1974

The Preaching of the Reverend Rowland Hill (1744-1833), Surrey Chapel, London.

Morris L. Mccauley

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE PREACHING OF THE REVEREND ROWLAND HILL

(1744-1833), SURREY CHAPEL, LONDON

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by

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ABSTRACT

Eighteenth-century Anglican clergymen drank too deeply of the well of Lockean rationalism and the fountains of preferment, patronage, plurality, and absenteeism to minister to a large segment of their communicants. Consequently, the pietistic revival which began in the 1730's found a ready following among Britshers. Eventually three parties emerged from the revival: the Methodists, Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and the Anglican Evangelicals. All three shared the conviction that Christian faith was a personal matter requiring the recognition of sin, a conversion experience, and high moral standards.

Since preaching was a means of propagating revivalist sentiments among the pietists religious speaking assumed a new importance. Speaking extemporaneously, frequently in places not authorized for worship, pietistic preachers called men to a personal faith in Christ.

One of the most prominent practitioners of revivalistic rhetoric was Rowland Hill. In spite of family's wealth and position, Hill chose neither a career in law, medicine, the services, or even the easy route of a beneficed living within the Established Church. Instead, his religious inclinations led him to an unorthodox, Evangelical defiance of the Anglican Church. From his days as a student at Cambridge until his death in 1833, Hill itinerated throughout Britain calling men to a belief in Christ. With the exception of a brief ministry as a curate in Somerset following his graduation, Hill almost totally devoted himself to these preaching tours.
Increasingly popular, Hill finally, in 1783, built Surrey Chapel in London. This ministry and the smaller one at Wotton-under-Edge did not quench Hill's thirst for itinerant preaching. Filling the pulpit at Surrey Chapel in the winter and Wotton in the summer, Hill devoted his remaining time to preaching all over the British Isles. His efforts made him one of the most widely-known and influential British preachers of the late Hanoverian period. After the death of Wesley in 1791, Hill probably was the best-known pulpit orator in Britain.

Whether at Surrey Chapel or away, three themes dominated Hill's preaching: "ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit." Although his comments on these topics were often couched in the language of modified Calvinism, Hill committed himself to the Arminian task of "preaching the gospel to every creature." In addition to these major topics, he occasionally addressed himself to other subjects. He vigorously advocated toleration and unity among Christians. He criticized charismatics and millenarians. He emphasized the need for biblical revelation and cautioned against Deism and French "atheism." In reaction to French radicalism, Hill insisted on a strict observance of the Sabbath and the maintenance of British social and political institutions. Even when he alluded to these secondary subjects, he seldom devoted an entire sermon to one of them. He usually mentioned them as they related to the "three R's of religion."

An outgrowth of Hill's preoccupation with winning converts was his homiletic theory. He felt that only men who had experienced conversion and a call from God should assume the office of minister. Ordination meant little to Hill. He also believed that men whom God
had selected as his messengers were commissioned to spread the gospel at every opportunity, regardless of church order or parish boundaries. Finally, Hill believed that God's message of salvation should be delivered extemporaneously in simple and candid language.

Hill's pulpit endeavors generally measured up to his homiletic theory. Probably as a result, Hill, whose ministry spanned a period of well over sixty years, became one of the most popular preachers of his day.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The eighteenth century was an era of transition for Great Britain. In 1707, Scotland and England united under one Parliament. With the death of Queen Anne in 1714, a new Protestant dynasty ascended the throne of the two kingdoms, Wales and Ireland. The gradual evolution of a modern, constitutional monarchy intensified. Agricultural and industrial revolutions began which eventually would lead to Britain's emerging as the first, modern industrialized state. Concomitant social transitions would eventually transform British society from one dominated by the aristocracy to a more egalitarian one.

Amidst all these transitions, another of no less significance came in the life of British churches. Arising in reaction to the dry rationalism of British Christianity, the pietistic revival transformed much of British religious thought and practice. Led by such individuals as John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, and the Countess of Huntingdon, thousands devoted themselves to a heart-felt interpretation of Christianity, which emphasized the need for personal conversion, devotional meditation and prayer, Bible reading, high standards of personal conduct, and evangelistic preaching.
In addition to the long and active preaching ministries of men like John Wesley and George Whitefield, others joined in the campaign to call all Britons to "serious Christianity" or the truths of the Christian faith as interpreted by the revivalists. One such preacher was the Rev. Rowland Hill, an Anglican deacon. The son of a wealthy Shropshire county baronet, Hill -- while still a student at Eton -- turned revivalist. By the time he had completed his studies at Cambridge, he had become a full-fledged itinerant evangelist. At his death, he had preached over 23,000 times all over the British Isles. He had established two important tabernacles, one in Wotton-under-Edge, Somerset, and another in St. George's Fields, London. Thousands crowded to these chapels, to open fields, to theatres, to public halls, and to Anglican and Dissenting places of worship to hear Hill over the period of his sixty-year ministry. Even such notables as William Wilberforce, the Duke of Kent, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan heard the popular preacher.

A description and analysis of the preaching career and the sermons of Rowland Hill provides insight not only into the life of a man called by some "the second Whitefield," but also aid in an understanding of the intellectual, ecclesiastical, and social milieu of the second half of the eighteenth century and the first third of the nineteenth. This dissertation is such a study.

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Contributory Studies


Methodology

This dissertation is a rhetorical study of Rowland Hill as a religious speaker. It is an attempt to describe and analyze Hill's preaching and homiletic theory. In doing that, it surveys the eighteenth-century religious climate in which Hill worked. Second, Hill's speech education and subsequent preaching career both as a minister and as a popular itinerant are described and examined against the religious background of the period. Third, Hill's sermons are analyzed to discover the ideas that seem most important in his sermons. Finally,

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2Sangster.


Hill's homiletic theory is presented. All these efforts should provide insight into the eighteenth-century pietistic revival.\(^5\)

**Organization**

Chapter One of the thesis states the problem, lists contributory studies, suggests the methodology and the organization employed and lists the institutions consulted for this dissertation on the preaching of the Rev. Rowland Hill.

Chapter Two places Hill and his preaching into an historical background by surveying the history of British Christianity during the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. In addition to describing the conditions of religion in Great Britain during these years, a description of pulpit oratory of the period is presented so as to better understand the religious speaking of Rowland Hill.

Chapter Three recounts Hill's life, concentrating on his speech education and the history of his preaching ministry, which spanned more than sixty years and included speaking tours, sermons preached before parishioners, at ordinations, to children and before religious and philanthropic societies.

Chapter Four analyzes Hill's sermons to discover the ideas that dominated the preacher's speaking, thus enhancing an understanding of the British pietistic revival of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

\(^5\)See Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XXXIII (December, 1947), 451-57, for the suggested methodology of speech criticism which is used in the chapter in which Hill's sermons are analyzed. Wrage says that speeches may be studied to provide insight into social and intellectual history.
Chapter Five briefly presents Rowland Hill's homiletic theory, with emphasis on his views of the Christian ministry, itinerant preaching, and the topics appropriate to, the language to be used in, and the delivery of sermons.

The final chapter presents a summary and the conclusions drawn from the dissertation.

Institutions and Sources

This study of Rowland Hill's preaching necessitated a trip to Great Britain. All of Hill's sermons are among the holdings of the British Museum. Dr. Williams' Library kindly allowed the use of its closed-stack collection of nearly forty years of The Evangelical Magazine. The Borough Library of Shrewsbury made a hand-written diary of one of Hill's early preaching tours, as well as other useful materials, available. The Shropshire Archives, Shire Hall, Shrewsbury allowed me the use of the Hill family papers. John Marsh, a Redemptorist candidate for the priesthood guided me through Hawkstone Hall, the Hill family seat, near the village of Hodnet, in Shropshire. Other institutions consulted were: the National Library of Scotland; the Library of the University of Edinburg; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the Congregational Council for World Mission Archives; the Methodist Manuscripts and Archives Repository; the Wesleyan Historical Society; the Archives and Manuscript Rooms of the British and Foreign Bible Society; the public libraries of Bath and Manchester; the John Rylands Library, Manchester; the National Archives Register; and Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, London. Needless to say, the Library of Louisiana State University, especially the interlibrary loan division, provided much needed material.
Chapter 2

BRITISH RELIGION DURING THE LIFE OF
ROWLAND HILL (1744-1833)

INTRODUCTION

Living for almost a century, Rowland Hill witnessed far-reaching transitions in British life. Political, social, intellectual and, more particularly, ecclesiastical institutions underwent significant alterations from his birth in 1744 to his death in 1833.

To properly understand Hill's preaching, it must be seen against the historical background of the reigns of the four Hanoverian Georges.¹ This chapter provides a brief account of British church history and a survey of British pulpit oratory in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.

The Hanoverian Church

The Established Church of the Hanoverian age has long been maligned for its all too obvious inadequacies and failures. Governed by an episcopal bench that owed its composition to family, wealth, and

political favoritism, the Church of England from the reign of George I to that of Victoria was unreformed and often unable to meet the needs of many of its communicants. Having over-reacted to the "fanaticism" of the Puritans of the last century, most of the Anglican clergy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries fell into the trap of espousing a rationalistic moralism, devoid of strong theological foundations.

Notwithstanding, to dismiss the English Church as totally failing its members during this period would be a grave error. Extant materials suggest that in some parishes faithful clergymen diligently labored to execute their pastoral responsibilities. Unfortunately, however, more eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Anglicans found the unreformed church incapable of and often unwilling to provide sufficient religious sustenance than those who did.

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2 Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1962 /T934/), pp. 147-88, provides an informative analysis of the importance of wealth, family, position, and patronage in the composition of the Anglican episcopate under the Georges. Generally the bishopries and the secondary leadership positions within the church went to the cadets of noblemen or the sons of the influential wealthy as the century wore on. Because the spiritual peers held seats in the House of Lords, the King's Government carefully conferred the episcopal office on those who had supported and would continue to support their policies. This, coupled with the practices of absenteeism and pluralism, damaged the work of the Established Church.

3 Sykes, pp. 6-7. He notes, "From the perusal of these /those mentioned in preceding paragraphs/, and other contemporary sources too numerous to . . . /name/, evidence may be found to justify a more sympathetic and impartial survey of the religious traditions and standards of the Hanoverian Church. . . ." Arthur Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1969), p. 9, concurs with Sykes' thesis.
The spiritual needs of most Britons were not satisfied with the rationalism that permeated Anglican thought throughout much of the Georgian reigns. Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity* had been read and digested by not only archbishops, bishops, and university dons, but also by parish priests. Coupled with Locke's writings, the work of Isaac Newton offered new insights into the physical sciences. The influence of these two great minds on British thought simply reinforced among English clergymen the prevailing fear of "enthusiasm." This aversion to emotionalism in religion generally characterized the regular Anglican clergy for the entirety of Hill's life. Rational Christianity was the shibboleth of the day. 4

As a result of conflicts over the place of reason and revelation in religion, many controversies arose to confront the church. Proclaiming reason to be the ultimate authority in religion at the close of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries, the Deists challenged the very foundations of historic Christianity. Responding to the threats posed by the Deists, English churchmen had presented Christianity in as "reasonable" a light as possible, without denying the miraculous. Nevertheless, the emphasis of these apologists was on the rationality of Christianity as opposed to the miraculous. Even Bishop Butler's *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to Constitution and Courses of Nature* (1736), which some say ended the Deist controversy in favor of the church, stressed the role of man's rational processes.

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4 Gerald R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), is a profitable work that relates to this topic.
It was to man's "reasonable nature" that the English church in the first half of the century addressed itself, when in the 1730's such men as Wesley and Whitefield began the pietistic revival.\(^5\)

Whitefield, the Wesleys and Lady Huntingdon's preachers appealed primarily to the neglected English lower classes. As the century progressed and the effects of the agricultural and the industrial revolutions were felt, the lower classes turned to the warm, heart-felt religion effectively offered by the revivalists.\(^6\) As a consequence thousands of men, women, and children untouched by the Augustan church or any of the several dissenting bodies found a faith compatible with their emotional and intellectual capacities. Eventually three separate groups emerged from the revival.

Perhaps the most widely known of the bodies to come out of the revival were the Methodists. Due to the preaching of John Wesley and

\(^5\)Pietism is a technical term used by historians to describe the romanticism in religion that manifests itself in religious movements in which the feelings and emotions play a greater part than cold formalism or arid scholasticism. The Moravian Revival in Germany or the Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening in America are examples of the phenomenon other than that discussed in the above.

\(^6\)The effects of the agricultural and the industrial revolutions on British social structure were felt in both rural and urban areas. Frequently the uprooted Briton felt a sense of displacement. His position in society, formerly having been clearly delineated, was unsure. Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* offers some insight into this problem. This work also helps one understand the frequently held eighteenth-century belief that London was the center of moral depravity. Dorothy Marshall, *English People in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), and M. Dorothy George, *England in Transition: Life and Work in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1953 [1931]), are helpful social histories. For information concerning the economic revolutions one may consult Thomas Southcliffe Ashton, *An Economic History of England; the 18th Century* (London: Methuen, 1955); Thomas Southcliffe Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution, 1760-1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948); or Phyllis Deane, *The First Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965).
his "class system," which organized his followers into small, closely-knit, and well-disciplined groups, as well as annual conferences, the Methodists came to assume their own identity. Despite Wesley's convictions to the contrary, and the even stronger objections of his brother Charles, a new church distinct from the Established Church, appeared after Wesley died in 1791. Because the Wesleyan itinerants stressed the emotions and the simplicity of the "gospel," the composition of the sect was predominately lower class.

Closely associated with the Methodists were the followers of Lady Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon. This wealthy aristocrat not only was a patroness of Whitefield, but also of numerous other revivalists. Providing the financial backing and the organizational talent which Whitefield lacked, she laid the foundations for a new religious body. Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, as it was legally called, was never the force, however, that Methodism was, either in the latter half of the eighteenth century or in the nineteenth. As with the Wesleyans, the Connexion appealed primarily to the lower strata of British society.

The only stream which flowed out of the revival which did not appeal to the poor was the Evangelical Party within the Church of England itself. The pietists who remained within the Established Church generally were men and women among "those who counted." The

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pietistic Anglicans had a higher regard for the faith and practices of the national church than did their fellow revivalists. They also found certain Methodist views and practices to be questionable or objectionable.8

In spite of differences, the Evangelicals shared the common belief with both the Methodists and the disciples of Lady Huntingdon that individuals must experience the "new birth." Nominal Christianity was inadequate for a proper relationship with one's Creator. A strong

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8 Elliott-Binns, pp. 208 ff.; Brown, pp. 4-6. Brown maintains that the "accommodating" Evangelicals, led by William Wilberforce, were responsible for the moral reforms of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and that the Methodists who primarily reached the poor failed to effect a moral reformation of British life. On the other hand, Elliott-Binns says that the Evangelicals were more clerical. While that might have been true as to their views regarding formal ministerial functions, Brown contends that the real leadership of the Evangelical Party which was responsible for the pervasive moral influence of the first third of the nineteenth century was lay. He writes: "There were four great instruments of Evangelical reform that were more important than preaching: the proselytizing, the societies, the money and the written propaganda. All of them were 'used' by the laity far more than by the clergy. Even the preaching was done very powerfully, perhaps more powerfully, by Hannah More, Mrs. Sherwood, Charlotte Elizabeth and their colleagues, and the most influential book of the age was written by William Wilberforce. . . . The Evangelical clergy . . . were exceedingly happy to submit, in practical matters, to the lay dictation. . . ." Perhaps these two views—Brown's and Elliott-Binns'—may be reconciled by noting that Elliott-Binns writes of the period up to about the time of the 1780's and Brown begins his study there. Elliott-Binns also seems to be discussing ministerial functioning.

The question of the role of the revivalists in political and economic reforms has long been an issue of debate among historians. See George Rude, Debate on Europe, 1815-1850 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), pp. 126-32.
personal faith in the God of Scripture and in His work through Christ was essential if one were to claim to be genuinely Christian.9

Unfortunately the theological rigidity that typified many of the revivalists led to theological bickering. Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and the Evangelicals were Calvinists.10 On the other hand, Wesley and the Methodists were Arminian. Both groups tenaciously defended their positions, claiming the other had gravely misinterpreted the nature of the Gospel. After a battle of words and pamphlets that spanned much of the 1770's, the Calvinistic Controversy finally expired with few minds changed and considerable bitterness engendered.11

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9 Evangelicals, Methodists, and the preachers supported by the Countess of Huntingdon all denounced the nominal Christianity of the majority of the membership of the Established Church. Rowland Hill frequently used II Corinthians 5:14—"Come ye out from among them ('and be ye separated, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you')"—as a text to describe "nominal Christians." Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England from Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 153-54, notes that this theme was prominent in the preaching of both Wesley and Whitefield. Specifically both had a sermon entitled "The Almost Christian."

10 Elliott-Binns, p. 198, observes that most of the Evangelicals adhered to "a very moderate type of Calvinism."

11 P. E. Sangster, "The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill (1733-1844) and His Position in the Evangelical Revival," (unpublished D. Phil. dissertation, Queen's College, University of Oxford, 1964), pp. 77-100, discusses Rowland Hill's role, and to a degree his brother Richard Hill's role, in the Calvinistic Controversy. Richard Hill was something of a controversialist all of his life, even when he sat in Commons (1780-1806). Brown, pp. 65-68, contends that Sir Richard might have become the leader of the Evangelical Party in Commons but for his religious rigidity and eccentricity. For instance, his maiden speech in Parliament on May 19, 1781, was made in behalf of a bill for the regulation of the Sabbath. A summary of the speech is found in The Parliamentary Register, or History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons . . . During the First Session of the Fifteenth Parliament of Great Britain, III (London: J. Debrett, 1783), 345-46.
The last two decades of the century and the first three of the next were years of widespread and vigorous revivalist expansion. Lady Huntingdon's Connexion officially severed relations with the Church of England when she registered her chapels as places of dissenting worship. Almost immediately following Wesley's death, the Methodists also broke away from the mother church. The only group remaining within the Establishment was the Evangelical Party. Although divided, all three groups, as well as some older dissenting sects, set themselves to the task of exerting a "leavening influence" in British society. Dozens of religious and philanthropic societies were formed. Following the example of Robert Raikes, the revivalists opened Sunday schools to instill their religious views in the young. William Wilberforce launched a vigorous campaign to abolish the African slave trade. In short, the revivalists, especially the Evangelicals, mounted a concerted

The article on Sir Richard, "Sir Richard Hill," The Dictionary of National Biography, IX, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), 857, notes that he was considered to be a good public speaker.

Some of the more important of these were: The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1787), The Church Missionary Society (1799), The London Missionary Society (1795), The Sunday School Union (1803), and The British and Foreign Bible Society (1804). A few of the others were: The Society for Carrying into Effect his Majesty's Proclamation Against Vice and Immorality (1788); The Religious Tract Society (1799); The Friendly Female Society, for the Relief of Poor, Infirm, Aged Widows, and Single Women, of Good Character, Who Have seen Better Days (1802); The London Hibernian Society (1806); The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (1808); The Village Sermon Society (1824); The British Open-Air Preaching Society (1830); The Young Men's Christian Association (1844); etc.

effort to reform moral conditions in the United Kingdom, and a consider-
able part of the British Empire.

The crusaders, despite occasional internal squabbles among themselves, exerted influence far beyond their numerical strength. Their successes outstripped those of the earlier revivalists, as they enlisted the aid of "those who counted" in British life. Merchants, industrialists, members of Parliament, peers, peeresses, and even members of the Royal Family lent their support—in varying degrees—to the drive to reform Britain morally.

Yet all Britishers, including the majority of the Anglican churchmen, did not subscribe to the measures advocated by the revivalists. Opposition to legislation to abolish the slave trade postponed its passage until 1807 and delayed the abolition of slavery in the colonies until 1833. Established clergymen fought Sunday schools, fearing that they would become centers for training radicals. The societies failed to attract many Church of England's bishops to their cause, even when such were either limited to or dominated by members of the Established Church.

Various considerations lay behind the opposition of orthodox Anglicans. The well-established emphasis on rational Christianity was certainly one factor. Another cause of animosity between the two groups grew out of disdain of what the regular clergy believed were Methodist excesses. A third consideration that created enmity was the obvious self-righteousness that the revivalists exhibited in their

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14 One of these took the form of a second Calvinistic Controversy between 1798 and 1812. Again, Sir Richard Hill took an active part in defending the Calvinists' position.
relations with Established churchmen who did not share their pietistic views. A fourth cause of friction was the reactionary atmosphere fostered by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, which led many Britons to fear any change of the status quo. A final reason for the antagonism between the revivalists and the majority of Anglican clerics rested on the ecclesiology of the latter which proscribed any fraternization with revivalist methods, programs, and sympathies.

Nevertheless, by the time of Wilberforce's, Hannah Moore's, and Rowland Hill's deaths in 1833 the Evangelical Party had captured the good will of "many who counted," had succeeded in leading the fight to abolish slavery and the slave trade, had launched a massive campaign to reform British life through participation in and influence of religious and philanthropic societies, had spawned an Evangelical literature, and had secured key positions for Evangelical clergymen within the Established Church.

Pulpit Oratory of the Period

The homiletical diet of most Englishmen at the beginning of the eighteenth century reflected the rationalistic theology that held sway among most of the Established Church's clergymen. Believing that appeals to the emotions smacked of "fanaticism" and having drunk deeply of the rationalism of Locke, Anglican preachers during the first half of the century frequently preached a message of arid moralism. Respectability, moderation, and reasonableness were the watchwords of the day.

No less a personage than the late Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson (1630-1694), offered English clergymen the paradigm for
both form and practice. Tillotson's influence on pulpitan oratory of the eighteenth century was both widespread and enduring. 15 In his sermon "The Wisdom of Being Religious," the archbishop developed "the themes on which he was to preach all through his life: the reasonableness of Christianity, the absurdity of irreligion, the nature of operative faith, and the necessity of the good life." 16 His emphasis on the compatibility of reason and faith made him the ideal model for Anglican pulpit orators for fifty years after his death. 17 Ultimately, however, it was not Tillotson's excellence as a preacher which is chiefly responsible for his eminent position in the development of English oratorical prose. It was his influence upon succeeding generations of preachers. Above all, . . . Tillotson was imitable. In both structure and language his sermons were easy to emulate. 18 It is,


16 Simon, p. 277.

17 After Tillotson's death in 1694, his widow received the unprecedented sum of £2,500 for the copyright to his sermons, which went through edition after edition for the next fifty years. Although they enjoyed continued sales even later, by the nineteenth century, according to Simon, p. 296, their popularity had dropped off. At any rate, Tillotson's sermon "His Commandments are Not Grevious" was the most popular sermon of the century, according to James Downey, The Eighteenth Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Seeker, Sterne, Whitefield and Wesley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 15.

18 Downey, p. 27. The plagiarism of sermons was widely practiced and widely accepted in the eighteenth century. Even a casual examination of the printed works in the library of the British Museum clearly indicates that hundreds of sermons found their way into print in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And eventually some of these sermons found their way into pulpits of men other than the authors. In fact, one enterprising cleric, John Trusler, as Downey, pp. 7-8, notes, "realized that a person who was anxious to make a reputation among his
however, open to question whether the Tillotsonian language and approach could be transplanted very successfully to rustic pulpits."

Many rural ministers and Anglican clergymen, in general—as is frequently the case with mere imitators—failed to satisfy the needs of their auditors as they attempted to duplicate Tillotsonian oratory in their own pulpits. Consequently, "before the eighteenth century had much advanced, sermons had very generally become mere moral essays, characterized briefly by cold sense and appealing almost exclusively to prudential motives." As a result, thousands of Anglican communicants found the Sunday homily an exercise to be endured rather than enjoyed. Thousands more, particularly among the lower classes, remained untouched by the Established Church. The religious situation for these individuals worsened as time went on and more of them found

congregation did not wish to acknowledge the source or sources of his sermon. If, however, he read from a published work he could hardly conceal his indebtedness. To copy sermons from published sources by hand was a laborious discipline." So in 1769, Trusler advertised about one hundred fifty sermons, which were printed in cursive, at the price of one shilling each. His efforts were adequately rewarded.

19 Davies, p. 73.

20 William Edward Hartpole Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century, I (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), 92. Although the above might have been true, it would be a mistake, Downey, pp. 17-19, maintains, to completely assume no life was to be found in Anglican pulpits between the time of Tillotson's death and the revivalists' field-preaching. Downey contends that polemical preaching played a role in the life of the English Church in the first two decades of the century. By the time Atterbury had been banished for his Jacobite sympathies in 1723, the use of the pulpit as a political platform had about ceased. The sermons preached by Henry Sacheverell—particularly his November, 1709, sermon before the Lord Mayor of London—offer examples of the use of the pulpit by a High Church Tory to attack the Whigs. See Abbie Turner Scudi, The Sacheverell Affair, Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, No. 456 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), and Geoggrey Shorter Holmes, The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell (Eyre: Methuen, 1973), for beneficial treatments of the incident and the impeachment of Sacheverell.
themselves uprooted or shifted by the beginnings of the agricultural and the industrial revolutions.

