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THE
 FICTITIOUS AND THE GENUINE
C R E E D :

BEING

“ A CREED for Arminians,”

Composed by *Richard Hill, Esq;*

TO WHICH IS OPPOSED

A CREED for those who believe that
 CHRIST *tasted death for every man.*

By the Author of the Checks to Antinomianism.

In doctrine show uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech
 that cannot be condemned; that he who is of the contrary part
 may be ashamed.

TIT. II. 7. 8.

L O N D O N :

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 Near *Spital-Square,* 1775.



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P R E F A C E.

In which the Author gives an account of Mr. Hill's new method of attack, and makes some reconciling concessions to the Calvinists, by means of which their strongest arguments are unnerved, and all that is truly scriptural in Calvinism is openly adopted into the anti-calvinian doctrine of grace.

WE should be deservedly considered as *bad* Protestants, if we were not ready always to give an answer with meekness to every man [much more to Mr. Hill, a gentleman of piety, learning, reputation, wit, and fortune] who asks us a reason of the hope that is in us. We confess that after the way, which our opponents call the heresy of the *Arminians* and *Perfectionists*, we worship the God of our Fathers; believing what is written in the Scripture concerning the extent of redemption by *price* and by *power*.

Concerning the extent of Christ's redemption by *price* we believe, that *he by the grace of God tasted death* to procure initial salvation for every man, and
eternal

eternal salvation for them that obey him: And concerning the extent of his redemption by power, we are persuaded, that, when we come to God by him, he is able and willing to save to the uttermost our souls from the guilt and pollution of sin here, and our bodies from the grave and from corruption hereafter.

With regard to our extensive views of Christ's redemption by price, Mr. Hill calls us *Arminians*: And with respect to our believing, that there is no perfect faith, no perfect repentance in the grave; that the *christian* graces of repentance, faith, hope, patience, &c. must be perfected *here* or never; and with respect to our *confidence* that Christ's blood fully apply'd by his spirit, and apprehended by perfect faith, can cleanse our hearts from all unrighteousness before we go into the purgatory of the *Calvinists*, or into that of the *Papists*, that is, before we go into the valley of the shadow of death, or into the suburbs of hell—with respect to this *belief* and *confidence*, I say, Mr. Hill calls us *Perfectionists*; and appearing once more upon the Stage of our controversy, he has lately presented the public with what he calls "*A Creed for Arminians and Perfectionists*," which he introduces in these words: "*The following confession of faith however shocking, not to say blasphemous, it may appear to the humble christian, must inevitably be adopted, if not in express words, yet in substance by every Arminian and Perfectionist whatsoever; tho' the last article of it chiefly concerns such as are ordained ministers in the Church of England.*" And as among such ministers, Mr. J. Wesley, Mr. W. Sellon, and myself peculiarly oppose Mr. Hill's Calvinian doctrines of *absolute election* and *reprobation*, and of a *death-purgatory*; he has put the initial letters of our names to his creed; hoping, no doubt, to make us peculiarly ashamed of our principles. And indeed so should we be, if any "*blasphemous*" or "*shocking*" consequence "*inevitably*" flowed from them.

But

But how has Mr. Hill proved that this is the case? Has he supported his Charge by one argument? No: But among some consequences of our doctrine, which are quite harmless and scriptural, he has fixed upon us some shocking consequences, which have no *necessary* connexion with any of our doctrines of grace. We apprehend therefore, that by this method, Mr. Hill has exposed his inattention more than our "heresy."

If Mr. Hill had said before a thousand witnesses, I hold *ten* guineas in my *right* hand, and *ten* in my left, could the author of the *Checks* wrong him, or expose his own candor, if he insisted upon the truth of this consequence, "Then Mr. Hill holds *twenty* guineas in *both* his hands." And if Mr. Hill protested ever so long, that he holds but *fifteen* in all, and that I am a "*calumniator*" for saying that he holds *twenty*; would not all the witnesses, who are impartial and acquainted with the proportion of numbers, clear me of the charge of *calumny*, and accuse Mr. Hill of *inattention*? Again: If I had said before the same witnesses, that I have *two* guineas in my *right* hand, and *two* in my *left*; and if Mr. Hill, to keep his error in countenance by bringing me in guilty of as great a mistake as his own, fixed the following consequence upon my assertions, "Then you ho'd *seven* guineas in *both* your hands;" should he not expose himself more than me? And would not all the candid spectators declare, that, altho' I have a right to maintain that *ten* and *ten* make *twenty*, my opponent cannot reasonably assert that *two* and *two* make *seven*. The justness of this illustration will appear to the reader, if he casts a look upon the creed which I have composed for an antinomian with Mr. Hill's principles. The doctrines that it contains are all his own, and they are expressed chiefly in his own words, as appears from numerous quotations, in

which I refer the reader to the pages where he has publickly maintained the tenets which I expose: But Mr. Hill has not produced in his Arminian-Creed one line out of my checks from which any shocking or blasphemous doctrine flows by "unavoidable" consequence. If he had, I protest, as a lover of truth, that I would instantly renounce the principle, on which such a doctrine might be justly fathered; being persuaded that the pure light of a pure doctrine, can never be necessarily productive of gross darkness; altho' it may accidentally be obscured by occasional difficulties, as the sun may be darkened by interposing clouds.

Some Readers will probably think, that I have made the Calvinists too many concessions in the following pages: but I am persuaded that I have granted them nothing but what they have a scriptural right to: And God forbid that any Protestant should grant them less!—At the synod of *Dort* the Arminians being sensible, that a *gratuitous election* can be defended by scripture and reason, would debate first the doctrine of *gratuitous, Calvinian reprobation*, which is flatly contrary to reason and scripture. The Calvinists on the other hand being conscious that the strength of their cause lay in maintaining a *gratuitous election*, and hoping that their *gratuitous reprobation* would naturally sculk under that election, insisted that the doctrine of election should be debated first. The Arminians would not consent to it, so that nothing was properly discussed: and the Calvinists having numbers and the sword on their side, deposed their opponents as obstinate heretics. Whilst we disapprove the severity of the Calvinists, we blame the Arminians for provoking that severity by refusing to clear up the doctrine of Election. And improving by the mistakes of both parties, we make the reconciling concessions which follow. (1)

(1) We grant that there is an election of distinguishing grace: but we show that this election is not Calvinian Election; thousands being partakers of the partial election of distinguishing grace, who have no share in the impartial election of distributive justice: Two distinct elections these, the confounding of which has laid the foundation of numberless errors. See the *Scripture Scales*, Sect. XII.

(2) We grant the Calvinists that *initial* salvation is merely by a decree of divine grace thro' Jesus Christ. But we assert that *eternal* salvation is both by a decree of divine grace and of distributive justice; God *rewarding* in Christ with an eternal life of glory those believers who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality.

