I have written relative to his minutes; and tho' I believe your sentiments to

be

be erroneous, yet I esteem and honor you for all you have said against sin; and for the stand you have made for practical religion in this Laodicean Antinomian age; and truly concerned should I be. if any expressions have dropped from my pen. which might make the readers think lightly of finunder the notion of honoring the Saviour from fin. But as God can bear me witness that I had no intentions of this fort. fo I am certain that who foever makes Christ all their falvation, can never at the same time make him a minister of sin: and I trustthe hour will come, when under a deep fense of your own finfulness and nothingness, you will be glad to lay hold of some of those comfortable gospel truths, which now you even look upon as dangerous poison.

In consequence of my former letter to you, I wrote to my bookseller in London, and told Mr. Eddowes in Shrewsbury, to stop the sale of all my publications, concerning the controversy between us, and (unless God shews me that it is matter of duty so to do) I shall not revoke this order; it being my earnest desire for the time to come, if it be possible

possible, to live peaceably with all men; and tho I cannot approve some of Mr. Wesley's doctrines. because I believe them to be contrary to scripture, and am fure they are contrary to my own experience, yet as I am perfuaded that many who are the excellent of the earth are in his connections, I wish to confirm my love towards them on account of the grace that is in them, and whilft I reject their errors, still to esteem their persons, nor ever to say or do any thing that may hurt that common cause for which we ought all to be contending, or which may grieve the weakest or meanest of Christ's people.

These, dear sir, are my present sentiments and intentions, and you have my free permission to declare them upon the house top. An afflictive breach which God has lately been pleafed to make in our family, by depriving me of a most tender and affectionate mother, calls upon me to beg your prayers, that the fudden stroke may be fanctified to me and to us all, and loudly bids me rememberthat I am but a stranger and pilgrim here below. May the Lord give me a pilgrim's spirit! and may **5** .7

n

Digitized by Google

he

he give us both a right judgment in all things. Permit me to subscribe myself,

Rev. and dear fir,
your fincere friend,
and fervant in Christ,
RICHARD HILL.

P. S. Upon fecond thoughts, I believe it will be fafer, to leave the two guineas with Mrs. G——e, till the can convey them to you with fafety.

EAVING the reader to follow his own unbiassed judgment concerning the foregoing letters, I beg leave to give an extract from two, which I lately received, from a very eminent minister in the Church of England, as his observations appeared to me both just and striking.

"I have been informed of the overtures you have made to Mr. F----r for reconciliation, and of the treatment you have met with in return; but we must bear with this, and worse, from them who think they do well in slandering our doctrine, and us for it. It is our portion, which

we must expect and prepare for. And as to se appealing to the world, or even to many real. 46 Christians, who know but the first principles in " defence of the deep things of GoD, it is apse pealing to judges who are strongly prejudiced " against us. There is no possibility of admitting " the truths we contend for from the authority " of God's own word, 'till we are taught them 45 by himself; the most that even education can " do in this matter, is to produce a partiality to-" wards them of a very flight and fuperficial nature. " and which, when hard preffed by arguments " from the Arminian, must give way. But when " watching, and prayer, and faith in Christ, and " the leadings of the Holy Ghoft, have made us to " fee ourselves, the Law, the Covenant, and Christ: " we then fee the plan awful, great, excellent, and " agreeable to all the divine perfections."

The same dear friend, in another letter which I received since the above, thus expresses himself:

"I have not feen Mr. F——r's last piece, but
"I have feen enough of his writings, to convince
"me, that his heart is full of bitter prejudice, and
D 2 "his

is his mind blinded to fuch a degree, that he will " furiously attack every one who differs from him " one tittle: (Witness his slandering Mr. Berridge's " book, as Antinomian, and particularly that part of which exposes the common error about fincere " obedience.) Whilst every child might see that "Mr. Berridge speaks only of that obedience " which is substituted in the place of Christ, Mr. F----r exclaims and abuses, as if Mr. Berridge " disparaged the obedience of faith and love.---" Neither am I surprised to hear how Mr. Wesley's " preachers have represented your overture for " peace. I know them and their spirit intimately. "The fact is, they look upon themselves as the only people of God; opposition therefore to them " is fighting against Gon; and few of them will " flick at misrepresenting or injuring any one, " who dares to differ from them.--But patience, " meekness, love, and zeal, manifesting themselves " in our works and conversation, are our best " weapons. "I hope your own foul is full of defires after

"God. I often think of dear Mr. Hervey; I

[· 23]

"visited him in the years 55 and 56, eighteen years fince; the force of that flaming love and deep humility with which he spoke, still reproves, humbles, and condemns me, and excites me to long to resemble him a little.—Nothing but this, my dear friend, is worth living for; and when, in answer to constant servent prayer, this grace of being made a burning and shiring light is given, our example will prove the frongest plea for the excellency of our principles, at least it will consute the slanderers of them, as if they were of pernicious tendency."