Finally in 1739, an innovation in pulp oratory not only took the Christian message to the laboring classes but also helped to revolutionize religion in Great Britain. George Whitefield began preaching out-of-doors Saturday afternoon, February 17, 1739, at Kingswood near Bristol. In describing the incident, Whitefield's primary motivation for the radical move grew out of his desire to preach to colliers who had not been reached by the regular ministry of the Church of England:

Saturday, Feb. 17. . . . After one in the afternoon, I went with my brother Seward and another friend to Kingswood, and was most delightfully entertained by an old disciple of the Lord. My bowels have long since yearned toward the poor colliers, who are very numerous, and as sheep, having no shepherd /italics mine/. After dinner, therefore, I went upon a mount, and spoke to as many people as came unto me. They were upwards of two hundred. Blessed be God that I have now broken the ice! I believe I was never more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields. Some may censure me; but if I thus please men, I should not be a servant of Christ.21

Another servant of Christ, John Wesley hesitated to follow Whitefield's example. Nevertheless, the great Methodist did. He wrote in his journal:

Saturday, 31 [March, 1739]. In the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me

21George Whitefield, George Whitefield's Journals, (1737-1741), To Which Is Prefixed His "Short Account" (1746) and "Further Account" (1747) (Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1969), p. 209.
an example on Sunday, having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in the church.

    April 1. In the evening (Mr. Whitefield being gone), I begun expounding our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching...).

    Mon. 2. --At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highway the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke was this, ... "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind: To set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."23

The year apparently was the "acceptable year of the Lord," as were those to follow, not only for Wesley but also for scores of revivalists. Whitefield's "emergence as a popular preacher signified the end of an era of reasoned restrain of religious experience."24

22 Whitefield, p. 236, described the incident as follows: "Saturday, March 31... At my return home, I was much refreshed with the sight of my honoured friend Mr. Wesley, whom God's Providence has sent to Bristol. Saturday, April 1/Sunday, not Saturday/. Preached at Bowling Green, Hannam, and Rose Green, at all of which places, the congregations were much enlarged, especially at the latter/sic/. There were twenty-four coaches, and an exceedingly great number of other people, both on foot and horseback. The wind was not so well set to carry my voice as usual, but however, I was strengthened to cry aloud, and take my last farewell."


24 Downey, p. 156. Elliott-Binns, p. 125, contends Whitefield "gave the /revival/ movement its initial impetus by his field-preaching, /but/ his real contribution was... meagre."
Having taken the lead, he and Wesley turned English pulpit oratory around. Revivalists of all groups preached sermons that emphasized the "three R's of practical theology:" "Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Cross of Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit." Churches, streets, hill sides, theatres, and public buildings afforded the pietists opportunities to carry the Christian gospel, as they understood it, to all classes, particularly the one class that had so long been deprived of religious instruction and encouragement, the laboring poor.

While the Methodists and the preachers of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion directed their attention to the poor, the Evangelical preachers within the Anglican Church focused their ministries on the "respectable" elements of British society. Convinced of the primacy of preaching, "their own preaching was threefold: to awaken men from apathy or formality and thus to convert them with the aid of the Holy Spirit; to build men up in the faith--edification; and to teach men to manifest the fruits of the Spirit--sanctification."

Like their Methodist and Huntingdonite counterparts, Evangelical preachers used strong emotive appeals. "Men were sinners and in need of a Saviour from their sins..." Therefore, language and subject

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25 Davies, pp. 143, 150.
26 Davies, p. 153.
27 Davies, pp. 227-28. He continues, "The extreme Calvinists... had reacted so strongly against the Pelagian moralism of the day as to run dangerously close to the quagmire of antinomianism." Hill's ethics as reflected in his preaching will be analyzed later in this study.
28 Elliott-Binns, p. 368.
matter were simple and to the point. 29 "A second characteristic of the Evangelical preaching was its intense earnestness. The preachers, conscious of having a definite message to deliver, were convinced their utterances had an eternal significance for the hearers. This gave their sermons a vital force which distinguished them from the moral essays delivered from the average pulpit in the parish churches." 30

Although the same observations could have been made of the Methodist and the Huntingdon revivalists, certain differences in the preaching practices of the Evangelicals and their more irregular brethren existed. Granted, some Evangelicals itinerated; but as time transpired, they did so less and less. 31 In fact, the Evangelical Party's position within the Church was stabilized with the withdrawal of the Methodists and Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. As the remaining revivalists within the Church of England, the Evangelicals "were loathe to identify themselves with anything which savoured of Methodism and its devices. Henceforth little is heard of Evangelicals itinerating in other men's parishes. . . ." 32

29 Elliott-Binns, p. 369, observes "Many of the Methodist preachers in attempting to be impressive became ridiculous and grotesque, a fault from which Evangelicals as a rule were free, though Berridge was a frequent offender . . . . Such 'odd things' were probably in the nature of asides and improvisations, and do not appear in his printed outlines, none the less they helped to support the common opinion that he loved to play the baffon." Hill was likewise given to such. These are discussed in a later chapter.

30 Elliott-Binns, p. 368.

31 Elliott-Binns, p. 212.

32 Elliott-Binns, p. 446. As a result, they did not suffer from mob action as did Wesley, Whitefield, and itinerants. Those Evangelicals who did itinerate did suffer, whoever. See Doughty, pp. 74-83, for a description of the mob's response to Wesley's preaching.
A hesitancy to itinerate was not the only difference between the irregular Methodists and the Anglican Evangelicals. The latter group, as previously indicated, were generally Calvinists. This naturally colored the content of their preaching.

At any rate, by the end of the eighteenth century, preachers of all three major streams of the revival spoke extemporaneously. They also all emphasized the sinfulness of man, his need for salvation through faith in Christ, and the living of a life reflective of the Christian calling.

Summary

The Church of England under all four of the Hanoverian Georges was often unable and unwilling to minister to all the elements within the communion. Although not wholly inept, the unreformed Established Church preoccupied itself with the maintenance of the status quo--politically and religiously. Even its attempts at meeting the intellectual challenges of the day--although possibly successful in the case of the church's defense against Deism--turned sour. Anglican clergymen drank too deeply of the well of Lockean rationalism and the fountains of preferment, patronage, plurality and absenteeism to minister soberly to a large segment of its members, especially the lower classes who were so significantly affected by the agricultural and the industrial revolutions. As a result, a pietistic revival beginning in the 1730's found a ready following both within and without the membership rolls of the Church of England. The three parties to emerge from the revival--the Methodists, Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, and the Evangelical Party--all shared the conviction that the Christian faith was a personal
one requiring recognition of sin, a conversion experience, and a life congruent with that rebirth.

As one would suspect, pulpit oratory provided one of the major means for the propagation of revivalist sentiments. So, oratory for the pietists assumed a new importance. Extemporaneous preaching—frequently in places other than recognized houses of Anglican worship—replaced the stilted delivery of orthodox Anglican divines. The moralism that had formed, and would continue to form, much of the traditional Anglican homily gave way to warm, emotion-filled sermons. Stated briefly, the revival of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century not only revolutionized British religion, but British pulpit oratory as well.
Chapter 3

AN ACCOUNT OF ROWLAND HILL'S PREACHING CAREER

INTRODUCTION

On at least twenty-three thousand occasions,¹ Rowland Hill, whose ministry spanned a period of sixty years, sought to fulfill the injunction of Christ's Great Commission to "preach the gospel to every creature."² Wherever he could--in barns, in field, in Dissenting meeting houses, in Established churches, on the streets, aboard a ship, on a mountain side, and, of course, in his own chapels at Wotten-under-Edge and in London--Hill proclaimed the warm, heart-felt message of pietistic Christianity. Like Whitefield and Wesley, Hill, throughout his entire ministry, was an itinerant preacher. He even continued the

¹T. J. /Thomas Jackson/, "Memoir of the Late Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M.," The Evangelical Magazine, n.s., XI (July, 1833), 299. One of Hill's biographers, William Jones, Memoir of the Rev. Rowland Hill, M.A. (4th ed.; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1844), pp. 232-33, says that Hill kept count of the number of times he preached up to June 10, 1831, at which point the Surrey Chapel minister had preached twenty-two thousand, two hundred, ninety-one sermons. Jones observes that many of Hill's acquaintances felt that this calculation fell below the actual number of sermons Hill had preached. Benjamin Senior, A Hundred Years at Surrey Chapel (London: Passmore & Alabaster, /1892/), p. 33, contends that while Wesley might have preached more sermons than anyone else, not even the great Methodist preached to more people in a ten-year period than Hill, who, Senior says, preached to fifteen thousand at Kennington Common, seventeen thousand in the St. George's Fields, and twenty-three thousand at Hampstead Heath.

As two William Joneses wrote biographies of Hill, the one mentioned above is referred to as Jones II throughout this study. The other is Jones I.

²Matthew 28:18-19.
activity long after it had virtually ceased to be a practice of the Evangelical Party within the Anglican Church.

With the length and the diversity of Hill's preaching ministry in mind, this chapter is a description of the Rev. Mr. Hill's career as a speaker. Because his social, religious, and educational background influenced his message, the first section of the chapter is devoted to Hill's family and education. The second division of the chapter describes Hill's itinerancy, which extended throughout the entirety of his ministry. And the final aspect of Hill's preaching career is his settled ministries at Wotten-under-Edge and Surrey Chapel, London.

HILL'S FAMILY AND EDUCATION

The Hills

Albeit English society was not as rigid or closed as was Continental society in the eighteenth century, a landed aristocracy dominated English life for the entire period. And "to this extent England was still medieval in its basic assumptions." At the top of the social pyramid sat the great families of the nobility. Having vast estates, frequently in more than one geographical area of the British

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3H. J. Habakkuk, "England," in The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century, ed. A. Goodwin (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), pp. 1-2. Most historians of the period observe that the gradations in the English social structure between the nobility and the gentry were not clearcut. By the same token, neither were those between the gentry and the "middling sort," or between the "middling sort" and the working poor, or the working poor and the indigent. One's position in the social hierarchy certainly had implications for his economic, political and cultural experiences. However, individuals and individual families could rise or fall from the position in which they originally found themselves.

Isles, these titled aristocrats exercised enormous political, social, and economic power. While the rising merchant class had some influence, rural life was the dominant life style of the century. "Power was still in the hands of the man who possessed land."\(^5\) Sharing the privileges enjoyed by the families of the peers were the gentry. These smaller landowners held positions in a locality that were analogous to those held by the great magnates in the counties and at times in the nation. For instance, the gentry built family seats and secured positions in the church, the army, the navy, the professions, and the government for their cadets. They sent their sons to the public schools and the universities. A significant number played active roles in politics, some even sitting in Commons as back benchers. However, their sphere of influence was localized, while the great noble houses wielded influence at the county and the national levels.

In short, "it was the possession of land that gave . . . [these aristocratic families] obvious and unchallenged place[s] in the social hierarchy, for though no longer the sole key to wealth, it was still the most unmistakable symbol and the channel through which political power flowed."\(^6\) "The family estate . . . provided the family not only with its revenue and its residence, but its sense of identity from generation to generation."\(^7\) Rowland Hill was born into a family with such an identity.

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\(^5\) Marshall.  
\(^6\) Marshall, p. 42  
\(^7\) Habakkuk, p. 2.
The fortunes of the Hills of Shropshire county were on the rise at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The "founder" of the family, Richard Hill (1654-1727), after having completed St. John's, Cambridge, became the tutor to the son of the Earl of Rochester. Coming to the notice of William of Orange's paymaster of the forces, the Earl of Ranelagh, Hill received an appointment as deputy paymaster of the English army which was sent to Flanders in 1691. After also serving as an ambassador extraordinary to various princely courts on behalf of William III, he returned to England where he was made a lord of the treasury until Anne's accession. He then became a lord of the admiralty until the Earl of Pembroke, at the death of George of Denmark, assumed the position of lord high admiral. After Hill left his post in the admiralty, he acted as the Queen's minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary to all the states of Italy, except the papal states. In fact, he helped negotiate the treaty of October, 1703, which allied the English with the Duke of Savoy. At the offer of another ambassadorship and even of a bishopric, Hill declined.

Yet his efforts did not go unrewarded. Having amassed a considerable fortune, he procured the patent of baronet for his brother John's son, Rowland, in 1727. He also built the mansion at Hawkstone in Shropshire for his nephew.8 The nephew, Rowland Hill, assumed the

8 John Brickdale Blakeway, The Sheriffs of Shropshire with their Armorial Bearings: and Notices, Genealogical and Biographical of their Families (Shrewsbury: William and John Eddowes, 1831), pp. 179-82. Richard Hill not only founded the Hawkstone Hill family, but he also left a part of his wealth to two nephews who took the surname Hill. One of these, Thomas Harwood, was the father of Noel Hill, who was elevated to the peerage as Baron Berwick. See "Hill," Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage, (102nd. ed.; London: Burke's Peerage Limited, 1954), p. 1138.
role expected of the English aristocracy. In 1732, he married Jane, the daughter of Sir Brian Broughton of Straffordshire, who bore him several children. He served as sheriff of the county of Shropshire in 1732. He was even elected to the House of Commons for the City of Litchfield in 1734 and 1740.

Because of his inheritance and his willingness to play the part of a local magnate, Sir Rowland Hill put his family on a sure social and economic footing for the next several generations. The wealth, the family seat at Hawkstone, and the political connections which gave him and his descendants a seat in Commons provided his family with all the advantages and privileges enjoyed by the lesser members of the eighteenth-century British aristocracy.

The Early Years

As the sixth son born into the Hawkstone family, Rowland Hill,

Hill's Hawkstone is still standing. In 1895, the Hall became vacant at the death of the third Viscount Hill. After passing through other hands, it was purchased by the Redemptorists, a Catholic order, in 1926. On a visit to the estate in the Spring of 1973, this writer found that its beauty, although in an unkept condition, remains. Nearby, on what was part of the estate, are a hotel and a golf course. The hotel had formerly served as a hunting lodge for the family. Both are within walking distance of the picturesque village of Weston.

The present and seventh Vicount, Gerald Rowland Hill, lives in the county, as do other Hills. The peerage for the family came when one of the Rev. Rowland Hill's nephews, also Rowland Hill, was elevated to a barony as a reward for his efforts in the Peninsular Wars. He was eventually declared a viscount and the commander of His Majesty's Forces after Wellington became prime minister in 1828.

9 Blakeway, p. 25.
from the time of his birth on August 23, 1744, \(^{10}\) until his death in April, 1833, lived in a manner fitting for one of the younger sons of a wealthy baronet. His family lived in one of the most beautiful minor country seats in England. A large number of servants and tenants catered to the Hills' needs. Rowland and his brothers had the assurance of being educated at the best public schools in the kingdom and at one of the two great universities. Proper marriages and marriage settlements were foregone conclusions. And as one of the younger sons of Sir Rowland Hill, Rowland could be confident of one of the beneficed clerical livings in his father's possession. All of these considerations no doubt played some part in the patronizing attitude toward those of lesser stations that manifested itself in Hill's preaching on occasion in latter life. It also probably explains in part his tendency toward autocracy at times. Perhaps one should not be too hard on Hill on these counts. After all, deference toward the aristocracy on the part of most Englishmen during the century was a definite part of the social code. At any rate, young Rowland Hill's parents provided their children with the advantages that were commensurate with the family's station.

\(^{10}\) Some confusion exists concerning the exact date of Hill's birth. P. E. Sangster, "The Life of the Reverend Rowland Hill (1744-1833) and His Position in the Evangelical Revival," (unpublished D. Phil. dissertation, Queen's College, University of Oxford, 1964), p. 2, says that Hill was born August 27, 1744. Sidney, Hill's official biographer, says that the Surrey Chapel minister was born August 23, 1745. Other sources give August 12. Hill, himself, says in one of his Scottish journals that he was born on August 23, 1744. The change to the Georgian calendar may explain some of the confusion over the exact day. However, August, 1744, seems to be correct as for the month and the year of Hill's birth.
As already suggested, for Rowland and his brothers this meant the best possible educations. Rowland's own began when his father enrolled him in the Royal Grammer School at Shrewsbury, which had been granted a charter by Edward VI in 1552. Unfortunately throughout most of the century, the school was in a period of decline. However, after a Rev. Hotchkis resigned following nineteen years as headmaster, fortune seemed to smile on the school at least temporarily.

The Rev. Charles Newling, a Fellow at St. John's College, Cambridge, and a former student at the school under Hotchkis, became headmaster in 1754. Newling was about twenty-six when he assumed responsibility for the school.

Seemingly, young Hill entered the school after Newling had become headmaster. He may have even boarded with Newling or some

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12 Oldham, p. 1.

13 Oldham, pp. 56-7, says that though the information is meager, "the story of the eighteenth century /for the school/ . . . is a record of sad decline. . . ."

14 Oldham, p. 66; Fisher, p. 238.

15 Oldham, p. 65.

16 Auden, p. 10, suggests that Hill probably enrolled after Hotchkis had resigned.
other faculty member. At any rate, here at the Shrewsbury Grammar School, Hill must have mastered the rudiments of a classical education. Certainly Newling's talents and his gentlemanliness had some influence on Hill's development. The next stage of that development came when Hill entered Eton in 1761. He and his brother Robert attended the school together.

Eton

The college, having been chartered under Henry VI in 1440, had by the middle of the Georgian era become rather cosmopolitan.

17 Oldham, p. 66, notes that Newling kept the sons of well known families as boarders, as does Fisher, p. 238.


19 Fisher, p. 238, quotes a manuscript by Blakeway which describes Newling as "a perfect gentleman in manner and very handsome in countenance."

20 Varying sources give varying dates as to the time Rowland Hill entered Eton College. Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (ed.), The Eton College Register, 1753-1790, Alphabetically arranged and edited with Biographical Notes (Eton: Spottiswoode, Ballantine, & Co., Ltd., 1921), p. 271, lists Hill as being at Eton from 1753 to 1764. Sangster, p. 6, states that Hill did not enter Eton until he was 17 in 1761. Apparently Jones II, p. 34, is Sangster's source for this assertion. Edwin Sidney, The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill (London: Baldwin & Craddock, 1834), also supports this view. William Jones, Memoirs of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Rev. Rowland Hill, M.A., Late Minister of Surrey Chapel (London: John Bennett, 1834), p. 17, says that young Hill was at Eton about four years before entering Cambridge. Thus, he seems to support the 1761 date. In light of the three Hill biographies, this writer believes that Hill probably did not enter Eton until 1761.

21 Sidney, p. 36.

In addition to English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh boys, students with French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, and Swiss surnames were listed in the registry. Even some boys from the North American and the West Indian colonies were enrolled in the college. The school, during Hill's time there, not only experienced growth in numbers, but in prestige as well.

The increase came under the headmastership of the Rev. Edward Barnard, who headed the college from May, 1754, until December, 1765. A fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, who held the B.A., the M.A., the B.D., and the D.D., Barnard, because of "great learning, superior management and exact discipline . . . soon brought Eton to that eminence as never . . . known before. . . ." Barnard's talents extended beyond his administrative expertise. One of his students, George Hardinge, wrote an account in 1814 describing the headmaster as a teacher. Hardinge admits that he had not discovered that Barnard was considered "as a deep scholar in Philosophy, Divinity, or even in the Classics," when the headmaster had been at Cambridge. He also writes that Barnard's major fault was his wit, which "he did not spare. . . ." Apparently as a teacher, he was given to the practice of ridiculing those about him.

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23 Austen-Leigh, pp. xx-xxi.
26 Hardinge, p. 548.
This trait in Barnard may explain, in part, the same tendency in Rowland Hill's preaching. At any rate, whatever shortcomings Hardinge notes, he readily admits Barnard's abilities as a teacher and public speaker when he writes,

Besides other faculties, in his eloquence he had the charm of a musical voice, and, in reading or speaking a most exquisite ear. He had all imaginable variety of companionable talents, and could, in serious debate, out-argue the doughtiest champions pitted against him. . . . If Nature had given him Garrick's features, he would have been scarce inferior to him in theatrical powers. He was an admirable mimic. . . .

He was an excellent reader, who read Greek plays, essays, and poetry to his students. In short, Hardinge says, "What he improved in us the most, was the taste of composition, of reading, and of speaking well." Consequently, the five hundred boys who attended Eton from 1761 onward under Barnard, must have benefited from his rhetorical example and criticism.

The students at Barnard's Eton fell into two classifications. The Collegers, who were on the foundation, frequently lived in despicable conditions. They were at Eton because of the academic abilities and frequently came from poorer backgrounds. On the other hand, life for the fee-paying Oppidans was considerably more tolerable.

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27 Hardinge, p. 546.
28 Hardinge.
Most of these boys lived with a dame or dominie in the village.  

Young Rowland Hill, as an Oppidan, lodged with Mrs. Frances Yonge, who was probably the sister of Dr. Cooke, a fellow at the college. In all probability, Hill, like other boys of his social class, was supervised by a private tutor.

Under the supervision of the tutors and the direction of the headmaster, Etonians in the 1760's were trained in the classics. Little attention was given, at least officially, to more practical studies in the public schools. A classical education was believed to be "the source of valuable moral lessons. From the classics..."

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31 Austen-Leigh, Eton Register, p. xxi, notes: "Viewed from another aspect the society at Eton was decidedly more democratic than it is today. Whilst, on the other hand, Eton was never so full of representatives of the leading families as it was under the regime of Dr. Barnard, on the other hand, it was still the practice for Eton and Windsor tradesmen to send their boys to the famous school which lay at their doors. Moreover, the advantages of the foundation attracted boys of humble origin from the outside world." Not all of the local boys were the children of tradesmen. Some of them were the sons of persons who had official duties at Windsor, others of parents who had moved to the village to educate their children.

32 Austen-Leigh, Eton Register, p. 271.

33 Austen-Leigh, Eton Register, p. xxxi.

34 Austen-Leigh, Eton Register, pp. xxv-xxi, observes that "the ordinary boy had for tutor one of the assistant masters, while some of the richer boys had private tutors, whom they either brought with them or found already living at Eaton."


36 Marshall, pp. 123 ff., discusses the role of Dissenting academies in eighteenth-century British education. In these schools, the children of the "middling sort" received educations which were directed toward more practical endeavors.
the boy would imbibe noble and generous sentiments and would learn to seek virtue and eschew vice. . . ."37

So in the lower forms, boys were introduced to the rudiments of Latin and Greek. Rowland Hill must have already mastered the fundamentals of classical studies by the time he entered the college in 1761. Not knowing the form he entered, it is difficult to determine the exact academic diet to which he was exposed.38 Nevertheless, a knowledge of Eton's curriculum in the 1760's provides some indication of the materials Hill was expected to have covered by the time he ended his stay at the great public school.

For instance, it is known that the headmaster's division in the college, which included the approximately one hundred twenty boys who composed the fifth and the sixth forms, attended school in a regular week seventeen times.39 ten for construing and seven for repetition (recitation).40 In the construing sessions, these


38 Austen-Leigh, Eton Register, p. xxxiv, comments on the age students entered and left Eton: "As might be expected, there was a wide discrepancy. We find, for instance, boys coming to the school at the tender age of four, especially those boys whose parents resided at Eton. . . . On the other hand, some boys arrived as old as fifteen or sixteen.

The age of leaving was not so very different from the present . . . . If a few precocious boys entered the University at fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen. . . , the majority waited till they were eighteen or nineteen."

39 See Lyte, pp. 308-10, for a detailed description of the school week and the school day at Eton. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were considered working days. Tuesday was a whole holiday, Thursday a half, and Saturday a "play-at-four."

40 See Lyte, pp. 310-13, for a description of the curriculum for upper-form Etonians in the 1760's.
upper-form Etonians translated about thirty-five lines of Homer twice, about forty from Lucian twice, thirty from Virgil twice, and about forty from the *Scriptures Romani* twice. In addition, they translated from Horace and the *Poetae Graeci*. Repetition for the young classicists included Horace, Homer, Virgil, *Poetae Graeci*, the *Selecta ex Ovidio Tibulla, et Propertio, Epigrammatum Delectus* and the Greek Testament. Another aspect of their education included the study of dramatic literature. The entire week before the summer and the winter holidays was devoted to Greek drama. This supplemented the two hours of each week upper-form boys translated from *Oedipus Tyranus*, *Coloneus*, *Antigone*, *Phaeniassae*, and *Septem contra Thebas*, or one of Aristophanes' plays. During their leisure, the boys of the two upper forms were expected to read Dr. Middleton's *Cicero*, Tully's *Offices*, Ovid's long and short verses, the *Spectator*, Milton, Pope, Roman and Greek history, Potter's *Antiquities*, and Kennet's. To facilitate their mastery of the ancient languages, each week the fifth and the sixth-form boys wrote original Latin and Greek essays, respectively. These were read before their classmates.

While reading and recitations certainly provided some basis for Hill's training as a public speaker, the college encouraged extracurricular speaking on the part of the boys of the sixth form. Declamations were made about a month before each of the three school holidays--Easter, Christmas, and August. These declamations were made on Saturday mornings. Another public speaking exercise came when students from the highest form were asked to speak before the student body. Boys selected to speak or declaim were allowed to forego a week's exercises so that they could prepare. Whether Rowland Hill
participated in these rhetorical endeavors or not, it is clear that young Etonians were expected to learn how to speak effectively. Moreover, between 1734 and 1832, one member in six who sat in Commons was an Etonian.41

These future M.P.'s, priests, military and naval officers, lawyers, and leaders did not spend all of their time studying the classics. Drawing, French, fencing, and dancing were all taught in leisure hours. Shooting, swimming, tennis, billiards, badger-batting, boating, as well as a whole series of games were popular pastimes.42 Judging from Hill's athletic prowess, he probably participated vigorously in these activities.

While some doubt exists as to the exact form Hill's social life and academic studies took while he was a student at Eton, none exists as to his religious life. As a child, Hill's religious inclinations had been stirred by the reading of Isaac Watts' hymns for children.43

41Gerrit P. Judd, IV, Members of Parliament, 1734-1832 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 37. Among those Etonians who were successful in Commons were: Robert Walpole, Pitt the Elder, North, Canning, Wellington, Grey, Charles James and Henry Fox, and Melbourne. Eton outstripped the other public schools, by far, in sending her students into the lower house.