(3) We grant that, altho' God, as a Judge, is no respecter of persons; yet, as a Benefactor, he is, and of consequence has a right to be, so far as *respector of persons*, as to bestow his *favours* in various degrees upon his creatures; dealing them to some with a *more sparing* hand than he does to others.

(4) We grant, that, altho' God punishes no one with eternal death for *original* and *necessary* sin; yet, when sin, which MIGHT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED by the help of creating or of redeeming grace, has been VOLUNTARILY and PERSONALLY committed: God does punish [and of consequence has a right to punish] with eternal death, *SOME* offenders *MORE* QUICKLY than he does *OTHERS*; the shewing, in such a case, *MERCY* or *JUSTICE* UPON GOSPEL TERMS, to whom he pleases, and as soon or as late as he pleases, being undoubtedly the privilege of his sovereign goodness or justice:—An awful privilege this, which is perfectly agreeable to the evangelical law of liberty, and upon which the Calvinists have absurdly built their

their twin-doctrines of *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*; not considering that such doctrines stain the first gospel-axiom and totally destroy the second.

The nature of this concession may be illustrated by an example. Two unconverted soldiers march up to the enemy. Both have unavoidably transgressed the third commandment; the one, by calling *fifty* times for his damnation; and the other, *five hundred* times. Now, both having *personally* forfeited their initial salvation, and continuing impenitent; God, as a righteous revenger of prophaneness, may justly suffer the *fifty-pence-debtor* to fall in the battle, and to be instantly hurry'd to the damnation he had madly prayed for: And, as a long-suffering, merciful Creator, he may suffer the *five hundred-pence-debtor*, I mean the soldier who has sinned with an higher hand, to walk out of the field unhurt, and to be spared for years; following him still with new offers of mercy, which the wretch is so happy as to embrace at last. Here is evidently an high degree of the distinguishing grace, which has been manifested towards Manasses, and a thousand other grievous sinners. But by this *peculiar* favour God violates no promise, and he acts in perfect consistency with himself: For, when two people have *personally* forfeited their initial salvation by one avoidable sin, of which they do not repent when they might; he does no INJUSTICE to the fifty-pence-debtor, when he calls him *first* to an account: And he greatly magnifies his LONG-SUFFERING, when he continues to relieve the five-hundred-pence-debtor.

By this *sparing* use of distinguishing mercy, God strongly guards the riches of his grace. This *inferior* degree of forbearance makes thoughtful sinners stand in awe; as not knowing but the first sin they will commit, shall actually fill up the measure of their iniquity, and provoke the Almighty to swear
in.

in his righteous anger, that their day of grace is ended. To justify therefore God's conduct with men in this respect, we need only observe, that, if *distinguishing grace* did not make the difference which we grant to the Calvinists, perverse free-will would draw amazing strength from the unwearied patience of free-grace. Suppose for instance, that God had *enjoined* to all men a day of grace of *four score* years; would not all sinners think it time enough to repent at the age of threescore years and nineteen? Therefore, through the clouds of darkness which surround us, reason sees far into the propriety of the partiality with which distinguishing grace dispenses its *superior* blessings. But all the partiality which that grace ever displayed, never amounted to one single grain of Calvinian reprobation. Because God, as a righteous judge, lets every man have a fair trial for his life. Nor will all the sophisms in the world reconcile the ideas, which the scriptures and rectified reason give us of divine justice, with a doctrine which represents God as condemning to eternal torments a majority of men, for the necessary, unavoidable consequences of Adam's sin:—A sin this, which, upon the scheme of the absolute predestination of all events, was also made unavoidable and necessary. To return:

(5) We grant that altho' Christ died to purchase a day of [initial] *Salvation* for all men, yet he never died to purchase *ETERNAL* salvation for any *adults* but *them that believe, obey and are faithful unto death*. And that, of consequence, the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ is *general* and *unconditional* with respect to *INITIAL* salvation; but, *particular* and *conditional* with respect to *ETERNAL* salvation; excepting the case of infants, who die before actual sin: These, and only these, are blessed with *unconditional election* and *finished salvation* in the Calvinistic sense of these phrases:—These are *irresistibly* saved and eternally admitted into one of the many mansions of

of our heavenly Father's house : Free-grace, to the honour of our Lord's meritorious infancy, absolutely saves them without any concurrence of their free-will. Nor is it surprizing, that God should do it *unavoidably* : for as they never were *personally* capable of *working* WITH free-grace, i. e. of *working out their salvation* : So they never were in a capacity of *working* AGAINST free-grace, or of *beginning* to work their damnation. Having never committed any act of sin, God can, consistently with the Gospel, save them eternally without any act of repentance. In a word, infants having *no unrighteousness* but that of the *first* Adam, reason, as well as scripture, dictates that they need *no righteousness* but that of the *second*.

(6) From the preceding concession it follows, that obedient, persevering believers are God's *elect* in the particular and full sense of the word ; being *elect* to the *reward* of eternal life in Glory :—A reward this, from which they that die in a state of apostacy or impenitency have cut themselves off, by not making their calling and conditional election sure.

(7) We grant, that none of *these peculiar elect* shall ever perish, though they would have perished had they not been faithful unto death : And we allow, that, with respect to God's *fore-knowledge* and *omniscience*, their number is *certain*. But we steadily assert, that, with regard to the doctrines of general redemption, of God's covenanted mercy, of man's free-agency, of divine justice, and of *a day in which the Lord will judge the world in righteousness* : We steadily assert, I say, that, with regard to these doctrines, the number of the *peculiar elect* might be greater or less, without the least exertion of *forcible grace*, or of *forcible wrath*. For it might be *greater*, if more *quickened and slothful servants* improved, instead of burying their talent : And it might be *less*, if more good
and

and faithful servants grew faint in their minds, and drew back to perdition before they had fought the good fight out, kept the faith and finished their course.

(8) And lastly, we grant, that according to the election of distinguishing grace, which is the basis of the various dispensations of divine grace towards the children of men, Christ died to purchase *more* privileges for the *christian* Church, than for the Jews, *more* for the Jews than for the gentiles, and *more* for *some* gentiles than for others: For it is indubitable that God, as a sovereign Benefactor may, without shadow of injustice, dispense his favours spiritual and temporal as he pleases; it being enough for the display of his goodness, and for the exciting of our gratitude, that the *least* of his *heathen* servants has received a talent, with means, capacities and opportunities of improving it, even to everlasting happiness: (2) That God never desires to reap where he does not sow, nor to reap an hundred measures of spiritual wheat, where he only sows a handful of spiritual barley: And (3) That the least degree of his improveable goodness is a seed, which nothing but our *avoidable* unfaithfulness hinders from bringing forth fruit to eternal life in glory.