TO these extracts let me subjoin the sollowing title, which a lay gentleman of great learning and abilities drew up, after reading Mr. Fletcher's Checks, as what he judged a proper one to be prefixed to all his writings:

A:

TREATISE,

By the Rev. J. FLETCHER.

SHEWING.

- I. That God is not all in all.
- II. That the Lord Jesus Christ did not know whom he died for.
- III. That glorified faints have none to thank but themselves for their future happiness.
- IV. That heaven shall be bestowed on them only who deserve it.
- V. That poor *Pietas Oxoniensis* has given up all reasonable expectation of a place in the mansions of bliss, by indulging such a wicked notion, as that salvation is of free grace.
- VI. That the faid P. O. is inexcusable for adhering to the opinion of Paul of Tarsus, in preference to that of John Fletcher, of Madely.

Somewhat

Somewhat fimilar to this title, is the following confession of faith, which however shocking, not to say blasphemous, it may appear to the humble Christian, must inevitably be adopted, if not in express words, yet in substance, by every Arminian, and Persectionist whatsoever; tho' the last article of it chiefly concerns such as are ordained Ministers in the Church of England.

A

CREED,

F O R

Arminians and Perfectionists.

I.

Believe that Jefus Christ died for the whole human race, and that he had no more love towards those who now are, or hereaster shall be in glory, than for those who now are, or hereaster shall be listing up their eyes in torments; and that the one are no more indebted to his grace than the other.

J 9711

II.

I believe that divine grace is indiscriminately given to all men; and that God foreseeing that by far the greater part of the world would reject this grace, doth nevertheless bestow it upon them, in order to heighten their torments, and to encrease their damnation in Hell.

III.

I believe it depends wholly on the will of the creature whether he shall or shall not receive any benefit from divine grace.

IV.

mind is enmity against God, yet I believe that there is something in the heart of every natural man, that can nourish and cherish the grace of God, and that the sole reason why this grace is effectual insome and not in others, is entirely owing to themestimes, and to their own saithfulness, and not to the distinguishing love and savor of God.

V.

I believe that GoD fincerely wishes for the falvation of many who never will be faved; confequently that it is intirely owing to want of ability in GoD, that what he so earnestly willeth is not accomplished.

VI.

I believe that the Redeemer not only shed his precious blood, but prayed for the salvation of many souls who are now in Hell; consequently that his blood was shed in vain, and his prayer rejected by his Father, and that therefore he told a gross untruth when he said "I know that thou hearest me always."

VII.-

I believe that God foreseeing some men's nature will improve the grace which is given them; and that they will repent, believe, and be very good, elects them unto salvation.

VIII.

I believe that the love and favor of him with

E whom

whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and whose gifts and callings are without repentance, * may vary, change, and turn every hour, and every moment, according to the behaviour of the creature.

IX.

I believe that the feed of the word by which God's children are born again, is a corruptible feed, and that so far from enduring for ever, (as that mistaken apostle Peter rashly affirms,) that it is frequently rooted out of the hearts of those in whom it is sown.

X.

I believe that Christ doth not always give unto his sheep eternal life, but that they often perish, and are by the power of Satan frequently plucked out of his hand.

XI.

Though I have folemnly subscribed to the 39 Articles of the Church of England, and have af-

firmed



^{*} Rom. xi. 29. Jam. i. 17.

firmed that I believe them from my heart, yet I think our Reformers were profoundly ignorant of true christianity, when they declared in the 9th Article that "the infection of nature doth remain in them which are regenerate," and in the 15th that "ALL WE, the rest (Christ only excepted). altho' baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things, and if we fay we have no fin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This I totally deny, because it cuts up root and branch, my favorite doctrine of Perfection; and therefore let Peter, Paul, James or John, say what they will, and let Reformers and Martyrs join their fyren fong, their eyes were at best but half opened (for want of a little Foundery eye-falve,) therefore I cannot look upon them as adult believers and fathers in Christ.

J. F.

J. W.

w. s.

Now, dear reader, hoping I have fully confinced thee that I have neither recanted St. Paul's fentiments, nor espoused those of Mr. Wesley; I say no more, but that I wish thee grace, mercy and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

FINIS

The state of the s

🐔 i sulla ca 🕍 là la 🖂 🏥 là i

PRESERVATION SERVICE

SHELFMARK 4106 BB27

THIS BOOK HAS BEEN
MICROFILMED (199 3)

RPI
MICROFILM NO SEE ESTC