42See Lyte, pp. 317ff., for a description of the pastimes which interested Etonians during the 1760's.

43Jones II, p. 33. See John Julian, A Dictionary of Hymnology, Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations (revised with supplement; London: John Murray, 1908), pp. 523-24, for a brief discussion of Hill as a hymnologist. In 1790, Hill, with the help of William Cowper, the Evangelical poet, published a hymnal for children. The Surrey Chapel minister's best known songs are "Cast thy burden on the Lord" and "Gently, my Saviour, let me down."
Yet Hill later spoke of his conversion as having come when he was a student at the public school.

The actual occasion for Hill's conversion came at Hawkstone during the Christmas holidays of 1761. Rowland's older brother, Richard, who had embraced "methodistical views," apparently was the primary agent in affecting the change. He read young Rowland a sermon by Bishop Beveridge. He also began writing to his younger brothers, Rowland and Robert, while they were at Eton. In these letters, the future Evangelical M.P. admonished his brothers to take their calling as disciples seriously. He warned them of the temptations that surrounded them; he encouraged them to develop devotional lives. He even warned them that while they should be diligent students, they should not fall into the snare of pride that comes with learning.

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44 Throughout his Eton days, Hill received letters from his brother Richard and his sister Jane. In 1794, he sent one of Richard's letters, which had encouraged him to a life of "serious Christianity" to the Evangelical Magazine. Rowland Hill's own remarks introduce Richard's letter: "Though not engaged as a stated contributor to the Evangelical Magazine /sic/, I wish it all possible success. As proof of this, accept the inclosed /sic/, which was written to me by me brother Sir Richard, when I was first called to the knowledge of the truth, being at the time a boy at Eaton /sic/ School. See Rowland Hill, "The following Letter . . . ." The Evangelical Magazine, II (April, 1794), 158.

45 Sidney, p. 9.

46 Jones II, p. 33, says the sermon was probably "Behold the Lamb of God." A reading of Jones does not make it clear as to when the sermon was read. It seems that Christmas was the occasion.

47 See Hill, pp. 158-62, and Sidney, pp. 37-54, for reproductions of some of these letters. This letter was written in February, 1762.

48 Sidney, p. 41.
Similar encouragement concerning religious and academic matters came from Hill's sister Jane. Despite the fact that Rowland was probably not good at responding, Jane wrote him weekly when he was at Eton. It seems that Hill took his sister's advice on both counts. In a June, 1764, letter she says that correspondence from Eton's Provost, Stephen Sleech, tells of Hill's success as a student. From the same letter, it is evident that he had decided to enter the ministry.

After his conversion Hill formed something of a "holy club" among his fellow Etonians. He used some of his own pocket-money to rent a room from an old woman for the group's weekly devotionals. And he was successful in winning several converts to the Evangelical

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49 See V. J. Charlesworth, *Rowland Hill His Life, Anecdotes, and Pulpit Sayings* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876), pp. 6-9, for a reproduction of a January 7, 1764, letter Jane wrote Rowland. In this letter she not only expressed an interest in her brother's religious state, but his intellectual as well. She wrote, "I now, my dear brother, must conclude my letter, but not without a word or two entreat ing you to be diligent in your school studies, and to be particularly mindful of reading English in your private hours. It is the sincere affection I bear you, which makes me thus anxious for your improvement. I have often urged to you the disgrace an ignorant clergyman is to religion."

50 Senior, p. 31.

51 See Sidney, p. 19, for the letter in which she writes: "I cannot conclude without saying how glad we are to find, by Mr. Sleech's letter to my brother, that you are so diligent in your studies: con tinue to be so, my dear Rowly, and if possible double your diligence, that you may be an ornament to the ministry..." Charlesworth, p. 9, says that Hill decided to enter the ministry at eighteen.

52 Sidney, pp. 17-18. The group apparently dwindled after he left.

53 Senior, pp. 31-32.
cause. These experiences established a precedent for his evangelizing and his formation of a similar group at Cambridge, after he had entered St. John's.

**St. John's, Cambridge**

University education in the eighteenth century was even more exclusively reserved for the aristocracy than the public schools. While neither university was large during the period, "a few terms' residence were considered essential for a gentleman's education."\(^{55}\) "At the universities class distinctions were as marked as those between the Collegers and Oppidans at Eton. In addition to the scholars on the foundation, who were usually the product of the grammar schools, each college had its complement of fee-paying students graded according to rank. . . ."\(^{56}\) At Cambridge, the appellations for the gradations among the fee-payers were Noblemen, Fellow Commoners, and Pensioners. The Noblemen and the Fellow Commoners enjoyed special privileges: they were allowed to dine at the High Table and were admitted to the Common Room; their gowns were more expensively decorated than the ordinary undergraduates; they also had private tutors.

As a Fellow Commoner, Rowland Hill was no exception. His tutor, William Pearce, "was a person of much learning and eminence, having been in the year 1767 third wrangler and second medalist. He was afterwards public orator, master of Jesus College . . . and dean

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\(^{54}\) Sidney, pp. 17-18.

\(^{55}\) Marshall, p. 112.

\(^{56}\) Marshall.
of Ely. Under Pearce's tutelage and with his father's permission, Hill enrolled as a Pensioner at St. John's in October, 1764. The college had been founded as St. John the Evangelist in 1511 on an endowment of Mary Richmond, the mother of Henry VII.

Having sent his son to St. John's as a Pensioner, Sir Rowland Hill intended that Rowland be given one of the six beneficed livings within the giving of the Hill family available to St. John fellows. However, Rowland eventually became a Fellow Commoner, which was not only more fitting for his station as the son of a baronet, but also made him ineligible for a fellowship at St. John's, and thus ineligible for a beneficed living. The act illustrates the tension that existed

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57 Sidney, p. 43. Because of the slight age difference between Pearce and Hill, they remained friends, a fact which accounted for Hill's being allowed to preach in the Temple Church where Pearce was master. This was terminated when the Bishop of London banned Hill from pulpits in his diocese. See J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, From the Earliest Times to 1900*, Part II, 10 vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1922-1954, p. 61.

58 See Sidney, p. 21. Jane Hill wrote Rowland in June, 1764, that their father had decided on Cambridge for him and had no objections to his entering the ministry. Their father had planned on Rowland's being placed under Dr. Brookes, who held one of the family livings in Norfolk, for the first year and Mr. Frampton, a tutor. What the outcome of Frampton's being Rowland's tutor is not known.

59 Sidney.

60 Hill was admitted on October 10, 1764. He matriculated at Michaelmas, as matriculation occurred once in each of the three terms—Lent, East and Michaelmas. See Venn, III, 373.


62 Sidney, p. 31.
between Rowland and his father as a result of Rowland's religious convictions.

At any rate, Rowland Hill's tenure at Cambridge was another privilege which was expected for the son of Sir Rowland Hill, Bt. Unfortunately, university education in eighteenth-century England did not really measure up to the standards one would expect. "The educational system of . . . the day shows a remarkable lack of co-ordination between the official studies of the schools and those of the universities. In the former the curriculum and methods were those of the Renaissance; in the later they were those of the Middle Ages. In the schools the staple of education was Latin and Greek literature, whereas in the universities it was logic and ethics. The Renaissance method of the written theme and the composition of verse prevailed in the schools; at Oxford and Cambridge the oral disputation survived."63 Albeit young men were required to attend lectures and perform exercises at the universities in addition to being aided by their tutors, teaching was really quite inadequate in many cases.64 All too frequently chairs were nothing more than sinecures.

At Cambridge, the problem was compounded by the senior members of the University being more interested in places and preferments. With the Duke of Newcastle, the King's servant who handled church patronage as chancellor, this is not surprising.65 Nevertheless, the

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63Clarke, p. 25.

64Clarke, pp. 64, 68.

St. John's Hill entered was not totally void of an academic atmosphere. Especially was this the case after the death of John Newcome, Master of St. John's, in January, 1765.

Newcome, who was the son of a baker "was of mean presence, and his delivery, whether in the pulpit or the professional chair, was monotonous and formal. By William Cole, who had just migrated to King's, and was much in Cambridge for the next twenty years, he is described as 'a slow, dull, plodding mortal,' and 'nothing liberal in his conversation, manner and appearance. . . ." 66 When Newcome finally died at the age of eighty-two after having been master for nearly a generation, Dr. William Samuel Powell succeeded him as head of the college. St. John's, at the time, was the largest in the university "and had no rival in size or influence except Trinity." 68

The new master, who had taken the Master's, the Bachelor of Divinity and the Doctor of Divinity, at the college and was "absolutely devoted, literally lived for St. John's. . . ." 69 In fact, he succeeded in instituting far-reaching educational reforms in the school. "In the first year of his mastership he applied himself to the establishment

66 Mullinger, pp. 222-23.
67 See Winstanley, pp. 245-66, for a description of the manipulations behind Powell's election. Only after a compromise would the Duke of Newcastle support his election.
68 Winstanley, p. 240. A fierce rivalry existed between the two colleges during this period.
of Annual Examinations, ordeals previously . . . unknown. The subjects and books . . . to be used were duly specified beforehand: one of the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles in Greek had to be taken by every examinee; qualified examiners were appointed for the respective subjects, and the master himself was always present in the college when the examinations were going on."

Although these tests were initially opposed by students, eventually they proved to be of such value that other colleges at Cambridge began to administer them. Not only was St. John's the only college at Cambridge to have an obligatory course of reading for her undergraduates, but under Powell an observatory was erected for astronomical observations.

As a consequence, "the scions of some of the most illustrious families in the land--the Cavendishes, the Cecils, the Fitzherberts, the Hydes, the Molesworths, the St. Johns . . ., the Townshends, and the Stuarts" attended the college during Powell's tenure. As it turned out, Rowland Hill's religiosity made him something of an anomaly among others who were the sons of aristocrats. In fact, he was the butt of some of his peers' humor. In looking back on his university days, he commented, "Nobody in the college ever gave me a cordial smile, except the old shoe-black at the gate, who had the love of Christ in his heart."

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71 Mullinger, p. 238.
72 Mullinger, pp. 238-39.
73 Mullinger, p. 243.
74 Mullinger, p. 242.
75 Charlesworth, p. 12.
Two men did encourage Hill's evangelical sentiments while he was at Cambridge. The first of these was John Berridge, the vicar of Everton. The son of a wealthy farmer and grazier, Berridge, born in 1716, entered Clare Hall in 1734. Receiving the Bachelor's in 1738 and the Master's in 1742, Berridge, after a six-year ministry at Stapleford near Cambridge, became vicar at Everton in July, 1755, where he remained until his death in 1793. In 1757, he had a conversion experience. As a result, large crowds came to hear him preach extemporaneously. Finally on June 22, 1758, he took a bold step: after meeting John Wesley on June 2, he began to itinerate. In May of the following year, he began preaching out-of-doors. By the time Rowland Hill came to Cambridge in the Fall of 1764, Berridge had developed something of a reputation.

On one of his preaching tours at Grandchester, the two men met. Berridge, at the suggestion of Thomas Palmer, wrote Hill on December 18, 1764, that he would like to meet him if possible. Hill not only met the great itinerant, but spent his Christmas holidays with Berridge at Everton that year. Throughout his time at Cambridge, Hill regularly

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78 Sidney, p. 21.
rode to Everton each Sunday, even in bad weather, to hear Berridge preach. The vicar, who supported lay preachers out of his own pocket, had a lasting effect on Rowland Hill's preaching. His example as an itinerant and as one who employed humor in the pulpit no doubt played a part in Hill's own homiletic jocularity and itinerancy.

Besides forming a relationship with the Vicar of Everton while an undergraduate at Cambridge, Hill also met and became the protege of George Whitefield, who was probably the most well-known and popular preacher among the eighteenth-century British revivalists. The occasion for the beginning of the friendship between Whitefield and Hill arose out of the ridicule young Rowland faced in 1766 when preaching.

Hill had begun preaching sometime earlier on the Hawkstone estate of his father, where he preached in a cottage to some of his

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79 Sidney. Charlesworth, p. 13, tells of Jane Hill's writing Rowland while he was at Cambridge. She warned him of being known as a follower of the eccentric Berridge: "My brother and myself /sic/ both think it proper to give you caution how you go too frequently to Mr. B, for, should that be discovered, I need not tell you the storm it would raise." Apparently, the storm would have come from Rowland's parents who strongly objected to his Evangelical views.

80 Charlesworth, p. 12. Marcus Lawrence Loane, Cambridge and the Evangelical Succession (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), pp. 109, 188, attributes Hill's life-long irregularity to Berridge's influence. Jackson, p. 294, says the following of the relationship: "Among the early patrons of Mr. Hill were the Rev. August Toplady and the immortal Whitefield, the latter of whom he made his model. With him he laboured for three years, until Mr. W. was called to rest, when his mantle appeared to fall on young Elisha, who caught his spirit. . . ."

father's tenants. After he arrived at Cambridge, he continued preaching in and about the town. Apparently, he preached when and wherever he could—in the castle at Cambridge which served as a jail, in private houses, in barns, later in Whitefield's chapel and tabernacle at London, and even in the chapel and the house of Lady Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, while on summer vacation in 1767. In these efforts the young itinerant met with opposition quite frequently; drunks and mobs disturbed his services. But with Whitefield's encouragement, Hill continued to proclaim his message.

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82 Sidney, p. 196. When Sir Rowland heard of the incident, he asked the feeble-minded son of the woman who owned the cottage in which Rowland had preached what man had preached in his mother's house. The lad told the baronet that the man who had repaired his mother's clock had preached. Sir Rowland, being unaware of Rowland's mechanical interests, assumed he had been misinformed. So, his son's preaching continued.

83 Hill kept a diary of his preaching efforts while he was at Cambridge. Unfortunately, the diary was sold in 1896 at Shrewsbury. It is lost to history. The first entry was made, according to Sidney, pp. 23-4, on Tuesday, November, 1766, with Hill preaching at Chesterton, a village near Cambridge, on Matthew 7:14, "Enter in at the strait gate." Hill wrote that "there was much disturbance, but less than was expected. . . ."


85 Sidney, p. 26, quotes the diary and tells of townsmen who were present. They seem to have been less than receptive to Hill's message.

86 Jones I, p. 19.

87 Sidney, p. 36.

88 Sidney, pp. 24-5, using a December 27, 1766, letter of Whitefield to Hill, quotes Whitefield as saying, "We never prospered so much at Oxford, as when we were hissed at and reproached as we walked along the street. . . . Go on, therefore, my dear man, go on. Old Berridge, I believe, would give you the same advice."

This was only the first of numerous letters exchanged between
even without benefit of ordination.

Not only did Hill preach in the highways and the byways around Cambridge, but he formed--despite his parents' opposition--a group similar to the one he had organized when he was a student at Eton. Among those who were members were Thomas Pentycross, Robert Robinson, and David Simpson. These young Evangelicals often met under duress, as both their fellow students and the university authorities took offense at their religious activities. At these sessions, Hill and his associates read the Greek Testament and other Evangelical publications and prayed. Sometimes they numbered as many as ten or twelve in their meetings.

Fortunately for the members, and Hill in particular, the Cambridge group escaped official expulsion. At Oxford, six "methodist"

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the two, who became close friends. In a July 14, 1767, letter to Hill, Whitefield encouraged Hill to continue his itinerancy by saying, "A preaching, prison-preaching, field-preaching, Esq. strikes me more than all black gowns and lawn sleeves in the world."

89 Sidney, p. 87.

90 See "Memoir of the Late Rev. Thomas Pentycross, A.M. Rector of St. Mary's, Wallingford, Berks.," The Evangelical Magazine XVI (November, 1808), 453-58, for a brief biography of Pentycross.

91 Sidney, p. 23.

92 Tyerman, pp. 551-53, quotes a letter from Hill to Whitefield describing the conditions under which they met.

students were expelled because of their religious views in 1768. Rowland Hill was acquainted with these young men. Nevertheless the Cambridge administration--after threatening to withhold Rowland's degree because of his own religious irregularity--decided to allow him to complete his academic work.

Hill's studies included mathematics, particularly optics, hydro-statistics, mechanics, and astronomy, in addition to some classics. But all was not academics and religion for Hill during his undergraduate days. He was quite an athlete, who excelled as a rider and a skater. He also swam from Cambridge to Grandchester, a distance of two miles against the stream. But these activities were nothing more than

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95 Sidney, p. 27.

96 Hill wrote Whitefield on May 12, 1768, saying, "As for our Doctors [the college officials at Cambridge], 'tis remarkable how very patiently they bear with my conduct, as they now know that as I have but a little while to stay: an expulsion from Cambridge would hardly answer. They seem now to have come to the following compromise—that I am to continue to be the possessor of my professorship, and to still be bishop over their parishes, provided I will be contented with houses or barns, and leave them alone with quiet possession of their streets, fields, and churches, and by and by, they will be glad to sign my testimonium, in order to get rid of me." See Tyerman, II, 552.

97 Sidney, p. 44.

98 Sidney, p. 43.
diversions. Hill graduated from Cambridge with honors—"an unusual thing for a fellow commoner in those days--in January, 1769." He automatically received the Master's in 1771.

From the time of his conversion while a student at Eton throughout his entire stay at Cambridge, Hill's life was overshadowed by his parents disapproval of his religious convictions. They considered him a disgrace. His preaching, his organization of a religious cell at Cambridge, his difficulties with the Cambridge authorities, and his part in converting his brother Brian to serious Christianity were no doubt factors in creating tension between Hill and his parents. Unfortunately, Sir Rowland never changed his mind. He viewed his sons' religious views as bringing needless shame to the family.

Nevertheless, Rowland Hill would continue his course as an Evangelical. Despite what was normally expected for the son of a

99 Sidney, p. 44.
100 Sidney, p. 20.
101 Charlesworth, p. 15, tells of Hill as an old man who, when visiting Hawkstone, said, "I have often paced this spot bitterly weeping, while by most of the inhabitants of yonder house I was considered a disgrace to my family."

102 Richard Hill, in a July 30, 1767, letter to Sir Rowland wrote of what he knew to be his father's disapproval of his own religious activities: "I am most fully afraid that this /the disgrace/ ought to be /a/ matter of greatest joy to myself, yet I cannot help sensibly feeling for you, who I doubt not are persuaded that all this odium scandal & reproach might be avoided, and doth not come merely for ye gospel's sake, but on account of my being joined to what you think a particular party or sect, & for some needless singularities in doctrine or practice." See Letter of Richard Hill to Sir Rowland Hill, July 30, 1767, in the Rev. J. C. Hill's Collection, 549/50, Shire Hall, Shrewsbury.
baronet, who had attended an old, established grammar school before going on to Eton and finally university, Hill broke with the accepted norms. From the time of his conversion while at Eton to the time he completed his undergraduate work, Hill, influenced by his brother and sister as well as Berridge and Whitefield, worked to prepare himself for the Christian ministry as he understood it.

HILL, THE ITINERANT

The Early Years

After finishing his work at Cambridge in January, 1769, Hill remained at the university, at the suggestion of his tutor. The headmaster had allowed this only on the basis that Hill refrain from seeking to win converts. Hill, however, was not to be out done. During his remaining time at St. John's, he wrote sermons for lackadaisical clerics. But even this ended when he returned to Hawkstone for the winter.

While at his parent's country seat, Rowland seems to have applied for ordination from the bishop of Litchfield. Although his request was denied, Hill determined to continue his preaching. So, in the spring of 1770, against his father's wishes, he set out for Edinburgh, where he stayed with a friend, a Mr. Buckley. Buckley and Hill preached together in and around Leeds, in Yorkshire, that summer and fall, where they were sufficiently successful to merit the notice

103 Sangster, pp. 43-44, quotes another edition of Sidney.

104 Sidney, pp. 50-51.
of John Wesley, who notified his Methodist preachers in the area of the sincerity of the two.  

The following spring, Hill began his efforts again, this time around Bristol. He even preached in the Tabernacle there. Unfortunately, these activities resulted in his father's reducing his allowance. In fact, Rowland's circumstances were so dire that the Rev. Cornelius Winter, who had introduced him to the Tabernacle congregation, collected the money necessary to purchase a small, Welsh pony for his transportation. Traveling by horseback, Hill preached in Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, and Wiltshire during 1771. A diary which he kept during the period tells of the opposition he frequently faced. He was pelted with rocks, eggs, and dirt. Opponents blew horns, rang bells, and beat pans and shovels together to disturb his meetings. Ruffins followed him from village to village to disrupt his preaching. Persons of the upper classes denied him the right to preach again in their districts. At times, the authorities were needed to keep the peace. Despite these adversities, Hill's preaching drew crowds of "thousands" in places. Yet, even with opposition, Hill—with the continued

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105 Sidney, pp. 53-54.
106 Sidney, pp. 54-55; Charlesworth, p. 23.
107 Sidney, p. 56.
108 Sidney, pp. 56-65, gives excerpts from this early journal which describe the opposition Hill confronted. See W. L. Doughty, John Wesley, Preacher (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), pp. 74-83, for a description of the difficulties which mobs presented to revivalists.
encouragement of Berridge and the interest of the Countess of Huntingdon, persevered in his firmly-fixed custom of intinerating in 1771.

Apparently he spent the winter of 1771-1772 at Hawkstone. But by the beginning of spring, Hill set out again for another summer of preaching. His first efforts were in Gloucestershire around Bristol. He even visited Wotton-under-Edge on five different occasions that summer. Yet he still had no thought of establishing a permanent ministry in the village. The summer also saw Hill in London preaching at the late Whitefield's Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Chapel. In fact, Hill lived in the Tabernacle house in Moorfields while he preached around London to "thousands." His reputation as a preacher began to spread during these early years. More and more people were hearing him. As time went on his acclaim grew. In the

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109 Writing from Everton, May 18, 1771, Berridge wrote: "I think your chief work for a season will be to break up fallow ground. This suits the accents of your voice at present; God will give you other tongues when they are wanted; but now he sends you out to thrash the mountains. . . ." See Whittingham, Appendix, pp. 511-12.

110 Sidney, pp. 58, 62.

111 See Sidney, p. 66, for a January 22, 1772, letter from a Mr. Hunt of Bristol to Rowland in which the former speaks of the latter's having captivated large and attentive "congregations" during the previous summer.

112 Sidney, notes that Rowland was at home in January, 1772.

113 Sidney, p. 68.

114 Sidney, pp. 68-9.

115 A Member of the House of Shirley and Hastings, Aaron Seymour Crossley Hobart, The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, I (London: William Edward Painter, 1839), 211.
meanwhile, later in the summer of 1772, he returned to Cambridge where he received his Master's degree. Continuing his preaching efforts, he travelled to Kent and Surrey.\textsuperscript{116}

It was about this period, perhaps a little before, that Rowland Hill clashed with John Wesley over the doctrines of Calvinism. Having sided with Calvinist August Toplady against the Arminians led by Wesley and Joseph Fletcher, Hill wrote several works defending the doctrines his much-admired Whitefield had espoused before his death in 1770.\textsuperscript{117} Rowland's position, being what it was, lead him and most of those involved in the theological debate to resort to personal, and often vindictive, attacks on their opponents for the entirety of the controversy, which lasted throughout much of the decade. Although Hill did expend too much of his energy on this internecine conflict, he was anything but deterred from his mission to preach in 1772, or for the years to follow. As had become his custom, after the summer's preaching in 1772, he retired to Hawkstone for a winter's rest.\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} Sidney, p. 71.
\item \textsuperscript{117} See \textit{Rowland Hill?}, \textit{A Review of all the Doctrines taught by the Rev. John Wesley: Containing a Full and Particular Answer to a Book Entitled "A Second Check to Antinomianism"} . . . (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1772); Rowland Hill, \textit{Imposture Detected and the Dead Vindicated /i.e., George Whitefield/ in a Letter to a Friend} (2nd ed.; London: T. Vallance, 1772); and Rowland Hill, \textit{A Full Answer, to the Rev. J. Wesley's Remarks upon a Late Pamphlet, Published in Defense of the Characters of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and Others. In a Letter to a Friend} (Bristol: T. Mills, T. Vallance, and J. Matthews, \textsuperscript{1777}). Hill never surrendered his Calvinistic views, but later he did regret the bitterness he had manifested during the debate with Wesley and other Arminians.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Sidney, p. 71.
\end{itemize}
While at home, he made a visit to see his sister, Elizabeth, and her husband, Clement Tudway, who for fifty years was the M.P. for Wells. On the visit, Hill met Mary Tudway, his brother's-in-law sister. She and Hill began to correspond. Out of this eventually came their marriage the following year.

In the meantime, Hill set out from Hawkstone on March 24, 1773, for Coventry to begin his annual summer preaching tour. He preached his first sermon there to "a small congregation" in the Baptist meeting house that evening. Continuing toward the southeast, he preached in another Dissenting building on March 26, 1773, when he held services in the meeting house of the late Dr. Doddridge in Northampton. After preaching out-of-doors on at least one occasion, Hill reached Woodburn Bucks on Easter Day, April 11, 1773, where he preached in the morning on the resurrection and in the evening on sin and the Law. Receiving some indication that he was about to obtain ordination, he returned home to Shropshire.

He was married, on May 23, to Mary Tudway in the Mary-le-bone

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120 Rowland Hill, Diary, Borough Library, Shrewsbury, March 24, 1773.

121 Diary, March 26, 1773.

122 Diary, March 28, 1773.

123 Diary, April 11, 1773.
Immediately, Hill and his new bride went to Somerset. There on Trinity Sunday, June 6, 1773, Dr. Wills, the bishop of Bath and Wells--after having been contacted by Hill's brother-in-law, Tudway--ordained twenty-nine year old Hill deacon "without any promise or conditions whatever"... These conditions were especially lenient for Hill, considering that six bishops had previously denied his requests for ordination.