By making these guarded concessions, if I mistake not, we rectify the mistakes of Arminius; we secure the doctrine of grace in all its branches, whilst Calvinism secures only the *irresistible* grace, by which infants and complete idiots are eternally saved; we turn the edge, and break the point of all the arguments, by which the Calvinian doctrines of grace are defended; and tear in pieces the cloak with which the antinomians cover their dangerous error.

Had Arminius, and all the antient and modern Semi-pelagians, granted to their opponents what we grant to ours; Calvinism would never have risen to its tremendous height. If you try to stop a great river,

river, refusing it the liberty to flow in the deep channel which nature has assigned it, you only make it foam, rise, rage, overflow its banks, and carry devastation far and near. The only way then to make judicious Calvinists allow us the *impartial, remunerative* election, and the *general* redemption which the gospel displays; is to allow them with a good grace the *partial, gratuitous* election, And the *particular* redemption, which the Scriptures strongly maintain also. See *the Scales*: Sect. xi. xii. xiii. For my part, I glory in going as near the Calvinists as I *safely* can. *Zelotes* is my brother as well as *Honnestus*; and so long as I do not lose firm footing on scripture-ground, I gladly stretch out my *right* hand to *him*, and my *left* hand to his antagonists; endeavouring to help them both out of the opposite ditches, which bound the narrow way, where Truth frequently takes a solitary walk.

I conclude this introduction by thanking Mr. Hill for coming a little closer to the knot of the controversy in his fictitious *Creed*, than he has done in his *Finishing Stroke*; for by this means he has stirred me up to dig deeper into the Scriptures—Those unexhausted mines of truth, which God has set before us. I would not intimate that I have dug out *new* gold: No: The oracles of God are not new: But I hope that I have separated a little dross from some of the richest pieces of golden ore, which the Arminians and the Calvinists have dug out of those mines: And I flatter myself that the judicious, and unprejudiced will confess, that some of those pieces, which Calvinian and Arminian bigots have thrown away as lumps of dross or of arsenic, contain nevertheless truths more precious than thousands of gold and silver. Should these sheets in any degree remove the prejudices of professors and prepare them for a reconciliation upon the scriptural plan of the doctrines of *grace* and justice, or of the two gospel-axioms, I should humbly rejoice and thankfully give God the Glory.

MADELEY,
Dec. 14th, 1774.



THE
FICTITIOUS AND THE GENUINE
C R E E D.





The *Fictitious* CREED :

BEING

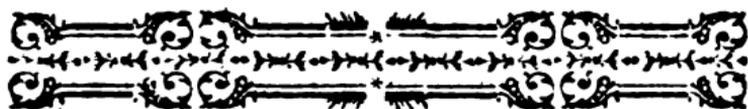
“A CREED for *Arminians*,”

Composed by *Richard Hill*, Esq; and
published at the end of his “*Three*
“*Letters, written to the Rev. J.*
“*Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley.*”

ARTICLE I.

“**I** BELIEVE that *Jesus Christ* died for the
“*whole human race, and that he had no more*
“*love towards those who now are, or here-*
“*after shall be in glory than for those who now are,*
“*or hereafter shall be lifting up their eyes in torments;*
“*and that the one are no more indebted to his grace than*
“*the other.*”

THE



The GENUINE CREED:

BEING AN

ANTI-CALVINIAN

CONFESSION OF FAITH,

For those who believe that CHRIST
*tasted death for every man, and that
some men by denying the Lord that
bought them, bring upon themselves
swift destruction.*

ARTICLE I.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for the whole human race with an intention First, to procure *absolutely and unconditionally a temporary redemption, or an initial salvation for all men univervally*: And secondly to procure a *particular redemption, or an eternal salvation conditionally for all men, but absolutely for all that die in their infancy, and for all the adult who obey him, and are faithful unto death.*

B 2

We

§ We believe that, in consequence of the *general* and *temporary* redemption procured by Christ for all mankind, every man is unconditionally blessed with a day of grace, which the scripture calls *the accepted time* and *the day of salvation*. During this day [under various dispensations of grace, and by virtue of various covenants made through Christ—David—Moses—Abraham—Noah—or Adam] God, for Christ's sake, affords all men proper means, abilities, and opportunities to *work out their own salvation*, or to make *their calling and CONDITIONAL election* to the ETERNAL blessings of their respective dispensations *sure*: and as many as do it, by keeping *the free gift which is come upon all men*, or by recovering it thro' faithful obedience to *re-converting* grace: Or, in other terms, as many as *know*, and perseveringly improve *the day of their visitation*, are, in consequence of Christ's particular redemption, entitled to an *eternal* redemption or salvation: That is, they are *eternally* redeemed from hell, and *eternally* saved into different degrees of heavenly glory, according to the different degrees of their faithfulness, and the various dispensations which they were under. While they that bury their talent, and *know not* [i. e. squander away] *the day of their visitation*, forfeit their initial salvation, and secure to themselves God's *judicial* reprobation, together with all its terrible consequences.

We believe moreover, that, altho' Christ *tasted death for every man*, yet, according to his covenants of peculiarity or distinguishing grace, he *formerly* shewed more love to the *jews*, than to the gentiles, and now shows more favour to the *christians* than to the *jews*, and to *some* christians than to others; bestowing more spiritual blessings upon the *protestants* than upon the *papists*—more temporal mercies upon the *English* than upon the *Greenlanders*; &c.—We farther believe, that this *special* favour is not only *national*, but also in some cases *personal*: Thus it seems that God shewed
more

more of it to *Jacob* than to *Esau*—to *Esaü*, than to *Ishbœben*; to *David* and *Solomon*, than to *Jouathan* and *Mephiboseth*; to *St. Paul* than to *Apollos*; and to *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, than to *Judas*, *Bartholomew* and *Matthias*.—We likewise believe, that God [ACCORDING TO HIS PRESCIENCE] has a regard for the *sons*, who [he foresees] WILL finally yield to his grace; And this regard he has not for those souls, who [he foresees] WILL finally harden themselves against his goodness. Thus WITH RESPECT to divine FORE-KNOWLEDGE, we grant that Christ had a respect for fallen Peter, which he had not for fallen Judas: For when they were both lying in the guilt of their crimes, he could not but prefer him, who had not yet sinned out his day of grace, to him who had:—him who had done the spirit of grace a *partial*, *temporary* despite, to him who had done that spirit a *total* and *final* despite—And, in a word, him who *would* repent, to him who *absolutely would not*. However, this peculiar regard for some men, this lengthening or shortening a sinner's day of grace arbitrarily, and this bestowing more talents, i. e. more temporal and spiritual blessings upon one man than upon another, according to sovereign prerogative, which God claims in his covenants of peculiarity:—This peculiar regard for some men, I say, never amounts to a grain of partiality in judgment; much less to a rape committed by overbearing grace, or infrustrable wrath upon the moral agency of two men (suppose Peter and Judas) to bring about in an *unavoidable* manner the *final perseverance* of the one, and the *final apostacy* of the other: For, had the covetous traitor humbly repented when he could yet do it, he would have gone to heaven; and had the lying perjured apostle put off his repentance as obstinately as Judas did, he would have gone to the place of impenitent apostates: For, God having *put life and death before* the sons of men; and having appointed eternal rewards for those who *finally choose*

life in the rectitude of their conduct, and eternal punishments for those who finally *choose death in the error of their ways*, he can no more finally turn the scale of their will, than he can deny himself, and turn the solemnity of the great day, into the pageantry of a pharisaic masquerade.