Nevertheless, having taken orders, Hill and his wife--whose dowry supplemented the marriage settlement given the couple by Sir Rowland--left for Bristol. Here on June 8, 1773, Hill preached for James Roquet, at St. Werburgh's, to a large congregation. This marked

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124 Sidney, p. 88.  
125 In a February 2, 1773, letter, quoted in Sidney, pp. 79-82, Hill wrote his bride-to-be that he appreciated her brother's offer to speak to their "old bishop" concerning ordination. Hill wrote his fiancee the following: "It might be represented that I am a younger brother with a small fortune, that I was bred up for the church, have taken two degrees, consequently much has been expended on my education; but that all is lost upon me without ordination--and that it is now too late to turn my hands to another employment... and if he (the bishop) has heard of all my doings, it might be mentioned to him that, as I have taken a religious turn, it might be much better to ordain me, and let me into the church, than to compel me to go preaching in the fields, whether I would or no... Perhaps also, it might not be amiss to say, if he should not willingly comply, that Mr. R. Hill only requests the favour of deacon's orders, as the bishop of Carlisle has promised second order whenever he applies."

126 Jones I, p. 42.  
128 Jones I, p. 42  
the first time he preached as an ordained clergyman of the Established Church.130

A few days later, Hill and his wife arrived at Kingston, near Tauton, in Somersetshire. He had been appointed curate of the small parish at a stipend of forty pounds per year.131 On his first Sunday in his new curacy, June 20, 1773, Hill preached from I Corinthians 2:2 on "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Unafraid of innovation, Hill immediately began Wednesday night lectures for his parishioners. For a while, he preached to his congregation in the open on Sunday afternoons.132 Moreover, he preached almost daily in surrounding villages.133 These efforts were only a part of his active itinerancy. Although young Rowland remained at Kingston for about twelve months as curate,134 he spent a large part of his time, with the encouragement of old Berridge,135 itinerating.

In fact, his irregularity accounts for his failing to receive full orders in the fall, when the bishop of Bath and Wells refused to

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130 Diary, June 8, 1773.
131 Sidney, p. 88.
132 Senior, p. 32.
133 Sidney, p. 90.
134 Charlesworth, p. 26; Sidney, p. 116, disagrees with Charlesworth's statement, when he says: "Every now and then there appears also an entry in his diary of a sermon at Kingston, his curacy, but there is no record of the time when he finally left it." The diary really provides little more in many cases than the date, the place and the text of Hill's sermons.
135 Whittingham, Appendix, pp. 514-15, quotes a letter of September 3, 1773, to Hill which says, "Indeed I was somewhat afraid lest orders ... would cure you of rambling; but my fears were groundless, and all is well."
write a letter of dismissal to the bishop of Carlisle. Acting under the instructions of the Archbishop of York, the old bishop told Hill that he would not be elevated to the priesthood because of his "perpetual irregularity." Despite this setback, Hill continued his active ministry. In September, he had been appointed chaplain to Melusina, the Countess Dowager of Chesterfield. During this period he received "numerous invitations to preach charity sermons in London." He preached his first at St. Mary Aldermary. On Sunday, November 28, 1773, Rowland spoke at Tottenham Court Chapel in London. On the last day of the year, Rowland was itinerating at Greenwich to a sizeable audience. Large crowds attended much of his preaching not only in 1773, but in 1774 as well. Hill opened the latter year by preaching at Tottenham Court Chapel on Sunday, January 2, when he spoke on the "barren fig tree." The rest of the year saw Hill preach at numerous other places, including Richmond in February, Rodborough in March, 145

136 Diary, September 26, and November 14, 1773.
137 Charlesworth, p. 27.
138 Sidney, p. 126.
139 Sidney, pp. 93-4.
140 Sidney, p. 93.
141 Diary, November 28, 1773.
142 Diary, December 31, 1773.
143 Sidney, p. 97.
144 Diary, February 6, 1774.
145 Diary, March 5, 1774.
St. Bartholomew Hospital on Good Friday,\textsuperscript{146} in Wales in May and June,\textsuperscript{147} in London at the Tabernacle in August,\textsuperscript{148} in Gloucestershire in the Fall,\textsuperscript{149} and back in London at Tottenham Court Chapel in December.\textsuperscript{150}

Sometime during 1773 or 1774, Hill probably terminated his ministry at Kingston. He then began to itinerate in earnest.\textsuperscript{151} "For a period of ten years he continued his itinerant labours. His ministry was attended by vast crowds; the conversions were numerous and many of them were very remarkable character."\textsuperscript{152} His wife frequently travelled with him on these tours.\textsuperscript{153}

On one occasion when they were going to London, Hill and Mrs. Hill were stopped by robbers. In later speaking of the incident, Hill commented:

I stood up in the carriage and made all the outrageous noices I could think of, which frightened the fellows almost out of their wits, and one of them said, "We have stopped the devil by mistake, and had better be off."\textsuperscript{154}

This was not the only time Hill faced danger on his preaching trips.

On another occasion a group of men in a boat were on their way to throw

\textsuperscript{146} Diary, Good Friday, 1774.
\textsuperscript{147} Diary, May 14, 1774, June 29, 1774.
\textsuperscript{148} Diary, August 7, 1774.
\textsuperscript{149} Sidney, pp. 109-11.
\textsuperscript{150} Diary, December, 1774.
\textsuperscript{151} Charlesworth, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{152} Charlesworth, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{153} Charlesworth, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{154} Charlesworth, p. 28.
Hill into the water, when their boat overturned and they were drowned.\textsuperscript{155}

Besides the opposition Rowland Hill confronted, perhaps one other aspect of his ministry during this period merits mention. Hill, like many of his fellow countrymen, during the 1770's was caught up in the controversy over the British colonial policy in North America. Hill "was constantly in the habit of mixing . . . politics with his sermons, and of denouncing in every place which he visited, the war with America; and this in such violent language. . . ."\textsuperscript{156}

**Tours Outside England**

Although Rowland Hill made his major preaching tours outside England after he built Surrey Chapel, he visited Wales at least twice in the 1770's. He began the first of these trips on Friday, May 14, 1774.\textsuperscript{157} Apparently crossing back and forth across the Welsh border several times during May and June,\textsuperscript{158} Hill reached Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca, in South Wales, in late June. The college--having been founded by the Countess in 1768, with the encouragement and aid of Wesley, Whitefield, Romaine, Fletcher, and Venn--trained "serious" young men for the Christian ministry.\textsuperscript{159} And it was to these

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{155} Charlesworth, pp. 27-8.
\item \textsuperscript{156} Sidney, p. 124
\item \textsuperscript{157} Diary, May 14, 1774.
\item \textsuperscript{158} Diary, June 5, 1774, mentions Hill's being at woodstock, near Oxford. Yet an undated entry immediately following places him in Haverfordwest in Wales, where he preached on the Prodigal Son, despite his own fatigue.
\end{itemize}
revivalists that Hill preached on Wednesday, June 29, 1774, when he
spoke on the text, "When I am weak I am strong" (II Corinthians
12:10). The following morning, he preached on the "ministration of
death and ministration of righteousness." The tour ended by August,
at the latest, as Hill preached in London at the Tabernacle then. However, Hill returned to Wales for other visits in 1776 and
1790. His fame as a preacher was still growing. Although he did
not speak Welsh, he must have felt his efforts were fruitful to have
continued his tours into the principality.

The same, no doubt, was true of Hill's feeling concerning his
visits to Ireland. The first of these came in the Autumn of 1793. Supported, in part at least, by the General Evangelical Society, which
had been founded to help spread the revival in Eire, Hill at first
found pulpits in Dublin and other places open to him. St. Mary's, St.
Bride's, and other churches were at his disposal. However, permission
eventually was withdrawn, and he preached frequently at Bethesda Chapel,
Lady Huntingdon's chapel, and the Scotch Church. In 1796, Hill
made another trip to Ireland. "He found ready access to the

160 Diary, June 29, 1774.
161 Diary, June 30, 1774.
162 Diary, August 7, 1774.
163 Diary, 1776.
164 Sidney, p. 166.
165 Sidney, p. 151.
166 Sidney, p. 164.
affection of the pious people in Dublin. . . "168

Similar responses came from Hill's 1798 preaching tour of Scotland. By that time Hill's reputation had spread all over the British Isles. Invited by Robert Haldane169 to visit the northern kingdom,170 Hill set out from Wotton-under-Edge on Monday, July 15, 1798, for a three month tour.171 Travelling with a servant in a light, horse-drawn vehicle,172 Hill usually preached several times each day in all sorts of places: in the open, in market places, and frequently in Dissenting meeting houses. On July 23, he took time out to do some sightseeing in the Lake District.173 But finally on Saturday, July 28, 1798, Rowland arrived in Edinburgh, where he stayed with James Haldane

168 Sidney, p. 182. On one of these two Irish tours, Hill preached at Rich-Hill for a congregation of Independents. Among those who heard him was Thomas Campbell, an Anti-Burger, Seceder Presbyterian preacher who visited the Independent services on occasion. Campbell, the father of Alexander, eventually migrated in 1807 to America where he was instrumental in a unity movement on the American frontier. Influenced by Hill, as well as others like the Haldanes, Campbell opposed the religious schisms and the strife that plagued much of American and British Christianity in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. See Robert Richardson, ed., Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, I (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1897), p. 60, and Lester G. McAllister, Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954), pp. 47-8.


on George Street. The following day, Sunday, July 29, the Rev. Mr. Hill preached in both the morning and the evening services at the Circus.

The Haldanes had procured the building to provide free pew space for the poorer classes of Edinburgh, as most of the denizens of the Scottish capital were unable to afford seats in the Established churches. In doing so, the two brothers intended to invite various ministers from England to preach in rotation. Rowland Hill was the first.

In addition to his preaching in the Circus, he did, however, proclaim his message of revival in other places. On August 2, the popular Surrey Chapel minister preached to a crowd of about two thousand in a timber yard at Leith, the seaport of Edinburgh. The following day, Friday, he preached to four thousand on Calton Hill. Sunday, Hill again preached both morning and noon services at the Circus. That night because the crowd of nine or ten thousand was so large, he moved to Calton Hill. Shortly after Sunday, he and James Haldane set out on a brief preaching tour outside Edinburgh.

176 "Religious Intelligence: Opening of Chapels, Circus, Edinburgh," The Evangelical Magazine, VI (December, 1798), 512.
177 Hill, Journal, p. 16.
Although back in the city on Sunday, August 12, to speak in a Burger chapel and in the Circus, Hill spoke to five thousand at Glasgow the following day. The next Sunday, the nineteenth, he spoke to at least fifteen thousand Scotsmen in the evening at Calton Hill. After a trip that took him as far as St. Andrews, in Edinburgh Hill preached twice on Sunday, September 2, to large crowds. That night on Calton Hill, he addressed between eighteen and twenty thousand people. The following day, Monday, the third, he set out for home.

By the sixteenth of September, the Rev. Mr. Hill had reached Rotherham in Yorkshire; he spoke in Dr. Edward Williams' meeting-house that morning. Nearby, that afternoon, he was addressing a crowd of not less than ten thousand when a man attempted to attack him with a sword. Fortunately for Hill, the crowd disarmed the attacker. The rescued Hill safely arrived back in Wotton on September the twenty-second. Of the tour, Hill wrote:

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184 Hill, *Journal*, p. 45.
Thus, I have now finished a nine week's Gospel tour of a full 1200 miles, have preached in much weakness to many thousands, and have been more or less engaged on different calls nearly eighty times. . . .

Obviously on none of these occasions had Hill been authorized by the Anglican episcopacy to preach. Nevertheless, he, in a publically printed letter to James Haldane commented, "In preaching through England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, I always conceived I stuck close to my parish. We are to preach the Gospel to every creature, even to the end of the world." His efforts at spreading "serious Christianity" did not go unrewarded. "Hill's method of preaching was a complete novelty in Scotland, except to a few aged persons who recollected the visits of Whitefield. . . . An anecdote in the Scotch pulpit was an experiment that no Presbyterian would have ventured . . ., but those told by . . . Hill were so lively and affecting that his hearers were raised to the highest pitch of interest."

The Rev. John Campbell, an eyewitness to many of Hill's sermons during the tour, described their effect by saying, "During some of his

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188 Hill, Journal, p. 64.

189 See "Original Criticism, Art. IV, Journal . . .," The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, IV (September, 1799), 27-33, for a very critical review of Hill, his tour and his journal. In introducing the essay, the conservative critic compares Hill to the much-feared Jacobins of the French Revolution: "The dedication is followed by a preface; in which, with all that cool and systematic effrontery peculiar to his sect, whilst both the object and the effect of everything he says and does appear too plainly to be the fermenting disunion, and destroying order, he affects to aim only to write those who are separated, and to pull down a party spirit. How does this differ from the unblushing impudence of the present French usurpers, who, even at the moment, when, as far as in them lies, they are endeavoring to drive all order and happiness out of the world, persist to boast, that they, and they only, are the true friends of the human race."

sermons, the eternal world appeared to be next door to us, and but to step between us and the judgment day, which seemed to cause a shaking among our dry boys. Not that Mr. Hill preached a different gospel from what we had been accustomed to hear, for at that time as well as now, there were numerous able ministers of the New Testament, both in and out of the establishment, but there was a general formal sameness, seldom what was striking or catching."\(^{191}\)

While the trip itself was obviously a success, Hill's actions following it damaged the effectiveness. When Hill published the journal of the tour, he appended it with Remarks on the Present State of the Established Church of Scotland and the different Secessions therefrom. . . . His attacks on the rigid dogmatism of the divided Scottish Presbyterian proved to be most offensive to many Scots.\(^{192}\)

Nevertheless, itinerancy must have been in Hill's blood, as he set out for a second tour of Scotland on Thursday, May 16, 1799.\(^{193}\) By Tuesday, the twenty-first, he had reached the home of Thomas Robinson, one of his fellow revivalists from Cambridge.\(^{194}\) The following Sunday, May 26, Hill reached Halifax and "preached to a very thronged congregation for . . . [\(a\ \text{Rev.}\) Cochin . . .," who pastored what Hill thought was probably the largest group of Dissenters in the North of England.\(^{195}\)

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\(^{191}\) Sidney, p. 187.

\(^{192}\) See Sangster, pp. 221 ff., for a discussion of the furor that arose after Hill published his journal.


\(^{194}\) Hill, Extract, p. 4.

\(^{195}\) Hill, Extract, p. 5.
Finally, on June 2, Hill addressed his first Scottish audience of the tour. In fact, he preached three times that day in either a Relief Presbyterian or Burger Presbyterian chapel.196 While in Scotland, Hill found numerous places of worship closed to his use because the General Assembly had passed an act which prohibited strangers from speaking in Scottish pulpits.197 Moreover, by the time he had arrived in Edinburgh on Thursday, June, he found "the city quite thunderstruck at the fulminating bull just uttered . . . from the General Assembly."198 Yet, when he preached in the Circus on Sunday morning, June 9, a large congregation had assembled. That evening he addressed a good-sized audience at Leith.199 By the following Sunday, he was back in the Circus. That afternoon, he conjectured that not less than ten thousand gathered to hear him on Calton Hill.200 On Wednesday of that week, the nineteenth of June, Hill left Edinburgh for northern Scotland. Accompanied by Mr. Ewen [Greville Ewing?], and preaching along the way, Hill reached Dundee by Sunday. There he spoke in a Relief chapel, which was really not adequate to hold the crowd. That afternoon, despite unseasonably cold weather, he preached out-of-doors. "And in the evening a convenient field was provided, where eight or nine thousand people . . . assembled."201 The following day, Hill addressed "a

197 *Loane*, p. 193.
201 Hill, *Extract*, p. 15.
full congregation" in a Methodist meetinghouse at Aberbrothick. At Aberdeen, on June 30, 1799, he preached both morning and afternoon in a crowded Independent building. That evening, three or four thousand gathered in the open to hear him. Unfortunately, rain broke up the meeting. About two thousand heard the Surrey Chapel minister on Wednesday, the third of July. And on Sunday, the seventh, at Inverness, he preached to two or three thousand. At Ft. Augustus on Loch Ness, on Monday, July 8, Hill spoke in a government chapel at the invitation of the officer in charge of the fort to a group of elderly invalids. Arriving at Glasgow on Friday of that week, he left his servant and carriage there and took the stage back to Edinburgh, where he spoke twice on Sunday to "congregations as large as heretofore."

Hill's preaching continued to attract good crowds. Nearly two thousand heard him preach in a field on Dunfermline on Tuesday, July 16. Three or four thousand heard him on Sunday, the twenty-first, when he spoke on "the divinity and atonement" of Christ. Back in Glasgow by the twenty-eighth, the Rev. Mr. Hill spoke in the Tabernacle to "not less than three thousand" individuals. That night he tried to

202 Hill, Extract.
203 Hill, Extract, pp. 16-7.
204 Hill, Extract, p. 19
205 Hill, Extract, p. 22.
207 Hill, Extract.
208 Hill, Extract, p. 27.
preach to six or seven thousand, but his voice gave out and he spat up blood. 209

Apparently he recovered, because on August 2, he addressed six hundred children in a cotton mill near Lanark. 210 By Monday, August 5, 1799, Rowland sent his servant and carriage on, and he travelled to Carlisle by the machine. . . . 211 From there he was heading toward Hawkstone, when on August 9, the carriage in which he was riding was wrecked. 212 However, Hill despite minor injuries, arrived at the family estate the next day. Sunday morning, he preached in the chapel of ease (a chapel built for ease or accommodation of an increasing parish) at Weston, a village near Hawkstone. 213 Saturday of that week, August 17, Hill reached Wotton-under-Edge, thus completing a sixteen hundred mile trip. 214

The tour seemed to have been marred by his having become engrossed in the controversy with the General Assembly's edict, which disturbed him.

His spirit was deeply wounded, and in every sermon he displayed considerable ingenuity in holding up these . . . bodies to public contempt. He . . . appears to have preached more against the Established and Secession churches than against the kingdom of Satan. A friend who was present, says of him. "In every sermon

209 Hill, Extract, pp. 30-1.
210 Hill, Extract, p. 32.
211 Hill, Extract, p. 34.
212 Hill, Extract, p. 35.
213 Hill, Extract.
214 Hill, Extract, p. 36.
he fired red-hot shots against the General Assembly and the General Associate Synod. It was astonishing how he varied his mode of attack on every occasion."215

Later, Hill regretted some of his remarks and attempted to reconcile himself to the Scotch Presbyterians. He even visited the kingdom again in 1824.216 The aging itinerant left for Edinburgh via a steamer on June 2, 1824. At the request of two Scottish members of Parliament, he preached aboard ship on the way. While in Scotland, he preached in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. He even preached in the Tabernacle for James Haldane while in the northern kingdom. This, his last Scottish tour, was free of controversy.217


216Jackson, p. 295. During the 1824 tour, Hill spoke to the Annual Meeting of the Glasgow Auxiliary Missionary Society on June 10, 1824. Appearing on the same program was Greville Ewing, a close associate of the Haldanes. This indicates some sort of reconciliation had taken place between the two Scottish revivalists and Hill. See "Anniversary of the Glasgow Auxiliary Missionary Society," The Evangelical Magazine, n.s., III (January, 1825), 39.

217Edwin Sidney, The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M. (2nd, Amer. ed.; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1834), pp. 286 ff. Hill was encouraged in the summer of 1814 by the Rev. George Burder to make another trip to Scotland. Although the Surrey Chapel minister apparently did not go, his response to Burder's request is interesting in that the aging Hill expressed regret for the controversy that resulted from his second tour and seemed to place the blame for the difficulties entirely on the shoulders of the Haldanes: "Tho' a journey to Scotland at my time in life, now in my 70th year, seems to be a most arduous undertaking, still I feel myself inclined to attend the pressing solicitations of the Missionary Society. . . . But before I attempt the journey some circumstance should seriously be considered. Twice in my life have I visited Scotland: but unfortunately under the patronage of the Haldanes. The first visit I own was much to the satisfaction of my . . . mind . . . . But my second visit I can never recollect without considerable regret. The separating and sectarian designs of the Haldanes were then sufficiently evident, and I unhappily was made to appear as a coadjutor in their work of division, while it was my entire wish to . . . unite with all, who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity. As soon as this was fully known to me I solemnly expostulated, and renounced all further connection with them." (See
Between the time of Hill's third and last Scottish tour in 1824 and his second in 1799, he made two other trips to Ireland. The first of these was made in the summer of 1802, probably July. The second of these, which was really Hill's fourth and last visit to Eire, was made in July 1808. Hill, working with the General Evangelical Society as he had done in earlier years, preached the dedication sermon at the opening of a new building in Dublin, on July 4, 1808.

These brief Irish tours were followed in 1820 and 1827 by what must have been short visits to Wales. The first of these Welsh trips was made when Hill preached at the fourth anniversary of the North Wales Missionary Society in Holywell, which met August 30 and 31, 1820. The Surrey Chapel minister preached four times during the conference, presided at the communion service and participated in the business meeting of the society. What apparently was Hill's last Welsh trip was made in August, 1827. Eighty-three year old Hill preached at the thirteenth anniversary of the South Wales Auxiliary Missionary Society, which was held at Cardigan on August 28-30. Hill preached twice and spoke at the open-air sacramental supper, which thousands attended.


218"Religious Intelligence: Miscellaneous," The Evangelical Magazine, X (August, 1802), 331.


220"North Wales Missionary Society," The Evangelical Magazine, XXIX (January, 1821), 44-5.

This trip made at least four times Rowland Hill had carried his message of "serious Christianity" to Wales. He also itinerated in Ireland four times. His three Scottish tours, particularly the first and the second, were perhaps the most important of his excursions outside England proper. Although involved in considerable controversy on the second Scottish trip, Hill's preaching usually drew large crowds in all three nations--at times crowds numbering in the thousands.

**Hill's English Itinerant Ministry After the Founding of Surrey Chapel**

Not only did Rowland Hill continue lengthy tours outside England after he founded Surrey Chapel in 1783, but as one would suspect he also persisted as an itinerant within the kingdom itself. Although no complete record exists of the Surrey Chapel minister's English itinerant activities between 1783 and 1833, sufficient materials exist to clearly indicate the kinds of preaching situations in which Hill found himself. He preached dedication sermons at the opening of chapels; he frequently addressed auxiliary missionary societies or spoke on behalf of the London Missionary Society; and he admonished ministerial candidates in ordination services.

Hill, it seems, was in demand as a speaker to open chapels used by English revivalists. In October, 1798, he and the Rev. William Wilkins of Burton opened a new chapel in Gloucestershire, which had been built under the auspices of the Gloucestershire Association of

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**222 The Evangelical Magazine** provides a useful source for Hill's preaching activities from its beginning date of publication in 1793 onward. Yet, for the first few years the accounts are not too numerous. But as the years wore on and Hill became one of the stated contributors of the periodical, more and more of his travels were recorded.
which Hill was a member. In December of the same year, he dedicated a new chapel in Reading. The thousand-seat auditorium would not hold the crowd and people were forced to stand in the aisles. These two occasions apparently were typical of at least one aspect of Rowland Hill's itinerant ministry after he had settled at Surrey Chapel. Evidence indicates that as late as 1826, eighty-two year old Hill was still dedicating chapels outside the London area.

In addition to the opening of chapels, another revivalist cause which made demands on Hill the itinerant was the London Missionary Society and its auxiliary branches. The Surrey Chapel minister was one of the founders of the society in 1795. He preached one of the sermons at the formation conference. And for many years he not only


224 "Religious Intelligence: Chapels Opened, Reading," The Evangelical Magazine. VII (January, 1799), 42.

225 "Chapels Opened," The Evangelical Magazine, n.s., V (February, 1827), 70.


227 The first meeting of the society was held on Monday, September 21, 1795, at the Castle and Falcon Inn in London. On Thursday, after other meetings, the group met in one of the school rooms adjoining Surrey Chapel. Hill preached on Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall come the end." Hill became one of the first directors. See "Religious Intelligence: Missionary Society," The Evangelical Magazine, III (November, 1795), 468-9, for brief accounts of the organizational meeting of the society.
hosted a part of the annual anniversary meeting at Surrey Chapel, but he travelled and spoke extensively on behalf of the society.

Generally these occasions were anniversary meetings of the L.M.S.'s auxiliaries. As a much sought-after speaker for these gatherings, Hill spoke all over the kingdom in encouraging missions. For instance, he spoke several years at the anniversary of the Bristol Missionary Society in Bristol. At the 1814 meeting, held on September 24-26, Hill spoke in one of the local Dissenting churches. He also administered the sacraments in a local assembly room. He often presided at the Table at missionary meetings. In doing so, Hill violated Anglican canon law, as only an ordained priest could administer Holy Communion.

Besides distributing the communion and speaking at anniversary gatherings, Rowland often aided in the formation of auxiliaries. One of these occasions was on August 18, 1823. Hill and the Rev. Thomas Jackson, a Wesleyan circuit minister who travelled a good deal with him on such trips, spoke on behalf of the parent society at the organizational meeting in Exeter of the branch society in east Devonshire. The following day, at a meeting in Bideford, they addressed the first meeting of a newly organized missionary auxiliary for North Devon. Hill's travels to Devon and Bristol on behalf of the L.M.S.