The end of the first article of Mr. Hill's fictitious creed is not less contrary to all our principles, than the middle part. For, according to all our doctrines of grace; persons who are in glory like Peter, are infinitely more indebted to Christ's grace, than persons who lift up their eyes in torments like Judas. This will appear if we consider the case of those two apostles. Altho' they were both equally indebted to Christ for his redeeming love, which put them in a state of initial salvation; and for his *distinguishing favour*, which raised them to apostolic honours; yet upon our Scheme, Peter is INFINITELY MORE beholden to free-grace than Judas; and I prove it thus. Christ according to his *remunerative* election, which draws after it a *particular* redemption and an eternal salvation—Christ I say, according to that remunerative election has chosen Peter to the REWARD of an heavenly throne and a crown of glory. Now this election, in which Judas has no interest, springs from God's *Free-grace*, as well as from voluntary perseverance in the free obedience of faith. It was of FREE-GRACE that God designed to give to all penitent, persevering believers, and of consequence to Peter, a crown of glory in his heavenly kingdom: For he might have given them only the conveniences of life in a cottage on earth:—He might have dropped them into their original nothingness after having blessed them with one single smile of approbation:—Nay, he might have demanded their utmost obedience without promising them the LEAST reward. Therefore Peter, and all the saints in glory, are indebted to Christ, not only for their
rewards

true grace to profit with; yet we acknowledge, that he makes as real a difference between *man* and *man* as between an *angel* and an *archangel*; giving to some men *one* talent, to others *two* talents, and to others *five*, according to the election of *distinguishing* grace maintained in the *Scripture Scales*, Sect. xii. But the least talent of grace is saving, if free-will does not bury it to the last.

And we believe, that, altho' God foresaw, that in some unhappy periods of the world's duration, the greater part of *adults* would reject his grace, he nevertheless bestows it in different measures upon all: but not (as Mr. Hill says) "in order to heighten the torments, and increase the damnation of any in hell." This is an horrid conceit, which we return to those who insinuate, that God gives *common* grace [that is, we apprehend, *unsaving, graceless* grace] to ABSOLUTE reprobates, i. e. to men; for whom, [upon Mr. Hill's scheme of *absolute reprobation*] there never was in God the least degree of mercy and saving goodness:—This shocking consequence, fixed upon us by Mr. Hill, is the genuine offspring of Calvinistic non-election, which supposes that God sends the Gospel to myriads of men, from whom he absolutely keeps the power of believing it; tantalizing them with *delusive* offers of free-grace *here*, that he may, *without possibility of escape*, sink them hereafter to the deepest hell—the hell of the Capernaïtes.

According to the gospel, the reprobation that draws eternal damnation after it, springs from our own personal *free-will* doing a final despite to *free-grace*; and not from God's eternal *free-wrath*. And if Mr. Hill asks why God gives a manifestation of the spirit of grace to men, who [he foresees] will do it a final despite, as well as to those who through that grace will work out their own salvation: We reply:

(1) For

(1) For the same reason which made him give *celestial* grace to the *angels* who became devils by squandering it away—*paradisical* grace, to our first parents—*expostulating*, Gentile grace to Cain—*jewish*, royal grace to Saul—and *christian*, apostolic grace to Judas. If Mr. Hill says he does not understand what that reason is: we answer: By the same reason which induced the Master who corrected Mr. Hill for making a bad exercise at Westminster-school, to give his pupil pen, paper, ink, and proper instruction, before he could reasonably call Mr. Hill to an account for his exercise. And by the same reason which would make all Shropshire cry out against Mr. Hill, as against a tyrannical master, suppose he horse-whipped his coachman and postilion for not driving him if he had taken away from them boots, whips, spurs, harness, coach and horses; and if he had contrived himself the fall of their apparatus, that they might put all their bones out of joint, when the floor gave way under them.

(2) If Mr. Hill is not satisfied with these illustrations, we will give him some direct answers. God gives a manifestation of his grace to those who make their reprobation sure by finally resisting his gracious Spirit. *First*: BECAUSE he will show himself as he is, *gracious and merciful, true and long-suffering towards all, so long as the day of their visitation lasts.*—Thus he bestows a talent of grace upon all his slothful servants who bury it to the last, because he will display his equity and goodness, altho' they will display their wickedness and sloth.—*Secondly*, BECAUSE he is determined, that if those servants will destroy themselves, their blood shall be upon THEIR OWN heads, according to the well-known scriptures, *O Israel, THOU hast destroyed THYSELF. I would—and YE WOULD NOT*:—*Thirdly*, BECAUSE God will judge the world in righteousness, and display his distributive justice in rendering to all

all according to THEIR WORKS; DESERVEDLY cloathing his finally-unfaithful servants with shame; and making the faithful walk with him in white, *because* THEY ARE [evangelically] WORTHY. And, to sum up all in one,—BECAUSE the two Gospel-axioms are firm as the pillars of heaven and hell; and God will display their truth before men and angels, and especially before *pharisees* and *antinomians*. Now according to the *first* axiom, there is a Saviour, a measure of saving grace, and a day of *initial* salvation for all. And according to the *second* axiom, there is *free-will* in all, and a day of *judgment*, with a *final* salvation or damnation for all, according to their good or bad *works*, that is, according to their *free-agency*; the good works of the righteous being the product of their *free, avoidable* co-operation with God's grace; and the bad works of the wicked springing from their *free, avoidable* rebellion against that grace.

Hence it appears, that the 2d. Article of the fictitious creed contains indeed a "*shocking, not to say blasphemous*" consequence; but that this consequence is nothing but a sprig of Mr. Hill's supposed "*orthodoxy*," absurdly grafted upon the supposed "*heresy*" which St. John and St. Paul maintain in these words: *He (Christ) was the true light, which lighteth EVERY MAN that cometh into the world.—The GRACE OF GOD, which bringeth SALVATION, has appeared unto ALL MEN, TEACHING [not forcing] us to deny ungodliness, &c. and to live soberly, &c. [if we are obedient to its TEACHINGS.]*

The



The FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE III.

“ I Believe it depends WHOLLY on the will of the
 “ creature, whether he shall or shall not RE-
 “ CEIVE ANY benefit from divine Grace.”

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE III.

WE believe that the benefits of a temporary redemption, of a day of salvation, and of the free-gift which came upon all men to the justification mentioned Rom. v. 18,—we believe, I say, that these benefits, far from “ depending wholly on the will of the creature” as to the RECEIVING of them, depend no more upon us than our sight, and the light of the sun. All those blessings are *at first* as gratuitously, and irresistibly bestowed upon us, for Christ’s sake, in our present manner of existence; as the divine image and favour were *at first* bestowed upon our first parents in paradise: with this only difference: Before the fall their paradisaical grace came immediately from God our CREATOR: whereas since the fall, our penitential grace comes immediately and irresistibly from God our Redeemer:—I say irresistibly, because God does not leave to our option whether we shall receive a talent of redeeming grace or no, any more than he left it to Adam’s choice whether Adam should receive five talents of creative grace or no: Although afterwards he gives us leave to bury or improve our ~~talent~~ of redeeming grace,

grace, as he gave leave to Adam to bury or improve his five talents of *creative* grace. Our doctrine of the general redemption and free-agency of mankind stands therefore upon the same scriptural and rational ground, which bears up Mr. Hill's system of man's creation and moral-agency in paradise; It being impossible to make any objection against the *personal* loss of *redeeming* grace in Judas, that may not be retorted against the *personal* loss of *creative* grace in Adam or Satan.

But, with respect to all the temporal and eternal benefits, which God has promised by way of REWARD to his every good and faithful servant, we believe that they depend upon the concurrence of two causes, the *first* of which is the *free-grace* of God in Jesus Christ; and the *second*, the faithfulness of our assisted and rectified FREE-will; which faithfulness is graciously crowned by God's remunerative justice and evangelical veracity. And, instead of blushing at this doctrine, as if it were "*Stocking*," we glory in it as being perfectly rational, strictly scriptural, and equally distant from the two rocks against which Calvinian orthodoxy is dashed in pieces: I mean the twin doctrines of wanton free-grace, and eternal free-wrath, according to which God without any respect to the faith or unbelief, to the good or bad works of *free-agents*, absolutely ordained for some of them the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness, and the *unavoidable* reward of eternal life by means of *unavoidable* faith: while he absolutely appointed for all the rest the robe of Adam's imputed unrighteousness, and the *unavoidable* punishment of eternal death, by means of *necessary, unavoidable* unbelief.

The

The FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE IV.

“ **T**HOUGH the scripture tells me that the carnal
 “ mind is enmity against God; yet I believe
 “ that there is something in the heart of every natural
 “ man, that can receive and cherish the grace of God;
 “ and that the sole reason why this grace is effectual in
 “ some and not in others, is entirely owing to themselves,
 “ and to their own faithfulness, and not to the dislin-
 “ guishing love and favour of God.”

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE IV.

THOUGH the scripture tells us that the carnal
 mind is enmity against God, and that the flesh lusteth
 against the spirit, yet we believe, that from the time
 God initially raised mankind from their fall, and
 promised them the celestial Bruiser of the serpent's
 head, there is a GRACIOUS free-agency in the heart of
 every man who has not yet sinned away his day of sal-
 vation; and that, by means of this GRACIOUS free-
 agency, all men, during the accepted time, can con-
 cur with, and work under the grace of God, ac-
 cording to the dispensation they belong to.—Again,
 we believe that no child of Adam is a natural man in
 the Calvinian sense of the word—[i. e. absolutely
 destitute of all saving grace] except he who has ac-
 tually sinned away his day of grace. And when we
 consider man as absolutely graceless, ~~as a child of~~
 wrath in the highest sense of the word, we consider
 C him

him in fallen Adam, BEFORE God began to raise mankind by the promise of the woman's seed. Or we must consider that man in his own person, AFTER he has done *final* despite to the spirit of that grace, which has more or less clearly appeared to all men under various dispensations.

Mr. Hill greatly mistakes if he thinks that, according to our doctrine, God's "*grace is effectual in some and not in others*;" for we believe that it is EFFECTUAL IN ALL, though in a different manner. It has its FIRST and MOST *desirable* effect on them that "*cherish it*" through the above-mentioned GRACIOUS *free-agency*. And it has its SECOND, and *less* desirable EFFECT on those, who finally reject the gracious counsel of God towards them: for it reproves their sins; it galls their consciences; it renders them inexcusable; it vindicates God's mercy; it clears his justice; it shews that the 'judge of all the earth does no wrong; and it begins in this world the just punishment which righteous vengeance will complete in the next.

The grace of God therefore, like the gospel that testifies of it, is a *two-edged sword*: It is a *favour of life* to those who cherish, and a *favour of death* to those who resist it. That some cherish it, by its assistance work righteousness to the last, and then receive the reward of the inheritance, is NOT "*entirely* owing to themselves and to their own faithfulness," as the fictitious creed asserts: Nor is it "*entirely* owing to the love and favour of God." This happy event has two causes: The FIRST is FREE-GRACE, by the *assistance* of which, the faith and good works of the righteous are begun, continued, and ended: The SECOND is FREE-WILL humbly working with free-grace: as appears by the numerous scriptures balanced in the *Scripture-scales*. And that some, on the other hand, resist the grace of God, and are *personally*

personally given up to a reprobate mind that they might be damn'd, is not at all owing to God's *free-wrath*, as the scheme of Mr. Hill supposes: Nor is it entirely owing to the unfaithfulness and obstinacy of impenitent sinners. This unhappy event has also *two* causes: The **FIRST** is man's *Free-will* finally *refusing* to concur with Free-grace: in working out his own salvation: And the second is *Just-wrath* revenging the despite done to God's Free-grace by such a *final refusal*.

With respect to "*the DISTINGUISHING love and favour*" of God OUR JUDGE, and his *DISTINGUISHED hatred and ill-will* [on which our *eternal rewards* and *punishments* unavoidably turn, according to Mr. Hill's twin-doctrines of *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*] we dare not admit them in our holy religion. We give to "*DISTINGUISHING favour*" an important place in our creed, as appears from the first article of this; But that favour has nothing to do with God's judicial distribution of rewards or punishments, i. e. with God's appointing of us to eternal life or to eternal death.—We believe that it is a most daring attempt of the antinomians, to place distinguishing favour, and distinguishing grudge, upon the *judicial throne* of God, and in the *judgment-seat* of Christ; no decrees proceeding from thence, but such as are dictated by *IMPARTIAL JUSTICE* putting Christ's evangelical law in execution, and *strictly judging* [i. e. *justifying* or *condemning*, rewarding or punishing] moral agents, according to their works. We should think ourselves guilty of propagating "*a shocking, not to say blasphemous*" doctrine, if we insinuated, that "*distinguishing favour,*" and not unbribed justice dictates God's sentence; God himself having enacted, *Cursed be he that perverteth judgment, &c. and all the people shall say,* AMEN. Deut. xxvii. 19: Nor need I tell Mr. Hill who has hinted, that God is such a *partial Judge*:—yea, that he

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carries *partiality* to such a height, as to say to a man who actually defiles a married woman, and treacherously plots the murder of her injured husband, *Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee* :—*Thou art a Man after my own Heart*, If Mr. Hill has forgotten this anecdote, I refer him to the *Five Letters*, the sale of which he does not scruple to advertise again in his *Three Letters*, thus “ I now think it the way of duty to permit—the *Five Letters* to Mr. Fletcher, &c. to be again sold, in order that both friends and enemies may, if possible, be convinced that—I NEVER RETRACTED MY SENTIMENTS.”—Strange confidence of boasting! [*O mores!*] What have *Morality* and *Godliness* done to Mr. Hill, that he will put them to a perpetual blush; lest his *Venus* [for she no longer deserves the name of *Diana*] should redden one moment?