230 "Domestic Missionary Intelligence: Devonshire," The Evangelical Magazine, n.s., I (November, 1823), 481.
or its auxiliaries are examples of many similar efforts. At his death, the Rev. Thomas Jackson wrote that Hill had travelled over ten thousand miles for the London society, frequently at his own expense. Jackson continued:

The writer has had the honour and the happiness to accompany him in most of these labours of love, and many a scene has he witnessed which can never be effaced from his memory. At Leeds, in the Cloth Hall (an open quadrangle), he saw, on one occasion, 10,000 people hanging on his lips with the deepest interest; he has seen the theatre at Sheffield open to receive him, and crowded to excess, when the largest dissenting place of worship in the town, the Wesleyan chapel, was denied to him. In other parts he witnessed equal proofs of his popularity, and never can he forget the scene at Cardigan, where immense multitudes were assembled to enjoy the missionary festival. The preacher stood on a platform, which was elevated for the occasion, preaching alternately in Welsh and in English.

Another scene. took place in Cornwall, at a spot called the Pit, near Red Ruth, where a kind of amphitheatre is formed by the falling in of a mine. Here the multitudes assembled, and the spectacle was unique; the shops of the town were shut, business was suspended, and men, women, and children of the amount of about 4,000, hastened to the spot where "Sir Rowland," as they called him was to preach. There you might have seen carts, waggons, gigs, postchases, horses, donkeys, chairs, tables, forms, & c., all in requisition; and a goodly band of the best singers in the adjacent country were conveniently placed among the crowd, who conducted that part of the service with great propriety, while the effect of the singing, the energy of the preacher, and the attention of the people, were truly solemn.

While such occasions were no doubt the most exciting speaking situations in which Hill found himself, all his sermons and addresses were not made under equally exhilarating circumstances. On occasion, the Surrey Chapel minister took part in ordination services of ministerial candidates. Needless to say, he ordained or aided in

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231 Jackson must have travelled with Hill on one of the later Welsh tours as well.

232 Another source says Hill could not speak Welsh.

233 Jackson, p. 295.
ordaining only Dissenters. Not even a priest, much less a bishop, Hill
definitely violated Anglican canon law when he participated in these
services. Such was the case when he assisted in ordaining Joseph
Slatterie as pastor of an Independent church in Chatham, in Kent. At
this particular service, Hill exhorted the congregation from II
Corinthians 3:5,6, "to a becoming conduct toward their minister, and
each other. . . ."234 Thus, he persevered in a course that made him
something less than a faithful member of the Church of England.

In actuality, all of Rowland Hill's work as an itinerant
between the time of the building of Surrey Chapel in 1783 and his
death in 1833 placed him outside the pale of orthodox Anglicanism. His
itinerancy during the period even separated him from the Evangelicals
within the Established Church. Itineracy for these men had almost
ceased. For Hill, it had become a way of life.

PERMANENT MINISTRIES

Wotton-under-Edge

In June 1771, Rowland Hill itinerated in and around Bristol.
On the evening of Sunday, the sixteenth, he stopped at the picturesque
Gloucester village of Wotton-under-Edge. There in the market-place he
preached from Ephesians 5:19/147, "Awake thou that sleepest, & c."235
This sermon marked the first of many Hill preached in Wotton.

234 "Religious Intelligence: Ordinations," The Evangelical
235 Sidney, pp. 63-64.
Although the exact date of the young itinerant's settling in Wotton is unsure, he seems to have moved there at least by late 1774. Some time prior to the building of Surrey Chapel in 1783, Hill built a comfortable residence and erected a good-sized chapel in the small, scenic community. For the next sixty years or so, Wotton became his summer home. Perhaps more accurately, it was a residence for his wife. It was more of a supply base for him, as he spent much of most summers itinerating.

However, when the Rev. Mr. Hill was at Wotton, his preaching was not discontinued. Quite the contrary, "almost every summer's evening was spent by Mr. Hill in preaching in the villages around his residence. After an early dinner, his phaeton drove up to the door, and he used his equipage . . . to proclaim to the poor and the ignorant, what he believed to be the way of life and peace. The peasantry all knew his errand, and many of his hearers who kept horses, rode to the various places in which he was to preach. They greeted him on the road with a respectful and affectionate smile. And by the time he reached the spot selected for his sermon, he was not unfrequently attended by a considerable cavalcade."

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236 Sangster, p. 112, says Hill's settlement in Wotton was probably between July 1773 and the end of 1774.

237 Charlesworth, p. 39. Jackson, p. 295, indicates that the Wotton congregation which Hill pastored numbered about one thousand at the time of Hill's death. Charlesworth, p. 41, says the chapel was raised shortly before he wrote his biography of Hill. According to Sangster, pp. 113-5, the Hills' house, the replacement chapel, and the almshouses Hill built all still stood in 1962. This writer, regrettably, did not visit Wotton during his own stay in Britain in the Spring of 1973.

238 Sidney, p. 207.
But Hill was not in Wotton the year round, only in the summers, and not constantly at that. Consequently, Hill seems to have had an assistant who resided in Wotton and pastored the congregation during the winter months and those periods in the summer when he was away preaching in some other part of the United Kingdom. For fifteen years—from November, 1816, until the time of Hill's death—a Welshman the Rev. Theophilus Jones, functioned as the assistant.\(^{239}\)

Hill even ordained Jones in September 1817.\(^{240}\) This act gives some insight into the status of the Wotton chapel. While the liturgy of the Established Church was probably used, since Hill preferred it above all others,\(^ {241}\) the Wotton chapel could not have been considered an official Anglican place of worship. After all, Hill was only a deacon and Jackson, in the eyes of the episcopate, was not even ordained. Therefore, the chapel was registered under the Act of Toleration of 1688.\(^ {242}\) Thus, at this small, scenic village in the West of England, Rowland Hill established a chapel in the 1770's that must have served as a working model for what he did in 1783 in London with Surrey Chapel.

\(^{239}\) Jones II, pp. 183-4.


\(^{241}\) For years, Hill read liturgy of the Church of England when the London Missionary Society met annually in Surrey Chapel. The Anglican order of worship was adhered to at the London chapel throughout the year.

\(^{242}\) Sangster, p. 115, asserts this, but offers no documentation. Ursula Henriques, Religious Toleration in England, 1787-1833 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 12, observes that under the Toleration Act, Dissenting ministers who subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles (omitting those which related to church polity) could register their places of worship with a bishop, an archdeacon or a justice of the peace.
Throughout the eighteenth century, London underwent extensive transitions. The population of the metropolitan area jumped from 575,000, in 1700 to 900,000 in 1801. Geographically, the hamlets, the towns, and the surrounding areas were eventually swallowed up by the sprawling, growing giant. Economically, London assumed a greater and greater role in banking, industry and commerce for not only Britain, but for British colonial interests and Europe as well. Politically, as a strong constitutional monarch developed, Britishers looked to the city as the hub of a growing colonial empire. As a result of all these considerations, greater London was the political, economic, and cultural center of the British Isles by the time the century was underway.

Regrettably with this enormous expansion came the problems that face most urban areas. Some were especially critical for Hanoverian London in light of the inadequate means of dealing with them. Many Londoners had only marginal existences. Manual laborers barely earned enough to keep body and soul together; and in hard times, they failed to even do that. Inadequate and crowded housing added to the misery. Sanitation was a far cry from twentieth-century standards. The price of bread, the staple of Londoners' diets, became a crucial issue in times of poor harvests. Health care remained woefully inadequate for the working poor. The infant mortality rate was astronomical, especially

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among the large population of deserted or orphaned children. Crime plagued the denizens of all parts of the metropolitan area. Drunkenness destroyed the lives of many. Prostitution and its concomitant fruit, venereal disease, were widespread.

By the eighties, the situation was complicated by other factors. Great Britain found herself faced with a rebellion in North America. The nation had experienced severe political crises in the 1760's and would experience more in the early eighties. Political radicalism and anti-Catholic sentiment were growing. A rising middle class was emerging and demanding more power. All of these, exacerbated by the rising cost of living for the poor, created a situation among the poor that from time to time proved volatile.

Riots had erupted periodically in London for decades. At times, "the mob" included only a few dozen, at others, hundreds or even thousands. In 1768, "the Massacre of St. George's Fields" had been precipitated by radical sentiment on behalf of the cause of "Wilkes and Liberty." In June, 1780, London was again the scene of mob violence when the Protestant Association of Lord George Gordon petitioned Parliament to repeal an act which gave Roman Catholics more freedom. The Gordon Riots and the "Massacre of St. George's Fields"

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244 See Rude, pp. 162 ff., for a discussion of London riots.


had transpired, in part at least, in Southwark, that part of London
lying south of the Thames and accessible by all three bridges: the

During the riots of 1780, Rowland Hill preached in St. George's
Fields to crowds of nearly 20,000. In fact, he seemed to have exerted
sufficient influence that some of the rioters disbanded. At any rate,
by the beginning of 1782, Hill began to think of establishing a
permanent pulpit somewhere in the Southwark area for his own use. "Only
ten years before, in 1770, he had been a welcome Evangelical among all
groups, equally at home with the Arminian followers of Wesley, the
Calvinist group under Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon,
eagerly received by dissenters, and even able, after his ordination,
to get access to a few pulpits of the establishment. By 1781 the
Wesleyan door was shut firmly against him, his publication of 1777
against Wesley had made certain of that; his unrelenting irregularity
had shut virtually all establishment doors; though still welcome among
some dissenters he was not one of them; and in 1780 by quarrelling with
the Countess, he had lost his hold over his most important congregations,
and the Calvinist body to which he had always belonged.247

Moreover, in a meeting held at the Castle and Falcon Tavern in
Aldersgate Street on February 14, 1782,248 several men agreed to
finance the building of a chapel somewhere in Southwark for Hill's

247 Sangster, p. 74. Charlesworth, pp. 34-35, contends that while
Wesley's chapels and those of the Countess were closed to Hill, the
late Rev. Whitefield's were not. Neither were, he says, "many of the
Dissenting pulpits."

248 Jones II, p. 97.
Among those present at the Castle and Falcon meeting was the Rev. John Ryland. One of the better known subscribers to the project was Lord George Gordon, who contributed fifty pounds.\textsuperscript{250} The trustees of the chapel\textsuperscript{251} agreed that Hill's labors would be "unfettered by ecclesiastical restraints."\textsuperscript{252} They further determined that Hill's itinerancy should continue; thus he was free to evangelize in other areas of Britain for six months out of the year.\textsuperscript{253}

With these provisions established, the cornerstone of the chapel was laid on June 24, 1782. Hill preached that Sunday on Isaiah 28:16: "There thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste. . . ."\textsuperscript{254} A year after the laying of the cornerstone, Hill officially opened Surrey Chapel on Whit Sunday, June 8, 1783. Preaching from I Corinthians, the new pastor declared "We preach Christ crucified."\textsuperscript{255}

\textsuperscript{249} Charlesworth, pp. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{250} Sidney, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{251} Sidney, p. 143, says they were: Sir Richard Hill, the Rev. Rowland Hill, Joseph Simms, John Keysall, Edward Webster, Thomas Wilson, Samuel Lloyd, William Lloyd, John Bush, James Neale, James Webber, Thomas Briknell, George Smith, Ambrose Martin, and John Clarke.
\textsuperscript{252} Charlesworth.
\textsuperscript{253} Charlesworth, p. 39. Because of this freedom to continue to itinerate, Hill facetiously called himself "the rector of Surrey Chapel, vicar of Wotton-under-the-edge, and curate of all the fields and lanes throughout England."
\textsuperscript{254} Sidney, p. 140. The sermon was published by another person against Hill's wishes.
\textsuperscript{255} Charlesworth, pp. 35-36.
The architecture of the chapel was octagonal, thus "well adapted for hearing. . . ." When filled to capacity, the building seated between 2,500 and 3,000 worshippers. On the same grounds, Hill built a thirteen room parsonage, which was connected with the chapel and adjoining buildings. He lived in the house for fifty years.

From the time of his decision to build a chapel, Hill intended it to be a center of "serious Christianity," but not aligned with any particular religious party. "It was his proud boast that . . . revivalists from all communions were free to preach in his pulpit. Venn, Scott, Berridge, and Pentycross, were some of the eminent Church of England clergyment who preached at Surrey Chapel during the earlier years of its history. . . ." Another Anglican who supplied for Hill on occasion was Glasscott. Among the Dissenters were Jay, Sibree, Bull, James Joss, Mills, Piercy, Medley, Elliott, Slatterie,

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256 Senior, p. 125.

257 Jones II, pp. 125-126, says it seated twenty-five hundred normally, but three thousand on special occasions. Senior, p. 43, suggests that eighteen hundred could be comfortably seated and twenty-five hundred when crowded.

258 Senior, p. 62.

259 Senior, p. vii.

260 Charlesworth, pp. 41-42.


262 Charlesworth.
ard Griffin.  

Despite the fact that on occasion Dissenters filled the pulpit at Surrey Chapel, the "liturgical service of the Church of England was adopted from the beginning... with slight modification.  

Although Hill used a modified Anglican liturgy, irregularities such as the use of Nonconformists to preach or the administration of the sacraments by a man who only held deacon's orders made the chapel, legally, a Dissenting one. As with his Wotton-under-Edge establishment, Hill registered Surrey Chapel under the Toleration Act.  

The proclamation of "serious Christianity" by Hill and the various supply preachers who occasionally filled the pulpit was not Surrey Chapel's only ministry to the residents of Southwark. In 1784, a benevolent society was founded for religious and financial aid to

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263 Jones II, pp. 120-124. Sidney, Amer. ed., p. 139, points out that a part of the agreement between Hill and the trustees of the chapel was that he should "provide and direct the ministers, so long as he should preach agreeably to the doctrinal articles of the church of England, and did not give the use of the pulpit to any one who was known to preach otherwise."

264 Charlesworth, p. 42. Hill's devotion to the liturgy of the Established Church has previously been mentioned. Further evidence of that preference is that the minister's will left fifty pounds per annum for an assistant to be retained who would continue to read the services.

One of the modifications Hill instituted was the deletion of the weekly communion service. He administered it on a monthly basis, according to Jones II, p. 107.

265 Charlesworth, p. 42, says the chapel was an independent one. It appears that the building, albeit licensed under the Toleration Act and known as Rowland Hill's, was not legally registered in the minister's name. The Hill Obituary, The Annual Register, p. 216, makes this assertion. An 1802 article in the Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine says that the license at that time was in a Mr. Wilke's name and not Hill's. See "Reviewers Reviewed," The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, XIII (October, 1802), 209.
poverty-stricken ill. Almshouses were built in the neighborhood for the support of twenty elderly women of "Christian character." A school to train indigent young girls in the arts of domestic service was established. The first ragged school in London was commenced under the auspices of Surrey Chapel. For the children of the Southwark area, Hill founded the first Sunday School in London in 1786. These ministrations, as time passed, expanded. Literally thousands were served through them by the time of Hill's death in April, 1833.

Hill not only preached for one of the most active revivalist congregations in London, but he played an active part in numerous other religious and moral causes. Besides his untiring support of the London Missionary Society, he was either a member of or had a serious interest in the Religious Tract Society, the Continental Society, the Evangelical Association for the Propogation of the Gospel in Villages, the London Female Penitentiary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools, the Southwark Sunday School Society, the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Freedom, the Hibernian Society, The Evangelical

266 Charlesworth, p. 44.
267 Senior, pp. 44-45.
268 Sidney, p. 162.
269 Surrey Chapel continued for a few years after Hill's death under the same conditions it had operated during his lifetime. Eventually the building fell into the hands of the Primitive Methodists. At another point, it served as a boxing arena. During the bombing of London by the German Air Force during the Second World War, it was destroyed. Today, a plaque marks the spot where Rowland Hill's chapel once stood.
Magazine, the British and Foreign School Society, and the Port of
London Society for Promoting Religion Among Seamen. The Rev. Mr. Hill
frequently addressed one of these groups or others in business meetings
or he preached at anniversaries.

These speaking engagements, coupled with his duties as a
pulpit minister for one of the largest churches in London made numerous
demands on Hill's rhetorical talents. Moreover, he kept up his active
pulpit ministry up to the very week of his death on April 11, 1833.
For almost fifty years he actively and vigorously preached for Surrey
Chapel, London.

SUMMARY

As a younger son of a wealthy English baronet, Rowland Hill
from his birth onward had all the advantages of position, education
and prospects that would prepare him as a forceful and popular speaker.
However, despite the wealth and position plus his education at the
Royal Grammar School in Shrewsbury, at Eton, and at St. John's,
Cambridge, Hill did not choose a career in the military, in the navy,
in medicine, in law, or in politics. He did not even choose the easy
route of a beneficed living in the Established Church.

Rather, Hill's religious inclinations led him to become an
unorthodox Evangelical within the Church of England. From the time he
was at Cambridge untill his death in 1833, Hill was an itinerant
preacher. Serving only briefly as a curate in a Somersetshire parish,
Hill turned almost totally to itinerancy after his graduation from
St. John's. Finally, in 1783, he founded Surrey Chapel in London.
But this ministry, and the smaller less demanding one at Wotton-under-
Edge, did not squelch Hill's love for itinerant preaching. Although he lived in London during the winter and used Wotton as a base in the summers, Hill's preaching took him all over the British Isles.

When he died in 1833, he had pastored Surrey Chapel for nearly fifty years and the Wotton chapel for about sixty. He had visited Ireland, Wales, and Scotland on numerous preaching tours. And he had proclaimed the warm, heart-felt faith of the revival in almost every corner of his native England.
Chapter 4

ROWLAND HILL: AN ATYPICAL ANGLICAN,
EVANGELICAL PREACHER

INTRODUCTION

Rowland Hill preached his message of warm, heart-felt Christianity for more than sixty years throughout England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Preaching literally thousands of times to many thousands of people, Hill's homiletic talents were the subject of considerable discussion among both his admirers and his adversaries during these years. Some of the notables who heard the Surrey Chapel minister were: Isaac Milner, the Dean of Carlisle;1 William Wilberforce, leader of the Evangelical Party in the House of Commons;2 Robert Southey, poet and historian;3 William Cowper, the melancholy Evangelical poet;4 Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent and father of Queen Victoria;5

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2Sidney, American ed., p. 329.
5Jones II, p. 126.
and William Brinsley Sheridan, Irish actor, playwright, and parliamentary orator. Virtually all of Hill's biographers were generally complimentary of his talents as a preacher. Their extravagant praise of Hill's abilities at times leads one to question their objectivity in evaluating the man. On the other hand, Hill was not without his critics. Criticism of Hill's homiletic talents grew out of his opponents' abhorrence of his views on church polity, or itinerant preaching, or theology, or his alleged political radical tendencies. These evaluations, while certainly offering another perspective, do not negate the itinerant's popularity with thousands of Britishers.

This chapter describes and analyzes the themes which dominated the Hill sermons. The first section is devoted to the major thrust of his preaching. The second looks at the secondary themes on which Hill spoke from time to time.

THE DOMINANT THEMES OF HILL'S SERMONS

The Major Theme of Hill's Message

A reading of the extant sermons and addresses preached by Rowland Hill leaves no doubt as to the major emphases of Hill's homiletic

6Sidney, American ed.

7Two of the most negative critiques of Hill's talents as a preacher are: A Barrister /James Sedgwick/, Hints to the Public, and the Legislature on the Nature and Effect of Evangelical Preaching, Parts one through four (London: Printed for Johnson, H.D. Symonds, Hatchard, and W. Reed, 1808-1810); and, Onesimus /Peter Courtier/, The Pulpit; or, A Biographical and Literary Account of Eminent Popular Preachers; Interspersed with Occasional Clerical Criticism, I (London: Printed for Mathews and Leigh, 1809). The second of these does recognize Hill's contribution to the increase of religion in Britain.
endavors. Clearly, the primary thrust of Hill's message was "ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit." In sermon after sermon, Hill stressed these three themes, as had John Wesley and George Whitefield. In fact, "the three R's" of religion dominated the preaching of most of the eighteenth-century revivalists.

The first of these themes involved the doctrine of the fall of man. This theological tenet asserts that Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden constituted an act of rebellion against God. That act not only created a barrier between God and Adam, but between God and all the descendants of Adam. The account of the fall was a recurring theme for Hill, as early as the time of the publication of his first sermon in 1773 to the closing years of his life. In that first sermon, which was Hill's first to his parishioners at Kingston in Somerset, Hill discussed Adam's fall:

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8 Thirty-seven manuscripts of sermons and addresses delivered by Hill are used in this section of the study. Vernon J. Charlesworth, Rowland Hill: His Life, Anecdotes, and Pulpit Sayings (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876); William Benzo Collyer, ed., Pulpit Sayings by the Late Rev. Rowland Hill (London: F. Westley and A. H. Davis, 1835); Edwin Sidney, ed., Mature Reflections and Devotions of the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M., In His Old Age (London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1836); Edwin Sidney, ed., Select Notes of the Preaching of the Late Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M. (London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1837); and Thoughts on Religious Subjects (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1835) provide either quotations from various Hill sermons or speeches or truncated sermons, or both. These have not been used in this study for two reasons. First, they frequently are not even dated; second, they are not in a contextual framework.

When our first parents were sent forth from the hands of their Creator, their hearts being the direct transcript of his moral image, they appeared the completest workmanship of an holy God; were blessed with a nature spotless and pure, as angels could possess. All love, all peace, all joy, all delight in, and conformity to the will of God that made them, were the continual inmates of their happy breasts. Not the least taint of the minutest impurity had they, to disturb their peace; but all was heaven and consolation in the Lord. God pronounced this, his last work, to be very good; and as such, took delight in the creature, that he had made.

--Such was man, while blessed with innocence before the fall; but how dreadful were the consequences of that first transgression. How was God's workmanship robbed of all its holiness, and grandeur thereby! How was the once glorious temple of the Holy Ghost prostituted to iniquity, and converted into the most hateful den of filthy lusts, and vile abominations! Which of you can deny this, who either reads his bible, or reads himself? From Genesis to the Revelations, all scripture declares this awful truth, that, as soon as ever man fell, immediately was he deprived of every thing that was good, and dreadfully filled with everything that was bad.

Man's natural propensity to evil was a topic Hill frequently iterated throughout his life. In his sermon, "Christ Crucified," at the opening of Surrey Chapel on Whitsunday, June 8, 1783, Hill told a capacity crowd that man after the Fall "became immediately obnoxious to his God." He continued,

Sin being infinitely odious to the divine nature, the creature that he made was no longer the object of his delight. All real good being instantly withdrawn, no principle of holiness any longer abiding in him, he is given over to the will of the adversary, is led captive by the enemy that first tempted him to rebel, who works upon his unruly passions, and completely deforms every faculty of the soul. Thus fallen, no wonder that it necessarily follows, that the imaginations of his heart are only evil, and

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Rowland Hill, "The Gospel Message:" Being the Substance of a Sermon Delivered in the Parish-Church of Kingston, Near Taunton, June 20, 1773 (Taunton: Printed by W. Norris, 1773), pp. 10-11. In a letter to the vicar of the parish at the front of the sermon, Hill remarks, "As this sermon was delivered extempore, without any intention of its being afterwards printed, much more than the substance of it I have not been able to recollect: however, as I hope never to be ashamed of plain familiar speaking, or rather conversation, from the pulpit; the extempore style have I endeavored to keep up."
that continually. How remarkable does universal experience prove the dreadful fact? Are we dreaming when we say a generation are found that deny the fall? Can they be serious? or what is to be believed if the fall is to be denied?\textsuperscript{11}

The proof was irrefutable. Hill warned his auditors, "But why need I multiply proofs? Were I to transcribe half the Bible, either directly or indirectly, we should see some fresh evidence of the fall. Which of the purest characters of Scripture were not defiled by sin?"\textsuperscript{12}

The total depravity of unregenerate man was not limited to adults in Calvinist Hill's mind. Quite the contrary, children had also been tainted by Adam's transgression. The doctrine of original sin, in fact, was a major theme in his annual Easter sermons to the children of the Surrey Chapel Sunday schools. In nearly all the extant addresses delivered to the children, the Rev. Mr. Hill emphasized, in vivid language, that they were dominated by sinful natures. In a March 7, 1824, address, Hill warned his youthful listeners:

\textsuperscript{11}"Rowland Hill, "Christ Crucified, The Sum and Substance of the Scriptures." A Sermon Preached by Rowland Hill, A.M. On Whitsunday, June 8, 1783. On the Opening of the Surrey Chapel, St. George's Road (London: Sold by C. Dilly, J. Buckland, J. Matthews, and the Vestry of Surry Chapel, 1793), p. 18. In the preface of his sermon, Hill comments on its textual authenticity, when he says "The substance of it [the sermon] I had an opportunity to collect from what a gentlemen sent to me, who took it down in short-hand: but as he only wrote for his own use, what I received from him was by no means so full as to render it unnecessary for me to consult my private notes; and thus, notwithstanding I was obliged to take some little liberty in connecting the discourse, had I thought myself at liberty to have composed a fresh Sermon, perhaps I might have had it more in my power to gratify those who prefer elegance of composition to plain and simple truth. Some inaccuracies having been thus corrected, I may venture to pronounce this to be the Sermon delivered upon the Sabbath on which public worship was introduced at Surry Chapel."