THE FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE V.

“ I BELIEVE that God sincerely wishes for the
 “ *salvation of many who never will be saved;*
 “ *consequently that it is entirely owing to want of ability*
 “ *in God; that what he so earnestly willeth is not ac-*
 “ *complished.*”

THE GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE V.

WE believe that God's attributes perfectly harmonize. Accordingly his *goodness* and *mercy*

mercy incline him to "*wish for the salvation of*" all men, upon gracious terms laid down by his *wisdom and veracity*. As a proof of the sincerity of this wish, he swears by himself, that his antecedent will or decree, is *not that sinners should die; but that, by the help of his free-grace and the submission of their free-will, they should turn and live*. He does more still—he grants to all men a day of initial salvation, and *all that day long, he stretches forth his hands to them; he reproves them for their sins; he calls upon them various ways to repent; and gives them power to do it according to one or another dispensation of his grace: requiring little of those to whom he gives little, and much, of those to whom much is given*. But it is his *subsequent* decree, dictated chiefly by his *holiness, justice, and sovereignty*, that, if free-agents will *none of his reproofs*, and finally disregard the offers of his grace, *his Spirit shall not always strive with them: a day of calamity shall follow the day of their neglected salvation: and Justice shall be glorified in their righteous destruction*. This is the sad alternative, which God has set before them, if in opposition to his antecedent will, they [thro' their free-agency] finally choose death, in finally choosing the way that leads to it.

This part of our doctrine may be summed up in three propositions. (1) God's *mercy absolutely* wills the **INITIAL** salvation of all men by Jesus Christ.— (2) God's *goodness, holiness, and faithfulness absolutely* will the **ETERNAL** salvation of all those, who, by the concurrence of their assisted, unobstructed free-will with his redeeming grace, are found **penitent, obedient believers** at the end of their day of initial salvation:—And (3) God's *justice, sovereignty, and veracity, absolutely* will the destruction of all that are found **impenitent** at the close of the day of their gracious visitation, or initial salvation. To see the truth of these three propositions, we need only

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consider them in the light of the two gospel-axioms, and compare them with these declarations of Moses and Jesus Christ. *I set life and death before you; (free-agents, who enjoy a day of initial salvation :) Choose life: (I offer it you first—Choose life, I say,) that you may live eternally. But if you choose death in the error of your ways, your rejected Saviour will complain, How Often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not: And now, the things that made for your peace are hid from your eyes: That is, You are given up to judicial blindness, and to all its fearful consequences.*

Hence it is evident, that the damnation of those, who obstinately live and die in their sins, and whom God was willing to save AS FREE-AGENTS UPON GOSPEL-TERMS, argues no “want of ability in him” to save them eternally, if he would give up the day of judgment, and exert his omniscience in opposition to his wisdom, justice, holiness, and veracity; or if he would destroy the most wonderful of all his works, which is the free-will of moral agents. We never doubted his ability to unman man, and eternally to save all mankind, if he would absolutely do it; it being evident that the Almighty can overpower all his creatures if he is bent upon it, and drive them from sin to necessitated holiness, and from hell to heaven, far more easily than a shepherd can drive his frightened sheep from the market to the slaughter house. Therefore, the supposition that, upon our principles, “God wants ability to save” whom he absolutely will save, is entirely groundless; every man being actually saved so far as God † absolutely will.

† The reader is desired to take particular notice of this observation. Because it cuts by the root Bradwarden's famous argument. “If you allow [says he] (1) That God is able to do a thing, and (2) That he is [absolutely] willing to do a thing: “Then

wills: For, first, God *absolutely* wills that *all men* should be *unconditionally* saved with an *initial* salvation: and *thus all men are unconditionally* saved: and secondly, he *absolutely* wills that all men who are obedient, and faithful unto death, should absolutely be saved with an eternal salvation; and *thus all men who are obedient and faithful unto death are actually* saved. They shall never perish neither shall any pluck them out of Christ's protecting hand. But what has this scripture-doctrine to do with calvinism!—with the *necessary, eternal, finished* salvation of ALL the disobedient sheep, who turn goats, foxes, lions, and serpents! who, far from remembering Lot's wife, slyly rob their neighbours of their ewe-lambs—their heart's-blood—their reputation!

To conclude: The most that Mr. Hill can justly say against our principles, is: (1) That, according to the gospel which we preach, *MAN* is a *free-agent*, and *GOD* is *wise, holy, true, and just*; as well as *good, loving, patient, and merciful*:—And (2) That one half of these attributes do not permit him to *NECESSITATE* free-agents; that is, to *make them absolutely* DO, or *FORBEAR* those actions, by which they are to stand or fall IN JUDGMENT. And let men of reason and religion say, if this doctrine is not more *rational and scriptural*, than the Calvinian doctrine of *finished salvation*, and of its inseparable counter-part, *finished damnation*. The

“ Then (3) I affirm, that thing will not, cannot go unaccomplished:—Otherwise God must either lose his power or change his mind.—If the” [*absolute*] “ will of God could be frustrated and vanquished, its defeat would arise from the created wills, either of angels, or of men. But could any created will what-ever, &c. counter-act and baffle the will of God, the will of the creature must be *SUPERIOR* either in strength or in wisdom to the will of the Creator: which can by no means be allowed.” We fully grant to Mr. Toplady that the argument is “ *extremely conclusive*,” provided the two words *absolutely* and *absolute* be taken into it. And therefore we maintain, as well as he, that man is *actually* saved, so far as God *absolutely* wills.

The FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE VI.

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

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE VII.