\textsuperscript{12}"Christ Crucified," p. 19.
You were born in sin and conceived in iniquity. Your hearts are prone to wickedness; you soon get angry, and some of you do not mind lying or speaking in a wicked manner. Why, your tongues would not say these things if your hearts were not bad. Children say bad things because they are bad. If children speak lies, it is because they are instructed to do so by "the father of lies /Satan/" if children do not read the Bible, it is because they do not like God who is revealed to them in the Bible.\footnote{Rowland Hill, "Address to Children, March 7, 1824," Sermons by the late Reverend Rowland Hill, Delivered to Children at Surrey Chapel, in the Easter Season of the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826,; with Prayers and Hymns Annexed. Also, Five Addresses, Transcribed by Thomas Warr Brookman (London: \_n.p\_/, 1833), p. 59.}

Because these youngsters were naturally inclined to evil from the time of their births onward, Hill continued:

None of you children can tell how long you have to live. It is a very short time; and this may be the very last time you may hear the truth from my voice. You are born to die, you cannot keep away the stroke of death. All the preparations in the world cannot keep it away; and if you die in the same wicked state in which you were all born, it would have been a thousand times better for you that you had never been born.\footnote{March 7, 1824, Sermon, Brookman, p. 58.}

Speaking on another occasion, Hill told a group of youngsters that they were "all by nature fallen, ruined children." They were a "set of little corrupt sinners," who "if . . . permitted to go on according to that which . . . \_was\_/ in . . . \_their\_/ hearts, \_they would\_/ . . . be sure to grow up wicked men and women. . . ."\footnote{"Address to Children, February 26, 1826," Brookman.}

Fortunately for sinful man, according to Hill, God saw man's plight and took the initiative. In his last sermon at Surrey Chapel, preached on March 31, 1833, Hill told his parishioners of God's action on their behalf.

O, my God, what a power is needed to change man from this desperate state of wickedness. The whole of it is nothing less than this:
man is earthly, "grovelling in all the things of time and sense, till he is put into the ground again;" he is "sensual" - he riots in sensuality by nature, whilst he brutalizes his mind.

Can man, by any human suasion, be made better than he is? No, verily, my beloved . . . . No, verily it requires a greater miracle of power to renew the heart, than any other miracle that can be performed even by the power of God himself.16

The miraculous intervention by God in conversion was also briefly the point of discussions in a sermon on the Lord's Supper which Hill delivered at Surrey Chapel on March 18, 1832. He remarked,

I once heard a poor creature say, "The Lord will save you if you let him." Why, no man will let God save him; blindness, and ignorance, and prejudice, must be first removed; and then when these things are done away, when the windows are open, the light is permitted to shine, and it shines into the heart, and we have the light.17

The illumination of the heart of the unconverted by the Spirit was again one of the topics when Hill addressed the Home Missionary Society in the Poultry Chapel on May 18, 1830. He then commented:

Whatever portion of knowledge any man has on these important subjects relating to salvation, if it be the right sort, is the result of the Spirit's operation on the heart.

No man can know what sorrow is but the sorrowful; or what joy is but the joyous; or what true repentence is but the penitent. The


17 Rowland Hill, "On the Lord's Supper, Preached at Surrey Chapel, Sunday Morning, March 18, 1832," in William Jones, Memoirs of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Reverend Rowland Hill, M.A., Late Minister of Surrey Chapel, to which is added Fifteen Sermons on Important Subjects Preached in the 89th and Last Year of His Life Including His Final Pulpit Address to, and Prayer for, Sunday School Teachers, all Accurately Taken in Short Hand, by Mr. Oxford, of Clifford's Inn, with a Funeral Sermon, Occasioned by the Death of Mr. Hill, by the Rev. W. Richards (London: Printed for John Bennett, 1834), p. 7.
Spirit first enlightens us, and then makes us abhor sin as most detestable and odious. 18

The activity of God in reconciliation of man to himself did not cease with the Spirit's opening of man's eyes to his own sinful nature. Hill repeatedly proclaimed that Jesus Christ's death was the reconciling event in which sinful man found hope for eternal salvation. In his sermons that examined the doctrine of redemption, four salient arguments emerged.

First, and definitely most importantly, redemption for Hill meant faith in the death of Jesus. Hill most fully developed this theme in his opening sermon at Surrey Chapel, "Christ Crucified." After having described fallen man's condition, he told his audience:

Such was the situation of ruined man, when God the Saviour came to redeem. In his body, prepared for him by almighty love, he comes; stands as the Mediator, bears on his own person all that was due to mankind from the justice of God, and fulfills those ancient prophecies recorded of him; for the Messiah was cut off not for himself, but for his people; thereby he finished the transgressions, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness on the sinner's behalf. Thus by the sacrifice of himself once offered, while he dies upon the cross, he bids the sinner live, and manifests himself as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. Respecting this glorious work of redemption, with his dying lips he tells us, it is finished, while by his repeated words of promise we are invited to hang all our hopes upon him for grace in time, and for glory in eternity. 19

Promising eternal life for those who had faith, the Rev. Mr. Hill exhorted the audience to respond to God's love as revealed in the death of Christ.

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18 Rowland Hill, "Sermon for the Home Missionary Society. . .," The Pulpit, XIV (May 27, 1830), 263. The Pulpit sermons appear to have been taken in short hand.

It is Jesus that has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; nor need you fear the penalties of the curse, while you view Christ crucified the object of your faith, and make him the only plea for your acceptance before God. Never was justice so magnified before, nor mercy so conspicuously revealed: had the Creator delivered up a thousand angels, there would not have been a sacrifice nearly equal to that of his now even sparing his well-beloved Son, when he stood as man for men, to bear the vengeance of his wrath! O the mercy that revealed such a salvation for a ruined world.  

While Hill offered salvation to those who had faith in Christ, on several occasions he flatly denied the efficacy of works or morality as the basis for reconciliation to God. Salvation by works, Hill told his Kingston parishioners in 1773 was impossible.

Such is the language of the law from Sinai! Whereby we see, that by the first covenant of works, all are lost; nor is there the least gleam of hope for fallen man, whereby he can be saved, by a righteousness of his own. So completely is he undone, without the grace of the Redeemer! Nay, what is worse, he even seems to be in love with his misery, and bent upon his destruction.

At the laying of the corner stone at Surrey Chapel on June 24, 1782, the new pastor expressed a similar view, when he told the crowd gathered for the occasion,

Many of the world depend upon their morality and good works. But where is that morality of salvation? Who is there so good or so moral as to be without sin? Where is the spotless man? Bring him before me, and I will acknowledge before ye all, he shall be saved. But I know ye will say with me, that man is not to be found. Then why my dear Brethren, would ye think or presume to depend on yourselves?

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20 "Christ Crucified," p. 22.
Nearly six years earlier, Hill had expressed almost an identical position in the funeral sermon for his close friend and fellow revivalist, James Roquet. Speaking on Sunday, November 24, 1776, in the parish church of St. Werburgh, in Bristol, Hill cautioned those gathered to pay their respects to the late Reverend Roquet against being religious, but unconverted.

I fear thousands split against this rock of offense; and however well decency itself may be, many there are that are pure in their own eyes, and yet not cleansed from their filthiness, contenting themselves with such a confidence as shall never avail; they can thank God like the Pharisee of old, that they are not so careless and negligent in their duty as other men are, that they can give constant attendance at the church, not only on Sundays, but on Wednesdays and Fridays also. Besides monthly sacraments, and mock-fastings in Lent, they can boast of saying their prayers regularly in private, that they are just, chaste, and sober, and now and then can spare a trifle for the poor. . . . And is this thy confidence, poor fallen worm? Thinkest thou that these few pitiful externals shall gain glory for thy poor polluted soul, when it stands awfully recorded. Without shedding of blood, and that too the blood of Christ, there is no remission of sin.23

In making this assertion, Rowland typified the Evangelical attitude concerning the sermon, "It reads as if it was jotted down afterwards by an unskilled person. It was probably a very rough and inaccurate version, but substantially what had been said." This writer, after having read the sermon, concurs. A review of the sermon appeared soon after it was published in The European Magazine which said, "This discourse is not worthy of any degree of praise. It is full of that fanaticism which is destructive to the interests of society." The reviewer continued by commenting on Hill's relationship with the late Whitefield, "In copying Mr. Whitefield he has like most copyists imitated his extravagancies and absurdities rather than his excellencies." See "A Sermon preached by the Reverend Mr. Hill, on His laying the first Stone of his Chapel in St. George's Fields, June 24, 1782. Folinsby," The European Magazine and London Review, III (January, 1783), p. 44.

23 Rowland Hill, "A Token of Respect, to the Memory of the late Reverend James Roquet:" Being the Substance of a Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of St. Werburgh, in the City of Bristol, on Sunday, November 24, 1776. (Bristol: William Paine, 1776), pp. 8-9. In the preface of this published sermon, Hill says that the sermon should be considered the substance of "an extemporary discourse," which contains "nothing but the leading sentiments of what was then delivered."
toward fellow religionists who were not adherents of "serious Christianity," i.e. revivalists. Needless to say, such a mentality offended many Britishers, especially those who considered themselves members in good standing of the Church of England. Many such individuals felt they not only were faithful children of the English Church, but faithful children of God. 24

Nevertheless, self-dependence for salvation formed no part of Hill's personal theology. Referring to his own relationship to God, the aged Hill told a Sunday morning, March 10, 1833, audience at Surrey Chapel that he personally depended solely on the cross for his own salvation.

Oh that God would bring us to the only remedy for this fatal disease—sin—the footstool of the cross. I am sure, I am very sure, you will find it there. God be praised, I hope the poor sinner who speaks to you from the pulpit found it there. I found it at the footstool of the cross; I looked to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; and I perceived that a change was wrought in me—a change that, I am sure, I could never accomplish myself, and desires which I never could have had, only God created them there. 25

Hill concluded that Sunday by saying,

The sum and substance of the sermon, then, you will remember is this: "If you want to overcome sin, trust in the sacrifice of Christ; trust in his atoning blood, and by your confidence in Him that has pardoned your sins, you may confide in him assuredly that through him you shall have the victory. 26


26 "Idolatrous Worship," p. 214.
Such a victory came from faith in the Jesus of the Bible. That Jesus, for the Surrey Chapel minister, was the Jesus of the Trinity, the Jesus of the incarnation, who was both God and man. Hill's insistence on this issue formed the third major argument in his discussions of "redemption by Christ." His remarks on the subject of Christology probably grew out of his abhorrence of varying forms of Unitarianism and Socinianism, which denied the divinity of Jesus. Like other eighteenth-century British revivalists, Hill found a denial of either the Trinity or the Incarnation or both to be heretical. He made this perfectly clear in his opening sermon at Surrey Chapel in 1783, when he told the large gathering,

You asked what is to be understood by preaching Christ crucified? First, concerning the person of Christ; and herein I am most firmly persuaded respecting his divine nature, he is the everlasting Jehovah, creator of all things, God over all, blessed for evermore. Now this I apprehend to be as plainly revealed as the existence of God.

Jesus' divinity, he continued, was a matter which some erroneously contested.

Cavils in abundance, it is well known, have been invented to invalidate the strongest arguments upon this subject; and thus far is undoubtedly evident, that from the plain reading of the Scriptures, by far the greater part of mankind have been led to worship Christ as God. Consequently, the Bible itself has led its

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thousands to a wrong object of supreme adoration. Was ever a book composed of man so essentially misunderstood? Do not the Socinians themselves give the strongest arguments to the Deists against the blessings of revelation.29

Christ's divinity was a significant theological tenet for Hill; Christ's humanity was of equal importance. In the same sermon he made just that point.30 He reasserted his belief in the incarnation on Christmas Day, 1832, at Surrey Chapel. Hill declared that

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." The great mystery of godliness is God's appearing in human nature; that he should become man for man, that he should take upon him our nature, that we might be blessed with a participation in his nature. For the first Adam completely ruined our race by his fall, so the second Adam stands in the first Adam's place...31

The death of the Second Adam, Christ, and its saving consequences for sinful man raise the fourth aspect of Hill's proclamation of salvation through Christ. Hill--as with his much-admired friend and mentor George Whitefield--adhered to a modified Calvinism. For the irregular Anglican Evangelical from Shropshire, God had his elect, whom He had selected as his own. The rest of mankind found themselves outside the effacious death of Jesus. It was to this topic that Rowland addressed himself on May 18, 1830, before the Home Missionary Society. However, his remarks conclusively show that he held a modified view of predestination:

This, then, is our duty, concerning the spread of serious Christianity, to use all the means which wisdom can devise, and then leave the issue, by prayer, in the hands of God. And what you will say, are the means to be employed? What? Why, "go and preach

29 "Christ Crucified," p. 16.

30 "Christ Crucified," p. 17.

the gospel." To the elect, say some; but who knows who or where they are. Christ said, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature." Let us do this; God knows when, and where, and how to apply it. Hence it is my duty to go and say to the poor, perishing sinner, "Come to Christ--whosoever will, let him come--whosoever cometh shall not be cast out." Hence it is my duty to go and cry to a perishing world, "Why will ye die? God has no pleasure in your death, but would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

The Salopian-born minister modified his Calvinism even more by acknowledging that the man who sinned chose to do so.

But every man living is wilfully ignorant, and desires to be so; he chooses darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. No man can commit a sin without first choosing to commit it; and when the choice is his, the guilt is his. That is the case with every man that lives: no man in the world, without telling an abominable falsehood, can say he cannot help sinning; he might mean as much as this,—that such is the strength of his own corruption, that I feel drawn to it against my own good; but to say he could not help it is a falsehood;—he would not help it.33

Not only did he acknowledge that man had some modicum of free-will, but Hill seemed to deny that unregenerated infants who died were not necessarily doomed eternally. At eighty-seven, Hill told his flock in a discussion of salvation on April 1, 1832, that God would perhaps extend mercy to children who died before adulthood.

The word is Salvation. What does it indicate? That you and I are in an unsaved state by nature. I will state it in the language of our good old article of the church, that every man born into the world in his fallen state deserves God's wrath and damnation. We are born, till born again, in a damnable state. We are not to say how far the Lord may have mercy upon the infant race; but we humbly trust that those infants who are born and die under the similitude of Adam's transgression may have mercy reserved for them. /Italics mine/34


33Rowland Hill, "A Sermon Preached at Surrey Chapel, Sunday Morning, March 25, 1833," The Pulpit, XXI (April 18, 1833), 268.

34Rowland Hill, "Dangers of Neglecting the Great Salvation, Preached at Surrey Chapel, April 1, 1832," in Jones I, p. 50.
Such an acknowledgment coupled with an admission of some free will, plus Hill's active itinerant ministry all seem to be incongruous with his long-proclaimed Calvinism. If God had predestined certain individuals as his elect and others as "carnal men" what need did they have of Hill's services as a preacher. Or, what difference did it make whether children died in infancy or not. Perhaps Hill would respond to such an observation by contending that the Christian preacher is God's instrument in "calling" the elect. At any rate, Rowland Hill's views concerning salvation through faith in Jesus had certain unmistakable facets. First, faith in Christ was essential if one desired to be reconciled to God. Second, recognition of the efficacy of the death of Christ meant the rejection of salvation by one's own goodness or works. Third, both Christ's divinity and humanity were essential to "saving faith." These, along with Hill's moderated Calvinism formed the substance of what the Rev. Mr. Hill preached to thousands of Britishers concerning redemption in Christ.

In addition to justification through Christ, which had been necessitated by man's proclivity to sin, Hill often preached on the theme of regeneration. Time after time, in sermon after sermon, the popular revivalist spoke of the necessity of living a "sanctified life." Moral purity, Hill frequently told his hearers, was a result of having been redeemed by the blood of Christ. The two could not be separated. On January 6, 1833, at Surrey Chapel, the venerable Mr.

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Hill told his audience that

There are some people talk about the atonement of Christ and don't like to talk about the influence of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and purify the heart. If I preach one sermon on justification, I would at least preach another on sanctification. If I tell people God has freely forgiven them, so I will tell them of his grace working righteousness in the heart; it has wrought out not only righteousness for me, but it works righteousness in me, and makes me righteous. Don't let us forget that fine doctrine. He is just as willing to give his grace for the purifying of your hearts, as he was free to give us of his blood for the justification of our persons. If ever we preach the gospel in a sort of partial manner, without giving equal weight to both parts of divine truth, we do injury to the souls of men.  

The agent who effected the change in man's heart, Hill told his audience, was God the Spirit. Whitefield and John Wesley both had made similar assertions in their preaching. As a result, many of the regular Anglican clergy regarded their views concerning the Spirit "as tantamount to blasphemous presumption." Nevertheless, Hill, like Whitefield and Wesley before him, boldly proclaimed that God not only saved through his Son, but purified through his Spirit. One of Hill's most succinct statements on the matter was made at the opening of Surrey Chapel in 1783. He explained that

The Holy Spirit assumes the office of the sanctifier of the people of God; his sanctifying influences we are this day called to commemorate; and as all the life and influence of holiness in this world depends upon his agency, it cannot be said that a complete summary of the gospel has been delivered, unless some notice be taken of this blessed truth. Now the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity designs to make the humble sinner's heart the place of his gracious abode. God can now in a way of justice, through the salvation wrought by the Son, communicate of his blessed spirit to the heart of man. His holy nature takes up his residence

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36 Rowland Hill, "'Improvement of Time,' Preached at Surrey Chapel, January 6, 1833," in Jones I, 170.

within us, converting every faculty of the soul, enabling us to choose him as our portion. And in consequence of that happy choice we love to run the ways of his commandments with a peculiar joy; yea, even with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Obedience is our heaven, and sin the only hell we know below.38

Unfortunately, according to Hill, many individuals who supposedly had been the recipients of the salvation God the Son had wrought in his death did not lead lives suggestive of their calling. Hill addressed himself to the problem with some regularity. Regeneration, Hill exhorted his audiences, demanded total renunciation of "the world" and compliance with the will of God. At the laying of the cornerstone at Surrey Chapel in 1782, he said,

Then what will be the riches and honours of the world to thine? You will be convinced with me, that riches and honours are not deserving our least care, while our only care is to turn from sin and be perfect. I despise riches and honours. They have no charms for me. They are contemptible baubles to tempt mankind for their ultimate and only pursuit of everlasting bliss. The wishes of the coffer of his heart being replenished with hope, and obedience in the Lord.39

Half-hearted conversion was not acceptable, Hill told a March 3, 1833, congregation at Surrey Chapel.

Wicked men don't like that religion that thwart's them in their wickedness; they don't like to be over-strict, as they call it; they love a little conformity to the world. I saw the world's comment on this the other day. The expression was this, "Be not conformed to this world," and the comment was, "Be not conformed to it in all instances:" love it a little, but don't love it too much. That is they want to compromise matters with God. Oh may the Lord keep us from such a compromise; and may we remember that


39 "Sermon... on the laying of the First Stone...", p. 13. As is obvious, wealth may not have meant much to Hill, but he certainly enjoyed its fruits. As a cadet of a baronet and the husband of another's daughter, he lived the life of a late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century gentleman. His homes, his servants, and his carriages all indicate that Hill's lot was certainly above the vast majority of his fellow Britishers.
Is that too strong for you? I hope not. The Bible says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," says the Lord: cut assunder from it, "and touch not the unclean thing;" don't even touch it.

Having ruled out compromise, Hill declared that being separate could mean one's willingness to forsake one's family if necessary to serve God. In terms that were almost biographical, the son of a wealthy Shropshire county baronet who had turned revivalist preacher told the first meeting of the London Missionary Society on September 24, 1795, that the rewards of salvation were worth the cost of discipleship.

Whatever may be dear to us, may our Lord and God be dearer still! yea dearer and dearer day by day! and 0 that Christ may find out for us, on this present work /i.e., the work of the L.M.S./, those who can forsake houses, lands, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives and all for his dear sake! And why should any refuse to forsake such low things as these for him, who forsook his heaven, his glory, and hid not his face from shame and spitting, and at last laid down his life to ransom us from the hell, that sin most righteously deserves, that he might make us partakers with himself of blessedness in eternal glory.41


41 Rowland Hill, "Glorious Displays of Gospel Grace, preached at Surry Chapel, September 24, 1795, Before the Missionary Society," Sermons Preached in London, at the Formation of the Missionary Society, Sept. 22, 23, 24, 1794: to which are prefixed Memorials Respecting the Establishment and First Attempts of the Society, etc. (London: /n.p./, 1795), p. 105. An advertisement to the reader at the front of the sermon makes the following observation concerning this sermon's accuracy: "The Public are requested to notice, that this Sermon was entirely extempore; the preacher, not in the least supposing that it would be demanded for Public inspection, had nothing before him but a few references to different passages of scripture; and that the shorthand writer could scarce preserve a quarter of what was then delivered, as from the multitudes that attended, he was placed in a situation, in which he had neither room to write, nor an opportunity distinctly to hear. The preacher, however, has done his best in recollecting what was then delivered; and has preserved, to the utmost of his power, the free, plain extempore style of his sermon; nor has he conceived himself at liberty to add a new thought to the subject; but as he was compelled by necessity, either to keep up the connexion, or from the scantiness of the materials he had for the work."
Calls for self-denial and renunciation of the world run throughout Hill's sermons. Moreover, a reading of these manuscripts provides insight, in part at least, for the topic's arising so often in Hill's homilies. During the 1770's, when still relatively young, Hill and some of his fellow Calvinists had been accused of antinomianism. The Calvinists' insistence on God's sovereignty and man's inability to merit salvation provided the ammunition for the Arminians' theological attacks. But Rowland Hill preached anything but antinomianism.

One occasion in which Hill denied any affinity for a libertine ethical system was during his opening-day sermon at Surrey Chapel. In a discussion of grace, he anticipated any objection which might come from his assertion that salvation was a gift from God. He said,

How, then, say some amongst you, that the doctrines of grace tend to make us lax in the rules of our obedience, or that from them may be advanced that detested principle, let us do evil, that good may come? And how is it that these inconsistent objectors, false witnesses we are sure they are against that cause which with an humble confidence we are bold to maintain as the cause of Christ; how is it that with the same breath they can scoff at the severity of our morals, and yet as setters forth of strange doctrines, represent us as enemies to morality.

Hill continued by suggesting the allegation that he and some of his fellow religionists encouraged personal laxity in morality was only an effort to discredit their work.

But are they really serious when they allege the accusation, or do they mean it as a bugbear to terrify the ignorant? I will not further expostulate with such as appear to be ignorant of what they say or whereof they affirm, but only publicly declare I suspect their dishonesty in the base accusation, therefore, am

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42 See Sangster, pp. 77-100, for a useful discussion of the Calvinist Controversy which divided British revivalists into two polarized camps.

not so vain as to suppose that such can be profited by my arguments, who are predetermined to believe evil in opposition to all that can be said against it, but rather for the sake of recording my sentiments amongst you this day I repeat the old stale objection, shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? I answer, God forbid; it is impossible. The doctrines of grace provide just the reverse to what our enemies would represent. . . . The knowledge of Christ crucified will and must lead us into those paths of divine obedience . . .; that by consistency and uprightness of behaviour in every social and relative situation in life, the world may be constrained to cry, what God hath wrought! O the glorious consequences of this blessed salvation!  

An even more precise statement concerning the effects of Christians' salvation was made in 1803, when he spoke to the British volunteers preparing to leave for the resumed Napoleonic wars. On that December Sunday, Hill cautioned against libertinism.

And while some suppose that the doctrine of free forgiveness will lead to licentiousness, and a presumptuous frame of mind; yet others can testify that they know and feel just the reverse. While we are thankful to our Holy Redeemer, that we are bought with a price; yet our conclusion is, not what others have concluded for us, but "that we are now no longer our own, and consequently are constrained to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his." I therefore read in the doctrine of man's redemption, his full and entire dedication to God, we are solemnly made the temples of the Holy Ghost thereby.

The contention that the Spirit is God's agent in regeneration was crucial for Hill, just as was the denial that justification could lead to antimonianism. In short, "regeneration by the Spirit" was the

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44 "Christ Crucified," pp. 24-5.

45 Rowland Hill, "The Protection of God Our Best Confidence in the Time of Danger," Being the Substance of a Sermon, Preached before the Volunteers at Surrey Chapel (London: G. Thompson, 1803), pp. 31-2. Hill in the dedication of the sermon remarked that because of the size of the crowd, the services began late. As a consequence, he had to hurry through the sermon and delete some of what he had planned to say. He continues, "It is principally for this cause, connected with the request of many of my hearers, cojoined also with the idea that a multitude fully equal to those who attended, could not gain admittance, that the sermon then preached is now corrected and enlarged for the public perusal, according to its original design."
third theme in the thrust of Rowland Hill's messages.

In his first published sermon, delivered at Kingston, near Taunton, in June, 1773, the young curate summarized succinctly what he considered to be the fundamentals of the Christ faith:

*I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* How fully do these words contain the substance of the whole plan of the gospel salvation? Man by sin is totally destroyed,—cast out of the favour of God,—under this tremendous curse,—utterly undone,—without the last power of bringing salvation to his own heart; when a crucified redeemer comes down from heaven, steps in to save, by introducing a complete and everlasting righteousness, for the recovery of every sinner, that is enabled through grace to accept it.—What a delightful message is this! What a message of mercy and of love, to a set of rebels apostatized from God, and in direct rebellion against him!—Surely you will attend to it, while I enter into a more immediate consideration of our total ruin by nature, and afterwards explain to you the glorious and complete recovery provided for us, in the blood and righteousness of the son of God.

Secondary Themes

Although Rowland Hill's major preaching emphasis centered on the themes of "ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit," secondary themes, which seemed to have captivated his interest from time to time, emerged. Most of these topics were mentioned only in passing or incidentally. Frequently, such subjects were hardly related to Hill's discussion of "the three R's." Nevertheless, several were of sufficient interest to him to mention them on at least more than one occasion. Six in particular stand out: ecumenicity, anti-Catholic sentiments, anti-millenial statements, the importance of biblical revelation, the need for Sabbath observance, and conservative social and political views.