WE believe that the Redeemer did not shed his precious blood, or pray absolutely in vain for any man: seeing he obtained for all men, in their season, a day of grace and INITIAL salvation, with a thousand spiritual and temporal blessings. Not were his prayers for the eternal salvation of those who die *impenitent* rejected by his Father: For Christ never prayed that they should be eternally saved *in impenitency*. Before Mr. Hill can reasonably charge us with holding doctrines, which imply that Christ told a GROSS UNTRUTH when he said, “I know that thou hearest me always,” he must prove, that Christ ever asked the eternal salvation of some men whether they repented or not; or that he ever desired his Father to *force* TO THE LAST repentance, faith, and obedience upon any man. If Mr. Hill cannot prove this, how can he make appear that, according to our doctrines of grace, one of our Lord’s prayers was ever rejected? We grant that

that Christ asked the forgiveness of his murderers, and of those who made sport with his sufferings; but he asked it upon gospel-terms, that is, *conditionally*. Nor was his prayer ineffectual: for it obtained for them time to repent, and uncommon helps so to do, with a peculiar readiness in God to pardon them upon their application for pardon: And if after all, thro' the power of their free-agency, they despised the pardon offered them in the gospel, and repented not, they shall deservedly perish according to Christ's own declaration. He has acted towards them the part of a gracious Saviour: he never engaged himself to act that of a tyrant.— I mean, he never sent either his good spirit, or the evil spirit of Satan, to bind the wills of men with adamant chains of *necessitated* righteousness, or of *necessitated* iniquity, that he might cast some into Abraham's bosom and others into hell; as Nebuchadnezzar sent the strongest men in his army to bind Daniel's companions, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Once more: We believe that, with respect to the *reward of the inheritance*, and the doctrine of *eternal salvation*, Christ's atonement and intercession are like his gospel. Now his gospel is guarded by what one of Mr. Hill's seconds queerly calls "the valiant sergent *if*," that is, the *conditionality* of the promises and threatenings which relate to *eternal salvation* and *eternal damnation*; and this *conditionality* is the rampart of the old gospel and the demolition of the new; strongly guarding the ancient doctrines of *free-grace*, *free-will*, and *just wrath*, against the novel doctrines of *overbearing grace*, *bound will*, and *free wrath*.

I should not do justice to our cause, if I dismissed this Article without retorting Mr. Hill's objection. I have shewn how unreasonably we are accused of holding

holding doctrines, which by "unavoidable" consequence, represent Christ as "telling a gross untruth:" And now we desire Mr. Hill, or his seconds, to show how the Son of God could, consistently with truth, profess himself to be the *Saviour of men*, the *Saviour and Light of the world*, and the *Drawer of all men unto himself*; if most men have been from all eternity under the fearful curie of Calvinian reprobation.—We ask if the Redeemer would have "told a gross untruth," upon the supposition that Calvinism is true, had he called himself *The REPROBATOR of men—The NON-REDEEMER, the DAMNER of the world, and the REJECTER of all men from himself*; seeing that, according to the doctrines of grace (so called) the bulk of men was *EVER reprobated—NEVER redeemed—NEVER initially saved—add NEVER drawn to Christ.*—We beseech candid Protestants to say, if the bible does not clear up all the difficulties with which prejudiced divines have clogg'd the genuine doctrines of grace, when it testifies that our Redeemer and Saviour has procured a *GENERAL temporary REDEMPTION* together with an *initial salvation* for all men *UNIVERSALLY*; and a *particular eternal redemption*, together with a *finished salvation* for *them that obey him and endure to the end*. And we intreat the lovers of the *whole truth* as it is in Jesus, to help us to bring about upon this scriptural plan, a reconciliation between those who contend for the doctrines of *particular redemption* and *finished salvation*; and those who maintain the doctrines of *general redemption*, and of *a day of salvation* for all mankind.



The

The FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE VII.

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

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE VII.

WE believe that out of mere mercy, and rich free-grace in Jesus Christ, without any respect to foreseen repentance, faith or goodness, God places all men in a state of *initial* salvation; electing them to that state according to the mysterious counsel of his *distinguishing* love, which places some under the bright and direct beams of gospel-truth; whilst he suffers others to receive the external light of it, only thro' that variety of clouds which we call Calvinism, Popery, Judaism, and Mahometanism†; leaving

† CALVINISM is christianity obscured by mists of pharisaic election and reprobation, and by a cloud of stoical fatalism.—POPERY is christianity under a cloud of pharisaic bigotry, and under thick fogs of heathenish superstition.—JUDAISM is christianity under the veil of Moses.—MAHOMETANISM is a jumble of Christianity, Judaism, Gentilism, and imposture.—And GENTILISM is the religion of Cain and Abel; or, if you please, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, under a cloud of false or dark tradition, Some call it *the religion of nature*: I have no objection to the name, if they understand by it the religion of our *nature* in its present state of *initial* recovery thro' Christ, from its *total* fall in Adam.

leaving most in Gentilism, that is, in the dispensation under which Cain, Abel, Abimelech king of Gerar, and Melchisedec king of Salem, formerly were.

(2) We believe that God, for Christ's sake, peculiarly [altho' with different degrees of favour] accepts all those, who, in all the above-mentioned religions, i. e. *in every nation, fear him and work righteousness.* These, when considered as enduring to the end, are his elect according to the election of remunerative justice. For these, he is gone to prepare the many mansions in his Father's house: for these, he designs the REWARD of the inheritance that fadeth not away in heaven. And when he speaks of some men as belonging to this number, it is always with respect to his fore-knowledge that they will freely persevere in the obedience of faith; it being the highest pitch of antinomian dotage to suppose that God, the true, the wise, the holy, and righteous God, ELECTS men to the REWARD of persevering obedience, without taking any notice of persevering obedience IN HIS ELECTION.

To sum up all in few lines: The doctrine of election has two branches: According to the first branch, we are chosen that we should be holy and obedient, in proportion to the ordinary or extraordinary helps, which divine grace affords us under one or another of its dispensations. This election to holiness has nothing to do with prescience; it depends entirely on free-grace, and distinguishing favour.—According to the SECOND branch of the doctrine of election, we are chosen to receive the rewards of perfected holiness and of persevering obedience, in proportion both to the talents which free, distinguishing grace has afforded us; and to the manner in which our assisted free-will has improved those talents. This remunerative election depends

depends on four things : (1) On **FREE-GRACE**, promising for Christ's sake the reward of the inheritance to the persevering obedience of faith :—(2) On **FAITHFUL FREE-WILL**, securing that reward by the assistance of free-grace, and by the **FREE** obedience of faith :—(3) On **DIVINE FAITHFULNESS**, keeping its gospel-promise for ever :—And (4) On **DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE**, dispensing the reward according to the law of Christ, and according to every man's work.—*This election therefore has much to do with divine prescience, as depending in part upon God's knowledge that "some men have improved, or will improve the grace which is given them, repent, believe, and be good" [if not very good] and faithful servants to the end.*

Unprejudiced readers will easily see how much our doctrine of Election is preferable to that of our opponents. Ours draws after it only an **HARMLESS reprobation** from some peculiar favours, and a **RIGHTEOUS reprobation** from rewards of grace and glory obstinately despised, or wantonly forfeited : But the election of the Calvinists is clogg'd with the dreadful dogma of an unscriptural and terrible **Reprobation**, which might be compared to a well-known monster,

Prima Leo, postrema Draco, media ipsa Chimæra.