Perhaps the most important, as far as providing insight into

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Hill's theological stance, was the Rev. Mr. Hill's call for religious toleration and catholicity. Hill's ecumenicity made him something of an anomaly among his fellow Anglican clergymen. Although Whitefield definitely indicated in some of his sermons something of a catholic spirit—which may account to some degree for Hill's—the younger preacher was widely known for his own desires for cooperation and tolerance among "serious-minded Christians." In a day when theological lines were rigidly drawn and a sectarian mentality permeated British churches, Hill called for openness and Christian brotherhood.

Although his biographers indicate that Hill's ecumenical plans stemmed from the earliest days of his preaching ministry, the earliest extant sermon in which Hill pleaded for Christian unity was his address at the laying of the first stone at Surrey Chapel in 1782. He publicly proclaimed that his chapel was not another sect seeking to steal the sheep from other flocks:

But in this my intention let none imagine that I mean to set up this Chapel to draw aside one individual from any other Church. No, God forbid. My desire is to see all churches united in the Lord. It would be my greatest comfort to see them all meet in that heavenly Zion, where the Lord himself laid the first stone.

The Rev. Mr. Hill believed that individuals had the right to private judgment, unfettered by governmentally enforced orthodoxy. In terms that suggest that the Surrey Chapel minister may have been influenced by John Locke, Hill said as much to a group of Sunday school workers in 1801:

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47 Davies, pp. 157-8.

48 "Sermon ... on the laying of the First Stone ...," pp. 8-9.
The right of private judgment is the natural, unalienable right of all; nor can any state justly presume to correct any supposed religious errors by its authority, provided the errorists can but give proper security to the state by which they are protected. Such are the chartered privileges of our own land. From this right of private judgment, as, on the one hand, the members of the established church are entitled to enjoy their own privileges without being attacked by the dissenters, so also the dissenters should be equally at liberty to enjoy their privileges without any molestation from the established church. The dissenter who aims at the demolition of the church, and the churchman who attempts the ruin of the dissenters, are alike persecutors in heart; and it is well that the mild spirit of our laws corrects the furious consequences of such unhallowed attempts.

Although the state was not to be the unifying force of Christianity in Britain, Hill apparently believed that an acceptance of Scripture as the norm for Christianity would produce some sort of unity. He told the worshippers at Surrey Chapel on May 6, 1832, that

We have nothing to do but to look to the Bible to tell us what it is to be Christians indeed and in truth. It has been the instrument of uniting different people of various denominations into one large society, and nearer to God. I hate a divided party spirit, I began with taking neutral ground, and have kept it ever since. God has good people amongst all denominations, but none of them are better for being bigotted. I will leave you to your party, but I will not leave you because I am not of your party. I want to love the image of God, wherever I find it in preference to any party.

The divisions which separated Christians into various sects were matters of cultural and personal preference, Hill told an audience at Surrey Chapel in March, 1833. Consequently, he could conform to

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various individuals' religious preferences when worshipping with them, he said. However, he found conformity to sin impossible.  

Because of his hatred of sin and his desire that men hear the Christian message as he understood it, Hill's catholicity had practical implications. His words were not simply hollow rhetorical verbiage. In his address to the London Missionary Society in 1795, he spoke highly of his Moravian brethren and their "amazing love for souls." He suggested to the society that they follow the methods the Moravians had effectively used. Furthermore, he extended his best wishes to the Methodist and the Baptist mission efforts which had already been inaugurated. He concluded by saying,

Our design is all the same: no matter for the name of the boat that ferries over the poor benighted sinner into the land of Gospel light and liberty, provided the blessed work best be accomplished. I hate bigotry with my soul, and while so many gospel ministers of different denominations assemble together, for the same purpose, I still hope to live to see it subsist no more, to divide the Christian from Christian; while each of us serves God in his own line, why cannot we love as brethren?

Let names, and sects, and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all.  

Hill expressed almost identical views six years later when defending the Sunday schools of Surrey Chapel against the attacks of Samuel Horsley, the Bishop of Rochester. Horsley, who had warned the clergymen of Rochester against Sunday schools, claimed they were under the control of subversive Jacobins, supporting the principles of the

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French Revolution. Hill, the founder of the first Sunday school in London denied that he and his fellow workers were revolutionists out to destroy the king's government. In his defense of Sunday schools, Hill's ecumenicity shone through, as he said,

On the basis of . . . a spirit of universal toleration, wide extended as the principles of universal love can reach, stand the Sunday schools, established under the wing of this chapel; every sectarian party motive with us is utterly renounced. We neither design to make the children, voluntarily committed to our care, either churchmen or dissenters, but Christians; to impress on their minds the important difference between good and evil. And we suppose this will be best discovered, if they be led where the gospel is truly preached /i.e. by a revivalist/. Without therefore, attending to any party consideration, the children are conductd at one time to a church /i.e. an Anglican Church/, as another to a meeting /i.e. a Dissenting place of worship/, where the glad tidings of salvation are decidedly held forth; and I advise that the children of the several schools be not always led to the same, but to different places of worship, that when they grow up into life they may find themselves at liberty from the narrow contracted spirit of a party: so as that if they meet with a bad minister in a meeting they may seek for a good one in a church; and if a bad preacher be found in a church, they, on the hand, may seek for a good one in a meeting. . . . Our entire undisguised design therefore is to direct children to seek after the truth, wherever they can find it. Truth is all in all. Better love Christians than parties. In this grand design therefore we drop all names but that of Christian, and direct the children, not to be dissenters from the church, but dissenters from sin; leaving all lesser matters to their own decision on a future day.

The options open to the children of the Surrey Chapel Sunday


schools were limited, as far as the Rev. Mr. Hill was concerned, to revivalist, Protestant churches. As with the vast majority of his contemporaries, Rowland Hill held strong anti-Catholic prejudices. The roots of this antipathy ran deep in the English experience.\textsuperscript{56}

For the Surrey Chapel minister, Roman Catholicism was corrupt. He spoke of such before the Sunday school workers in 1801, when he said that popery was a "corrupted system" which was "idolatrous anti-christian apostacy of the purity and simplicity of the gospel. . . ."\textsuperscript{57} He further warned of the dangers of a nation where the "horrid superstition of popery . . . mashed the glories of the Christian dispensation by its abominable antichristian invention," as in Ireland.\textsuperscript{58} One of the problems of Ireland precipitated by Catholicism, Hill repeatedly stated in his sermons to children, was the refusal of "that wicked man--the pope of Rome"\textsuperscript{59} and his "popish prists"\textsuperscript{60} to let children read the Bible.

In addition to attacking Catholicism because of its failure to recognize the Bible as the ultimate source of religious truth, Hill

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\textsuperscript{56} J. H. Hexter, "The Protestant Revival and the Catholic Question in England, 1778-1829," \textit{The Journal of Modern History}, VIII (September, 1936), pp. 297-319, says that anti-Catholic prejudice among most of the Methodists was very strong. Among the old-line Dissenters, the leadership supported Catholic emancipation, but the membership did not. As far the Evangelicals, reaction was mixed. Hill's own views on Catholic rights seem to have been unclear. However, he opposed Catholicism as a theological system.

\textsuperscript{57} "An Apology for Sunday Schools," p. 23.

\textsuperscript{58} "An Apology for Sunday Schools," pp. 27-8.

\textsuperscript{59} Rowland Hill, "Address to Children, December 12, 1824," Brookman, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{60} "Sermon to the Boys, Easter Monday, April 4, 1825," Brookman, p. 26.
\end{flushleft}
objected to the celebration of Catholic religious holidays. In a sermon before the Continental Society in the Orange-street Chapel, Leicester-square, on May 19, 1829, the aged Mr. Hill spoke of the heresies of "popery:"

And then think of all the mummeries of Popery, and of all the abstinences, and fastings, and mortifications, its votaries endure. There is nothing attractive or beneficial in such systems as these. 61

Hill found the doctrine of transubstantiation particularly objectionable. Speaking at Surrey Chapel on March 18, 1832, on the topic of the Lord's Supper, he flatly and unequivocably denied that communicants ate the actual body and drank the actual blood of Christ in the eucharist.

It is a great mistake of many of our fellow creatures that they receive the actual body and blood of Christ, in what they call the mass of the sacrament. They burnt many people in ancient times, when burning was more in fashion than it is now, merely on that principle, that they did not believe that the priest had the power to turn the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. No, my dear brethren, it is a figurative expression. 62

Despite his objection to the doctrine of transubstantiation and other Catholic practices, in none of his extant sermons did Rowland call for repressive measures against the papists. Quite the contrary, he urged a suasive campaign to show them the error of their ways. In his sermon to the Continental Society, which had specially been formed by the revivalists for the evangelization of Europe, much of which was Catholic Hill declared,

I have adverted to the darkness of the Roman Catholics. I do not wish to persecute them; but I would endeavor to open their eyes

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61 Rowland Hill, "Sermon, for the Continental Society . . .," The Pulpit, XII (June 25, 1829), p. 213.

62 "On the Lord's Supper," p. 13. Hill's allusion to the custom of burnings is perhaps the only attempt at the use of humor--for which he was well known--in his published sermons.
by milder methods. I firmly believe that will prove the best way: you will not get men to go your way while pressing them down; you must do it by leading them gently. They say you want to make them change their religion; but I would say to them, I had much rather you should remain Roman Catholics, till God himself shall change you.63

Catholicism, although viewed by Hill as a corruption of the purity of primitive Christianity, did not stand alone among the religious systems which the itinerant and Surrey Chapel minister looked upon with askance. British millenarians and charismatics formed another group which the Rev. Mr. Hill criticized from the pulpit on more than one occasion.

The French Revolution had given impetus to the rise of millenial thought and speculation, as cataclysmic situations often do.64 Growing by leaps and bounds, the millenarian movement won hundreds of converts, especially during a period of notoriety between 1825 and 1830. Perhaps the most exciting event attracting attention to the movement came in October, 1831, with the demonstration of glossolalia in the Caledonian Chapel of Edward Irving in Halton Garden in London.65 It is against this background that Rowland Hill's remarks concerning eschatology and charismatic gifts should be seen.

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63 "Sermon, for the Continental Society . . .," p. 214.


65 Sandeen, pp. 14ff. Edward Irving (1792-1834) had come down from Scotland in 1822 to preach in London. Due to a reference to the young millenialist by Canning in a debate in Commons, his melodramatic sermons briefly attracted sizeable crowds to his small chapel in Halton Garden.
The first recorded occasion of the Surrey Chapel minister speaking out on the premillennial concerns of some of his fellow revivalists came on January 29, 1826. Speaking at the late Whitefield's Tabernacle at the funeral of J. Wilson, a long-time manager of the Tabernacle and one of the first directors of the London Missionary Society, Hill told a crowded house.

We have nothing to do with the visionary feelings of some unwise Christians; we may have too much feeling, as well as too little. But if God give me life, I shall feel alive, and glory in that feeling.\(^66\)

Hill turned his attention to visions and prophecy again in the spring of 1832. In a sermon on March 21, 1832, speaking on the out-pouring of the Spirit in American revivals, Hill regretted that some had gone too far in expecting the personal return of Christ.\(^67\) On April 22, 1832, the Salophian-born preacher briefly addressed himself to the issue of Christ's Second Coming again, when he said,

There are some of our good men who are too curious about Christ's personal coming and personal reign, as it is called. I am vastly for the fulfilment of that millennial prayer, "Thy kingdom come:" but if Christ were to come into the next parish, what should I be the better for it in this corporeal state? But if he comes into my heart, blessed be his name, it makes a little heaven there.\(^68\)

Beside viewing the eschatological speculations of the millenarians with disapproval, Hill also opposed the practice of charismatic...

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\(^66\) Rowland Hill, "Sermon, Occasioned by the death of J. Wilson, Esq.," The Pulpit, VI (February 9, 1826), p. 21.

\(^67\) Rowland Hill, "'On the General Fast,' Preached at Surrey Chapel, March 21, 1832, being the Day Appointed for a General Fast," Jones I, p. 17.

\(^68\) Rowland Hill, "'Conformity to Christ in His Suffering,' Preached at Surrey Chapel, Easter Sunday, April 22, 1832," Jones I, p. 102.
gifts. In probable reference to Irving's congregation and glossolalia, Hill on April 8, 1832, cautioned a Surrey Chapel audience by saying,

Some people have assurance, and talk of having the gift of tongues; others pretend to be wise above the things that are written [i.e. in the Bible], and can understand and prophecy in a wonderful manner. I will only go so far as the sacred book has already directed me, and look and wait with reverence for the time to come. 69

About a month later, on May 6, Hill declared that the apostles had been empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak in languages understood by men, "not according to the foolish gibberish of some silly enthusiasts who say they have got the gift of tongues." 70

Hill's qualms about speaking in tongues and prophetic speculation about the Second Coming of Christ partially grew out of his views concerning God's revelation of Himself and His will in the Bible. This concern also manifested itself in his convictions on the place of reason and revelation in Christianity.

Civilizations that did not have the benefit of revelation, in Hill's view, floundered and drifted in a sea of moral decay and corruption. He reminded his Surrey Chapel audience in 1783 of the decay of Rome and Greece because those civilizations lacked the Bible. Attend to the absurdities that disgrace the system of the wisest philosophers, when devoid of this revelation. Of what avail was all the learning of Rome and Greece, to prevent them from framing to their darkened, and vain, and foolish imaginations, duties preposterous and detestable? While every vile lust and monstrous abomination was even deified for their adoration, there was scarce an idea to be found among them of a God of those infinite perfections that the Bible reveals. And if such was the condition of the

69 Rowland Hill, "'On the Testimony of a Good Conscience,' Preached at Surrey Chapel, April 8, 1832," Jones I, p. 64.

more learned and civilized part of mankind, no wonder that we find the rest of the fallen race, if possible, still deeper immersed in this universal ignorance of God.  

Hill went on to compare man who found himself without the benefit of revelation to a seaman lost without chart or compass:  

The unhappy mariner, tossed about in the midst of the ocean, without either chart or compass, and made the sport of every variable wind, cannot represent to us a deeper scene of misery and distress, than we should sustain were we deprived of this blessed book. The Bible alone holds forth a God of infinite purity, eternal justice, and endued with all possible perfections. May we not therefore conclude, the Bible to be the most invaluable blessing that ever God vouch-safed to man? And will it not be my highest honour and greatest glory, to recommend this book to you as the main object of your studies and delight, and to adopt it for myself as the only directory of all my public ministrations in this place.  

Hill believed that the veracity of the Scriptures rested on two proofs. The first of these he declared to be an external one. This, he told his congregation, was the fulfillment of prophecy. In addition to this external proof, Hill contended that the second support for the truths of the Scriptures was internal. By that, Hill meant that the renewed heart, which came through the activities of God the Spirit, was conclusive evidence of the trustworthiness of the Bible.  

Having established the reliability of the Bible, Hill turned his attention to "the witlings of the day" who employed "their pigmy powers in scribbling at the supposed absurdities of some of the miracles, or some fancied mistakes in chronology. . . ." Among those attacking

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71 "Christ Crucified," p. 11.
72 "Christ Crucified," p. 11.
the Bible was the "ignorant and profligate Deist," who had never really examined it.\textsuperscript{75} Apparently referring to Deists, in his sermon before the London Missionary Society in 1795 Rowland declared,

\begin{quote}
I hate the pride of such, as would fain attempt to set aside this glorious dispensation, and are ever attempting to establish, what they call, the powers of reason in its stead, and are ever boasting of the mighty things that it can effect. . . .\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

In a more specific attack on those who felt Christianity was not rational, Hill turned his rhetorical guns on Thomas Paine, author of Common Sense, in his sermon to the troops in December of 1803.

\begin{quote}
Again I observe, the very essence and soul of civilization, is alone to be found in the word of God; look at the real Christians, when regulated by those rules as before described; next view the philosophic infidel: read their lives, and see who is best governed. Even that low infidel Mr. Paine, if Mr. is to be applied to one of his detested cast, well knew that his first work was to make an outcry against that book which God has revealed against the wickedness of mankind.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

In his old age, Hill cautioned in a sermon on the topic of Christ's suffering, in 1832, that the Bible was all sufficient for the Christian, when he said,

\begin{quote}
I really begin almost to feel that we read not any book but this blessed book: all other books seem so little, so poor, so insignificant in comparison with the Bible, that there is nothing like it. The sword of the Spirit is abundantly sharper than the sword that cut off Goliath's head; and when this sword of the Spirit is in the hands of a spiritual man it lays all before it.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

Among the lessons learned by the spiritual man from the study of the

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\item \textsuperscript{75}"Christ Crucified," p. 14
\item \textsuperscript{76}"Glorious Displays of Gospel Grace," p. 109.
\item \textsuperscript{77}"The Protection of God Our Best Confidence in Time of Danger," pp. 29-30.
\item \textsuperscript{78}"Conformity to Christ in His Sufferings," p. 97.
\end{itemize}
Bible was the desire to keep the Sabbath. 79

Sabbath-keeping was a favorite topic for Rowland Hill. Although never the subject of an entire sermon, the importance of Sabbath-day observance in Hill's preaching should not be overlooked. While alluding to it in several sermons, Hill's statement of March 18, 1832, suggests the significance he attached to observing the day:

So, that it is absolutely necessary, if God is to be served at all, that a day should be fixed for his service, and it is absolutely necessary for the profit of the people at large, that on that day his service should be attended with all that punctuality which he himself has appointed and commanded. You may almost judge the religion of any people, and of the religion of any country, by examining how far people attend their Sabbath-day services, and whether God on that day is reverently and devoutly worshipped. 80

Hill's attitude towards the Sabbath is indicative of his general social and political conservatism. In spite of criticism from reactionaries, 81 Hill and his fellow revivalists were anything but subversionaries. Hill, the younger son of a member of the aristocracy, unequivocally lent his support to the British monarchy, the maintenance of the Established church, and an ordered society in which men recognized the gradations in the social hierarchy.

The fullest statement of Hill's views came in his sermon to

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79 "Sabbath" in both the Old and New Testaments always refers to the seventh day of the week or Saturday. For Hill and his late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century friends, the term referred to Sunday, the first day of the week.

80 "On the Lord's Supper," p. 3.

81 See Brown, pp. 156-83, for a description of the accusations made against the revivalists by High Churchmen and Tories. Among the leading critics was The Anti-Jacobin Review, which as shown earlier, singled out Rowland Hill, on occasion, as a dangerous radical who was set on destroying the Church of England and the great institutions of British society.
the men who had volunteered to fight in the Napoleonic wars. In that sermon of December 4, 1803, Hill preached to an overflow crowd. He boldly declared his allegiance to the settlement of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689. He outlined the reasons why he supported the settlement by saying,

And to what cause must this be attributed/England's being called by a "happy island"?/ To the well framed equine interwoven in excellent government of our land. And the best one of our own country, while its constitutional government was properly attended to, bespeaks its praise. What I now say respecting our civil government/sic/, I speak from the very ground of my heart. I am glad that the rich men of the nation, possessed of much landed property, compose the House of Lords, and are the hereditary senators of the land, to form a balance in our civil power, and I am glad the people have their elective representatives in the House of Commons on their behalf.

Admire the excellency of this well-framed constitution. The throne is hereditary, otherwise in our nation the cabals for its successor would be endless and dangerous in a high degree. Absolute monarchy frequently degenerates into oppressive tyranny. But this is counteracted by the Lords; they have power to defend the liberties of the land, for they are hereditary; they cannot be deprived of their legislative authority; and from the same interest also, and while these arbitrate between the King and the Commons, it is acknowledged that much oppression frequently arises, so corrupted is human nature, from the pride of aristocratic power.

All these evils the Commons can correct, the property of the nation is entirely entrusted with them, while all the capricious consequences of a republican spirit are corrected by the contrasting power of the Lords, and the executive authority of the Crown.

Thus we have all that which corrects the evils as they are found to exist in different forms of government, while the power and strength of all them on our behalf, are beautifully blended together, and conjoined in one.

Good rulers, in the mind of the aristocratically-born preacher, derived their authority from God. Hence, Hill told the troops on that December Sunday that they owed their allegiance to those over them.

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The civil magistrate, is described, as "the Power that is ordained of God." He therefore is said to be "the minister of God for good," an avenger of that which is evil, a protector of that which is good; and while he acts consistent with his office, he will frame his laws according to God's laws, being in themselves the most perfectly just and wise. This appears from the passage as it is now before us, "for this, thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. For love worketh no ill to our neighbours, therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." All good magistrates therefore to whom God has given "graces to execute justice and maintain truth," will regulate their laws according to God's laws, because they are the ministers of God for good. Hence it appears that all good government centers in God, and proceeds from God. What magistrates will act with oppression and tyranny, who acts under God; and what persons can be tumultuous, seditious, and murderous, or who can bear the evils of anarchy and riot, who fear and love the Lord our God? Hence it is, we are bold to say, that the best Christian will ever prove himself the best magistrate and the best subject.

But when subjects and magistrates fail to recognize the sovereignty of God, Hill cautioned his military auditors, anarchy and slavery result. He reminded those gathered that such was the case in revolution-torn France.

Let me next call to your recollection the scenes which have been exhibited in a neighbouring nation. Let their state be contrasted with ours. Not withstanding the long scourge of war, we know the happiness we still enjoy. They once were blessed with a king, and a patriotic king, as well as ourselves. He convened his subjects and into their hands he resigned all the offensive prerogatives of the crown. But alas their ingratitude! When he found his kingly power annihilated all but in name, no wonder if he attempted to regain so much of the power of the crown which he had a right to enjoy, and which he only wished to exert for the people's good; and for these supposed crimes he was lead to the block, the murdered victim of the people's tyrannic pride; for princes and people, such is the corruption of human nature, can play the tyrants by turns. And who rules them now? What has all their revolutionary madness produced among them? Scarcely the semblance of liberty has the present tyrant left them to enjoy. O let me, from these hints, as it respects the present state of the world advise the most

respectable company of soldiers I ever beheld, to be well grounded in the knowledge of our constitutional liberties, that you may all esteem it among the first of your privileges, to stand forward in its defence. Thus equally defended from anarchy and slavery, may we be thankful and grateful for the privileges of the happy country in which we live.85

Rowland Hill's expressed appreciation for the stability and the liberties of British social and political institutions was only one of six secondary themes on which the popular preacher spoke during his long ministry. In addition, he proposed that Christians unite in serving God and encouraged toleration in an era when theological bickering characterized British religion. He criticized Roman Catholic theology and practice. Fellow revivalists who manifested what he believed to be an unhealthy interest in prophetic concerns and charismatic gifts did not escape his wrath. Championing the cause of orthodoxy, he denounced rationalism's attacks on the Bible. In insisting on the strict observance of the Sabbath, he allied himself with the overwhelming majority of British revivalists. These six topics were the most frequently mentioned secondary themes in the preaching of Rowland Hill.

SUMMARY

Three themes, all intricately part of a single message, dominated the pulpit oratory of the Rev. Rowland Hill. In almost

85 "The Protection of God our Best Confidence in Time of Danger," pp. 16-17. Although Hill's political conservatism manifested itself in statements he made in other sermons and addresses, the sermon before the volunteers provides the fullest expression of his social and political convictions. For instance, in his "An Apology for Sunday Schools" sermon, Hill says that if radicals and subversives are using the Sunday schools to ferment rebellion, they should be ferreted out and punished.
every extant Hill sermon, the subject of "ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit" appear. Hill's discussion of the "three R's of religion" reflected his constant interest in winning converts to the pietistic revival of his day. Although his interpretation of these subjects was frequently couched in the language of moderate Calvinism, Hill definitely committed himself to the Arminian task of "preaching the gospel to every creature" and "allowing God to give the increase."

In addition to these subjects which he proclaimed all over the British Isles, Hill spoke on six other topics on more than one occasion. He advocated Christian toleration and unity; he expressed strong anti-Catholic biases. He criticized charismatic and millenarian revivalists. He emphasized the need of revelation in religion. He insisted on the recognition of the Sabbath as a day for paying reverence to God. He advocated a conservative political and social philosophy. But even when Hill alluded to these subjects, they were usually mentioned incidentally. In short, Hill's message was that man had fallen by his own sin, that Christ died to redeem man, and the Holy Spirit enabled believers to live lives of moral purity.
Chapter 5

ROWLAND HILL'S HOMILETIC THEORY

INTRODUCTION

When an old man with more than sixty years' experience as a preacher, Rowland Hill said,

I would rather be shut up in my coffin than shut out of the pulpit. Old, very old, as I am, yet I still trust I find it not less my privilege than my duty, to the very last of my declining strength to... glory in the accomplishment of the sacred work. Should a physician tell me that my life is in danger if I continue to preach, I will answer him,—"Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." So said Paul and so says poor old Rowland Hill.1

Hill's love for preaching never prompted him to write a systematic treatise on his homiletic theory. However, over his long life-time, he expressed his views on preaching in various sources. Using Hill's sermons, personal letters, journals, Village Dialogues, and other sources, one is able to reconstruct Hill's philosophy of preaching.

James Downey proposes in The Eighteenth Century Pulpit that the preaching of revivalists, when compared to the sermons of regular Anglican clergy, differed both in form and in content.2 This chapter


relates that thesis to the preaching of the Rev. Rowland Hill.

ROWLAND HILL'S HOMILETIC THEORY

Rowland Hill's homiletic theory can be divided into three categories. First, he held pronounced views concerning the office of the Christian ministry. Second, Hill's understanding of the religious climate of his own day resulted in his seeing itinerant preaching in very favorable terms. Third, Hill expressed strong opinions in regard to three of the more traditional aspects of rhetorical theory as they related to preaching, the integrity of ideas, the use of language, and delivery.

Hill's View of the Ministry

Rowland Hill's understanding of the Christian ministry grew from his strong revivalist conviction that sinful man being estranged from God stood in need of hearing the glad tidings of salvation worked through the death of Jesus Christ. Addressing the London Missionary Society in 1795, Hill stated that "matters of salvation are of infinite importance. The glory of bringing souls to Christ is the greatest honour God can confer upon us. The salvation of one soul is of more worth than a thousand worlds." 3 "The charge and care of your souls," Hill told his parishioners in 1773, "therefore rest upon us /i.e. the vicar and the curate of the parish/. Having God's commission, we are

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commanded as from the Lord himself, that with all diligence we should preach the word; that we should be instant in season, and out of season: that we should reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Thus, by fighting the good fight of faith, are we to show ourselves approved unto God, faithful workmen. . . . If you should perish through our negligence, the condemnation will be ours."^4

In Hill's view, individuals called preach the message of salvation were selected by God's Spirit. Writing in the journal of his first Scottish tour, Hill declared that the "Holy Ghost is the only maker of every spiritual church officer. . . ."^5 The church's duty was to ordain those whom God had called. Such men should be universally accepted as preachers of the gospel.6

God's ministers must manifest the fruits of regeneration worked by the Holy Spirit, Hill wrote in a pamphlet entitled, "A Short Summary of Important Points, for the Consideration of the Ministers of the Word of Life."^7 According to Hill, the ministerial call and the regenerating influences of the Spirit are not limited solely to

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^6Journal, p. 142. The view that an individual ordained of God should be universally accepted is, of course, a manifestation of Hill's ecumenicity. Needless to say, this contradicts the Anglican view of episcopal ordination. It also found little currency among the Scottish Presbyterians.

^7Rowland Hill, "A Short Summary of Important Points, for the Consideration of the Ministers of the Word of God." Printed by Page & Sons, in the Rev. J. C. Hill Collection, Shropshire Archives, Shire Hall, Shrewsbury, 549/67.
those who had received episcopal ordination. Quite the contrary, Hill suggested that the New Testament did not recognize the clergy-laity distinction of the established Scottish and English churches.\(^8\)

Hill told the Home Missionary Society in 1830 that the Christian minister—whether ordained or not—had been called by God and should possess three qualities: "1. A little good sense in his head; for God does not employ foolishness in his service. 2. Plenty of good grace in his heart. Nothing will do without this; for a man cannot preach about what he knows not. 3. A good competent knowledge of the word of God. A man must study the things of God, and give himself wholly to them. And we have reason to thank God that there are now so many precious helps; good commentaries, and other books, which give abundant information. A minister should avail himself of every help that he may become a wise and good workman, not needing to be ashamed."\(^9\)

While Hill placed some value on training and study for the Christian minister,\(^10\) he opposed the tradition of allowing the unconverted to enter the ministry simply because they had attended a seminary

\(^8\) *Journal*, p. 181.


\(^10\) T. J. Thomas Jackson, "Memoir of the Late Reverend Rowland Hill, A.M.," *The Evangelical Magazine*, XI (July, 1833), 296, observes that Hill had been accused of denegrating the need for a trained ministry. Jackson writes, "Those who were most intimate with him know that he valued sound learning as the handmaid of Christianity; but, when he saw conceited young men pretending to what they had never attained, and assuming an air of consequence accordingly, he did not fail to expose their pride and folly. He thought there was much need of reformation of some of our academies..."
or university. The fictitious young Mr. Merryman, the recently-converted Evangelical curate in Hill's *Village Dialogues*, tells of his decision to enter the ministry while a student at one of the universities. Merriman regretfully admits that he took orders because a relative possessed a beneficed living which would be his after ordination. Hill looked upon this common practice as having eternally damning consequences for the British churches.

As a revivalist, he believed that only "serious-minded" ministers effectively preached the gospel. All too often, the regular clergy destroyed any good influences they might have because of

11 *Journal*, pp. 25, 156-7. Hill wrote that insistence that a man must have attended a university, as the Church of Scotland universally required, was unfortunate. After all, Hill remarked, "the wisest and best of men" might be excluded from the ministry, even if they through a "natural thirst for learning, by private helps, and personal supplication," prepared themselves for the ministry. The great English pulpit orator also noted that some "stupid, thick-headed" individuals may undergo the required education and be more "fit for gamekeepers, jockies, farmers, or graziers than Ministers of the Gospel. . . ."

12 Rowland Hill, *Village Dialogues Between Farmer Littleworth, Thomas Newman, Rev. Mr. Lovegood and Others*, II (18th ed. with additional dialogues; New York; Johnstone & Van Norden, 1825), pp. 88ff., contains the dialogue in which Mr. Merryman and Mr. Lovegood discuss their conversions, after they had been ordained. Using fictional characters and situations, Hill began publishing these dialogues in 1801. He used them to popularize his Evangelical views. Not infrequently, he criticized the regular Anglican clergy in them. As a consequence, his enemies accused him of attacking morality and the Established Church.

13 Hill, in *Journal*, pp. 116-7, says "What a grievous pressure upon the consciences of godly ministers /i.e. Evangelicals/ to be compelled to recognize as ministers of Christ, men whom they know to be totally unconverted to God, and entirely ignorant of that Gospel which they are ordained to preach."
lives that "would almost put a decent heathen to the blush." Mr. Merryman of *Village Dialogues* tell of his own frivolity prior to his conversion. His interests lay more with cock-fighting, bull-baiting, ice skating, billiards, and the theater than with the practice of Christianity. As a result of such and because they failed to preach the glad tidings of salvation, many of the regular clergy found their churches deserted. Their parishioners took to attending Dissenting meetings where revivalist sentiments were proclaimed.

In contrast to the regular clergy who allegedly forced the spiritually starved British to seek salvation outside the pale of the Established Church, Hill believed that the ideal minister took the Christian message to the people, wherever they were. Hill's ideal preacher probably was the eighteenth-century itinerant, the Rev. George Whitefield. In describing Whitefield's first efforts at field-preaching, Hill offers his description of the model minister.

I thank God for that permissive providence, whereby that great man /Whitefield/, being turned out of the churches, esteemed it his duty to preach at large. His first attempt was among the poor Kingswood colliers; I defy any missionary upon earth, to find a darker spot, or to visit a more benighted people; these he called out of the holes and dens of the earth, and to these he preached repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus: And O, it was a lovely sight, to behold the glorious effect! Eyes unaccustomed to weep before, now began to flow with the tears of repentence unto life, white streaks appearing thereby on their black faces, now turned up towards heaven, praying for mercy and

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15 *Village Dialogues*, p. 98.

forgiveness; knees unaccustomed to prayer before, are now bended down in fervent devotion before God; and their lives well and wisely regulated by the power that grace, which had done such wonders on their hearts. Now mind what these fastidious sons of pride, and self conceit, had to say on this occasion; to be sure, Whitefield has done good among these low sort of people: Now we cannot thank them for their compliment, as it is given with such wretched ill grace; but a higher panegyric cannot be framed. We generally suppose he is the best physician that cures the most desperate diseases: And we should also suppose, that he is the best minister, notwithstanding the convenient terms of methodist and enthusiast, that cures the diseases of the mind, in its most desperate state.17

In short, Rowland Hill believed that the Christian minister, who had been genuinely converted to "serious Christianity"—whether episcopally ordained or not—had a responsibility to proclaim a message of glad tidings to sinners, regardless of place or circumstance. Genuine preaching could only come when the preacher, after reflecting on his own sinful nature and salvation by Christ's death, practiced the message he preached.

Hill's Belief in Itinerant Preaching

Although Rowland Hill did not pioneer the work of itinerant preaching in eighteenth-century Britain, he continued the practice long after it had ceased to be acceptable among members of the Evangelical party within the Church of England.18 Of his first major preaching tour into Scotland, Hill says, "In preaching through England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, I always conceived I stuck close to my parish. We are to preach the Gospel to every creature, even to the end of the


world." His evangelistic efforts grew from his conviction that God had called him for itinerant work. Through itinerant preaching, Hill felt that he reached the poor and the underprivileged. Individuals who might otherwise remain untouched by the Christian message were influenced, he believed, by his practices. Unfortunately for Hill, his itinerant endeavors came under fire from critics within the Church of Scotland and the Church of England. In response to the criticism Hill wrote,

It has been a very common trick to accuse Itinerant Preachers as enemies to Church and State, merely because they are enemies to the deadness and formality of some, and the rotten heathenish system broached by others. The design of this is to render them odious and suspected by the public. The tongue of malice was not wanting in the same charge against me when in the North, and the best method to confute the slander is to call forth the slanderers to prove the fact. It is a strange circumstance that a man should be accused for a crime to which he himself never meant to commit. Moreover, Hill declared the early Christian preachers were itinerants. In fact he stated that God sent Saul /Paul/ himself, and made him one of the greatest preachers of the whole company. We read but little of stated ministers in those days, though we do not speak against them; but we find that God, at first, sent them out as itinerants, and as missionaries. Thus the gospel of Christ was preached, and churches were formed in various parts to his praise.

Consequently, Hill argued that people who used "cramping rules" and...
"restricting laws" to stop a minister from doing his work just because he had no specific flock of his own, did "infinite mischief to the cause of Christ." He continued, "I ask, what is to be done among the thousands at home, virtually without the Gospel, and tens of thousands in Heathen lands, if men of this Spirit are not ever to exist in the Church of Christ?" 24

Believing that itinerant work had the blessings of apostolic precedent, Hill wrote, "I know that itinerant preaching has done wonders in our land, and this was God's primitive design, that his ministers should go about preaching everywhere that men should repent." 25 This is what Hill practiced and encouraged others to do.

Hill's Views Concerning the Proper Subjects for Sermons, the Proper Language for Sermons, and the Proper Delivery of Sermons

The homiletic theory of Rowland Hill, when seen from the perspective of the traditional canons of rhetoric lends itself to a threefold division: a discussion of proper subjects for sermons, the use of appropriate language, and the importance of effective delivery.

An examination of Hill's remarks concerning the classical canon of inventio reveals that he believed that Christian ministers were limited to the "great evangelical truths of the gospel" in their preaching. In an appendix on preaching in his first Scotland journal, Hill described the subject matter to which "serious-minded" preachers were limited:

24 Journal, p. 140.
In his preaching he has but three subjects, Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration. These are the doctrines which humble the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and promote holiness. He has no sneering reflections against any party; mere parties are beneath his notice. When these are more righteous they will be more liberal, and as to politics, to these he is quite a dead man. He preaches up a scriptural obedience to "the powers that are. . . ."\textsuperscript{26}

Continuing, Hill described the methods of preparation in which a revivalist preacher should engage.

In delivering his subject, he finds above all the things, the benefit "of living near God;" and while others tire themselves and their hearers by beating out a sermon by the mere dint of labour and painful application; under such a spirit as he enjoys, the subject itself appears to his mind, clear, lucid, and glorious. . . . And, while his spirit is under "an unction from the Holy One," the words will "come with power." He will little the charge of madness and enthusiasm, nor need he mind it while he has "the wisdom that is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits."\textsuperscript{27}

Expressing similar contempt for the preaching of unconverted clergymen, Hill told the London Missionary Society in 1795, that the "nicely composed paper-pop-guns" of rationalist preachers could never win converts among the multitudes.\textsuperscript{28} As a result of preaching "a false Gospel" and "mere morality," British churches were emptied.

The Surrey Chapel preacher was decidedly more of a rhetor than a rhetorician in his theory of invention. However, one other aspect

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\item\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Journal}, p. 178. As shown in a previous chapter, the three R's formed the basis of Hill's own message. To that degree his practice met his profession. However, as a young man--and even later in life Hill did use the pulpit for theological and political controversy. On these counts, he failed to heed his own advice.

\item\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Journal}, pp. 179-80. Although Hill read the Greek New Testament with ease, he was never a great student. He seems to have relied more on the influence of the occasion to prompt his thoughts. See William Jones, \textit{Memoir of the Rev. Rowland Hill, M.A.} (4th ed.; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1844), pp. 193-4, 195, 207-8.

\item\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Glorious Displays of Gospel Grace.}, pp. 110-12.
\end{enumerate}
of Hill's use of humor in the pulpit merits mention. According to his biographers, Hill was widely known for humorous comments in his sermons. Some theological adversaries felt that the itinerant used levity inappropriately. Others felt it only added to his success as a preacher. Hill's own attitude was expressed in the sermon he delivered at Roquet's death in 1776,

One... hears a distant hint, as if now and then my dear lov'd friend might have been supposed to have made somewhat of a small elopement from the cheerfulness which is truly Christian, towards a disposition too much bordering upon a turn of pleasantry which might have needed a little more of the spirit of solemnity. With the greatest delicacy I drop the hint, and am glad to cover it

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29 Rowland Hill, "Sermon, for the Continental Society. . .," The Pulpit, XIII (June 25, 1829), 210.

30 Onesimus [Peter L. Courtier], The Pulpit: or, a Biographical and Literary Account of Eminent Popular Preachers; Interspersed with Occasional Clerical Criticism, I (London: Printed for Mathews and Leigh, 1809), p. 192, says, "Is it now too late to dissuade Mr. Hill from extravagantly pursuing a system of preaching, of which the beneficial effects are so extremely doubtful?--Cannot he be familiar without being funny; or, must illustration be necessarily irreverential? What gratification can he find, in being considered as the great head of story-telling and stamping preachers; of evangelical eccentrics; of mountebank pulpiteers? His example has wrought incalculable ill." On the other hand, Charlesworth, pp. 86-7, denies Hill was guilty of violating the standards of good taste by use of humor. The truth concerning Hill's jocularity probably lay somewhere between these two extremes.

It should perhaps be noted that Charles Smyth, The Art of Preaching in the Church of England, 747-1939 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1940), pp. 107-8, says that between the time of Latimer and Hill, humor was not used in British preaching. That thesis is apparently inaccurate. John Berridge used humor in his sermons and probably by his example influenced Hill to do so.
with the mantle of love, by lamenting before you all, the same weakness in myself; a lively, active disposition is too apt to lead into this mistake, in many things we offend all. . . . 31

Hill apparently recognized the danger of too much levity in religious discourse. More important was the avoidance of simply preaching moral essays. Failure to preach what he believed to be the great truths of "serious Christianity" was unforgiveable.

Closely related to Hill's attitudes concerning the integrity of ideas in the speaking of Christian preachers was his understanding of style. He repeatedly asserted that preachers needed to use language which could easily be grasped by the common people. When he first preached to his newly-acquired parish in Kingston, in 1773, Hill condescendly said,

Besides, my dear friends, as I do it in meekness and love, you must permit me to tell you, that, as I have for sometime been accustomed myself to preach and converse among people of little education, I am far from being ignorant of the capacities of the generality; how difficult it is, even in common matters, that they are not entirely conversant with, to make them understand. And, if we further consider the general prevailing ignorance among the poor, concerning even the first and plainest principles of Christianity; together with the natural blindness and stupidity of the human heart; the great necessity of repeatedly bringing line upon line, and precept upon precept, in the most familiar terms, I think, cannot be denied.32

Acknowledging the necessity of speaking on a level which his auditors could grasp, Hill told his parishioners that he would not use "hard and unusual words" which were common to "learned orations"33 or "with

31 Rowland Hill, "A Token of Respect to the Memory of the late Rev. James Roquet;" Being the Substance of a Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of St. Werburgh, in the City of Bristol, on Sunday, November 24, 1776 (Bristol: Printed for William Pine, 1776), pp. 20-1.
that elegance which [many persons said] should adorn spiritual discourse." He felt that it was "better a thousand times to have the simplicity of Peter than the eloquence of Longinus. . . ." After all, "plain language" was the only language sinners understood. Consequently, the preacher really found it impossible to "find terms sufficiently strong to speak of sin, or of repentence," as they ought. Clearly, Hill felt that a major function of the preacher was to persuade men of their sinfulness. Lucidity and candor were essential to fulfilling that mission.

Hill's views concerning delivery corresponded to his opinions of style. At a time when preachers customarily read or memorized their sermons, Hill denounced these practices. Reading sermons lullled people to sleep and cast a heavy burden of preparation on preachers. Memorization carried the same problem for the preacher. A better method, Hill wrote, was extemporaneous address, which gave "warmth and animation" to sermons.

Whether writing or speaking about the delivery, language, or

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34 A Sermon, Preached by the Rev. Mr. Rowland Hill, on laying the First Stone of his Chapel, p. 11.


36 Journal, p. 16.

37 "Sermon for the Home Missionary Society. . .," p. 263.

38 "A Token of Respect to the Memory of the late Rev. James Roquet," p. v.


40 Journal, Hill was an extemporaneous speaker throughout his life.
topics appropriate to sermons, Rowland Hill's treatment of these three classical canons of rhetoric was anything but extensive. Nevertheless, he held definite opinions as to what should be preached, the language in which it should be couched, and how it should be delivered.

A COMPARISON OF HILL'S PREACHING TO THE SERMONS OF OTHER EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PREACHERS

James Downey in *The Eighteenth Century Pulpit* says that pulpit oratory in the Hanoverian age took on new vitality and new forms with the rise and spread of the pietistic revival, led by such preachers as John Wesley and George Whitefield. Prior to their taking to the field, for most regular clergymen preaching consisted primarily of dry, rationally-oriented moral essays, which ministers read to their flocks on Sunday.

With the advent of the revival, preaching reassumed much of its former "verve, power, and authority, though not, alas, its literary grace." Men spoke extemporaneously, whenever and wherever they could. They declared that all men were sinners in the sight of God. They proclaimed Christ's death to be the saving event of history and that moral holiness and purity came as a work of the Holy Spirit.

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41Downey, pp. 226 ff., notes that generalizations, after his study of six Augustan preachers, are dangerous. Nevertheless, he does offer a number of observations concerning the transitions pulpit oratory underwent during the period. The above remarks are a summary of Downey's conclusions.

42Downey, p. 227.

not an outgrowth of man's rational processes. In short, evangelists in eighteen-century Britain preached the "three R's of religion: ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

Examination of the sermons of Rowland Hill indicates, without a doubt, that his preaching was no exception to Downey's evaluation of other revivalists of the period. Hill habitually spoke extemporaneously, when and wherever, he could. Long after his fellow Evangelicals within the Anglican communion had ceased to do so, he continued the practice of itinerancy. His message grew out of his conviction that man had fallen by sin. A Calvinist, Hill--like Whitefield and most of the Evangelical party--believed all mankind had been tainted by Adam's original transgression. Consequently, Hill told the thousands who heard him that man could only be reconciled to God by faith in Jesus Christ, who had become the Second Adam and died for corrupted man. After redemption, Hill exhorted, God's Spirit worked to effect moral and ethical purity in the lives of the converted. When Hill preached this message, with its Calvinistic overtones, all over England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, he stood in the same homiletic and theological tradition as did his fellow revivalists--whether Anglicans, Methodists, or Dissenters.

SUMMARY

Rowland Hill held strong and definitive opinions regarding preaching. He felt that only men who had experienced a conversion to "serious Christianity" and a call from God should assume the office of minister. Ordination meant little to irregular Hill. Second, he believed that men whom God had selected as his messengers were
commissioned to preach the gospel at every opportunity, regardless of church order or parish boundaries. Third, he believed the message of "serious Christianity" was to be delivered extemporaneously in simple and candid language. Generally, Hill's practice measured up to his theory, standing in the same tradition of other eighteenth-century British revivalists.
Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Church of England under all four of the Hanoverian Georges often was unable or unwilling to minister to all the people within its ranks. Although not wholly inept, the unreformed Established Church was preoccupied with the maintenance of the status quo, both politically and religiously. The church's attempts to meet the intellectual challenges of the day, while possibly successful in its defense against Deism, usually turned sour. Anglican clergymen drank too deeply of the well of Lockean rationalism and the fountains of preferment, patronage, plurality, and absenteeism to minister soberly to a large segment of their communicants, especially the lower classes who had been uprooted by the agricultural and the industrial revolutions.

As a consequence of these conditions, beginning in the 1730's a pietistic revival found a ready following both within and without the membership rolls of the Church of England. Three parties emerged from the revival: the Methodists, Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, and the Evangelical Party within the Anglican Church. All three shared the conviction that Christian faith was a personal matter requiring the recognition of sin, a conversion experience, and a life congruous with that rebirth.

As may be expected, since pulpit oratory was a major means of
propagating these revivalist sentiments, among the pietists religious speaking assumed a new importance. In places other than recognized Anglican houses of worship, extemporaneous preaching often replaced the stilted and formal exhortations of orthodox churchmen. The moralism that had produced and continued to dominate traditional eighteenth-century Anglican homilies gave way to warm, emotion-filled sermons emphasizing the sinfulness of man, faith in the death of Christ, and stringent standards of personal morality. The revival of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries not only revolutionized British religion, but pulpit oratory as well.

One of the most prominent practitioners of revivalist rhetoric was the Rev. Rowland Hill. A younger son of a wealthy English baronet, from his birth onward Hill enjoyed all the advantages of position, education, and prospects requisite to his emergence as a forceful and popular speaker. However, in spite of his wealth, position, and education at the Royal Grammar School in Shrewsbury, at Eton, and at St. John's, Cambridge, Hill chose neither a career in law or politics, nor the easy route of a beneficed living within the Established Church.

Instead, Hill's religious inclinations led him to an unorthodox, Evangelical defiance of the Church of England. From his days as a student at Cambridge until his death in 1833, Hill itinerated: he traveled throughout Britain calling men to faith in Christ. After serving briefly as a curate in Somerset following his graduation from St. John's, Hill turned almost totally to itinerancy. For the next ten to fifteen years his popularity as a preacher increased. Finally, in 1783, he founded Surrey Chapel in St. George's Fields, London. This ministry and the small, less demanding one at Wotton-under-Edge,
did not quench Hill's thirst for itinerant preaching. Filling the pulpit at Surrey Chapel in London during the winter and Wotton in the summer, Hill devoted his remaining time to preaching tours which took him all over the British Isles.

When he died in 1833, he had pastored Surrey Chapel for nearly fifty years and the Wotton-under-Edge chapel for about sixty. He had itinerated through England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, proclaiming the warm, heart-felt faith of the pietistic revival thousands of times to many thousands of people in almost every corner of Georgian Britain. His efforts made him one of the most widely-known and influential British preachers of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. After the death of Wesley in 1791, Hill was probably the best-known pulpit orator in Britain.

Whether at Surrey Chapel or away, three themes—all intricately part of a single message—dominated the pulpit oratory of the Rev. Mr. Hill. Like his fellow revivalists, Hill's preaching focused on the subjects of "ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit." Hill's discussion of the "three R's of religion" reflected his unswerving determination to win converts to "serious Christianity," a motivation which led him to carry his message to all of Britain. Like most members of the Evangelical Party within the Anglican Church, Hill was a moderate Calvinist. Although his comments on the fall, redemption, and regeneration were often couched in the language of modified Calvinism, Hill nevertheless definitely committed himself to the Arminian task of "preaching the gospel to every creature" and "allowing God to give the increase."

While orthodox Anglican clergymen almost universally adhered
to the doctrines of the fall of man by sin, redemption by the death of Christ, and agreed on the need for moral conduct on the part of Christians, most regular churchmen certainly gave little emphasis to these three dogmas in their preaching. They not only placed little stress on the need for personal salvation, but usually avoided any suggestion that the Holy Spirit influenced the conduct of believers. Such a contention, in their view, smacked of enthusiasm, as did the revivalists' emphasis on man's sinfulness and need for salvation. The stress which Hill and other revivalists placed on the "three R's" distinguished them from their orthodox counterparts within the Church of England.

In addition to these major themes, on occasion Hill addressed himself to other topics. Unlike most Anglicans and many Dissenters, including the revivalists, he advocated Christian toleration and unity. He, along with others both within and without the Establishment, expressed strong anti-Catholic biases. He criticized charismatic and millenarian revivalists. Emphasizing the need for revelation in religion, he joined most other British preachers of the era in cautioning against the dangers of Deism and "atheistic" philosophy of French revolutionists and Tom Paine. Furthermore, his fear of French radicalism prompted him, as well as most of his fellow pietists, to insist on the observance of the Sabbath and the maintenance of the British social and political system. But even when Hill alluded to these subjects, he seldom devoted an entire sermon to one of these topics. He usually mentioned them only as they somehow related to major focus of his message. In short, Hill preached that man had fallen by his own sin, that Christ died to redeem man, and that the
Holy Spirit enabled believers to live lives of moral purity.

His interest in preaching did not limit itself to the practice alone. Although he never systematically wrote it out, Hill developed a theory of homiletics. Holding strong and definitive opinions regarding who should preach, how to preach, and what to preach, he felt that only men who had experienced conversion and a call from God should assume the office of minister. Consequently, ordination meant little to Hill, who preached, uninvited, in other men's parishes, administered the eucharist without priest's orders, and without being a bishop "ordained" men to preach. Hill believed that men whom God had selected as his messengers were commissioned to spread the gospel at every opportunity, regardless of church order or parish boundaries. As a consequence of his own unabated itinerancy, Hill was never elevated from the diaconate to the priesthood. Finally, Hill believed that God's message should be delivered extemporaneously in simple and candid language, and he adhered to this conviction in his own practice.

Hill's pulpit endeavors generally measured up to his homiletic theory. Probably as a result, Hill, whose ministry spanned a period of well over sixty years, became one of the most popular and influential preachers of his day. Devoting himself from the time of his conversion as a school boy at Eton to his death in 1833 to what he believed to be the greatest endeavor in which man could engage--calling sinful men to repentance and salvation in Jesus Christ--the Rev. Rowland Hill significantly influenced the religious thought and attitudes of his time.
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VITA

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