Its head is *Free-wrath* ; its body, *Unavoidable Sin* ; and its tail, *Finished Damnation*. In a word : Our **ELECTION** recommends God's free, distinguishing grace, without pouring any contempt on the holiness of Christ's precepts, the sanction of his law, the veracity of his threatenings, and the conditionality of his promises. And our **REPROBATION** displays God's absolute Sovereignty, without sullyng his mercy, impeaching his veracity, or disgracing his justice. In a word *our election* doctrinally guards

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the throne of sovereign grace, and *our reprobation*, that of sovereign justice: But Calvinian election and reprobation doctrinally overthrow both those thrones: or if they are yet left standing, it is to allow *Pre-wrath* to fill the throne of justice, and an *Unchaste, bloody Diana* to step into the throne of grace, whence she hints to Laodicean believers, that they may *with advantage* commit adultery, murder, and incest; calling as many as take her horrid innuendos, *My love, my undefiled*, &c. and assuring them that **THEY** shall never perish, and that all things [the most grievous sins not excepted] shall work for their good.



The FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE VIII.

“ **I BELIEVE** that the love and favour of him,
 “ with whom is no variableness and shadow
 “ of turning, and whose gifts and callings are without
 “ repentance, may vary, change, and turn every hour,
 “ and every moment; according to the behaviour of the
 “ creature.”

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE VIII.

WE believe that God's works were all originally very good; and that God did love, or approve of them all, as very good in their places. We maintain, that some of God's works, such as
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some angels, and our first parents, by free, avoidable disobedience, forfeited God's love or approbation. He approved or loved them while they continued righteous; and disapproved or hated them, when they had use which they made of their free-will deserved his disapprobation or hatred.—Again: We believe that God's *ABSOLUTE gifts and callings are without repentance*. God never repented that he gave all mankind his paradisaical favour in Adam, and yet all mankind forfeited it by the Fall.—God never repented that he CALLED all his servants, and GAVE to every one of them his talents, as he thought fit: and yet, when the wicked and slothful servant had buried and forfeited his talent, God said, *Take the talent from him.*

Once more: We believe, that so certain as God is the gracious creator and the righteous judge of angels and men, the doctrines of divine grace and divine justice [or the two gospel-axioms] are perfectly reconcilable; and that, of consequence, God can justly curse mankind with temporal death, after having blessed them with paradisaical life; and punish them in hell, after having blessed them a second time with *initial salvation* during their day of personal probation on earth. To deny this is to deny, that there are graces on earth, or torments in hell for any of the children of men.

Nevertheless we believe that there is no positive change in God. From eternity to eternity he is the same holy and faithful God: therefore he unchangeably loves righteousness, and hates iniquity: Apostacy in men or in angels does not imply any change in him; the change being only in the speculative disposition of his *free-willing* creatures. If I make my eyes so sore that I cannot look with pleasure at the sun, or that it's beams, which cheered me yesterday, give me pain to-day; this is no

proof that the sun has changed its nature.—The law that condemns a murderer absolves me *now* : but, if I stab my neighbour in ten minutes, the same law that *now* ABSOLVES me, will in *ten minutes* CONDEMN me.—“Impossible!” says Mr. Hill’s scheme: “The Law changes not.” I grant it: but a *free-agent* may change: and the law of liberty, which is but the transcript of God’s eternal nature, is so ordered, that, without changing at all, it nevertheless treats all *free-agents* according to their changes. The changes that God makes in the world do not change him: much less is he changed by the variations of free-agents: Such variations indeed lay *rebels* and *penitents* open to a new aspect from the Deity; but, that aspect was in the Deity ~~before~~ they laid themselves open to it. Fire, without changing its nature, melts wax and hardens clay: Now if a rebel’s heart absolutely stiffens itself, so that it becomes like unyielding clay; or if a penitent’s heart humbles itself, so that it becomes like yielding wax, God changes not, any more than the fire, when he hardens the stiff rebel by resisting him, and melts the yielding penitent by giving him more grace.

To understand this better, we must remember that God’s eternal nature is to *resist the proud, and give grace to the humble*; and that when free-grace, (which has appeared to all men) assists us, we are as free to chuse, *humility* and *life* as we are to chuse *pride* and *death* when we dally with temptation, or indulge the natural depravity of our own hearts. Hence it follows, that the *judicial difference* which God makes when he alternately smiles and frowns, dispenses *rewards* and *punishments* springs not from any alteration in his unchangeable nature; but from a change in the mutable will and behaviour of free-agents:—a change this, which arises from **THEIR WILL FREELY RESISTING** divine grace, if the alteration

alteration is for the worse; and from THEIR WILL yielding WITHOUT NECESSITY to that grace, if the change is for the better. Nor are we any more ashamed to own man's *free-agency* before a world of fatalists, than we are ashamed to say: *Verily, there is a REWARD for the righteous: Tho' hand join in band the wicked shall not be unpunished: Doubtless there is a God, that JUDGEETH the earth, and will render to every man according to HIS works, that is, according to HIS free-will; works being OUR OWN works, only so far as they spring from OUR OWN free-will.* And we think that the opposite doctrine is one of the most absurd errors, that ever disgraced Christianity; and one of the most dangerous engines, which were ever invented in *Babel* to sap the walls of *Jerusalem*:—A dreadful engine this, which, if it rested upon *truth*, would pour floods of disgrace on all the divine perfections; would upset the tribunal of the Judge of all the earth; and would raise upon the tremendous ruins the throne of the doctrinal idol of the day: I mean the spurious doctrine of *grace*, which I have sometimes called *The great Diana* of the Calvinists, because, like *the great Diana of the Ephesians*, it may pass at once for *Luna* or *Finished Salvation* in heaven, and for *Hecate* or *Finished Damnation* in hell.



THE FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE IX.

“ I BELIEVE that the seed of the word by which
 “ God's children are born again, is a CORRUPT-
 “ TIBLE seed; and that so far from enduring FOR
 “ EVER (as that mistaken apostle Peter rashly affirms,)
 “ that it is frequently rooted out of the hearts of those
 “ in whom it is sown.”

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE IX.

WE Believe that *the word, or the truth* of God is the divine seed, by which sinners are born again when they receive it, that is, when they believe: and this spiritual seed (as that enlightened apostle, *Peter*, justly affirms) *endures FOR EVER*:—but not for antinomian purposes—not to say to fallen believers in the very act of adultery or incest, *My love! my undefiled!*—No: It *endures FOR EVER*, as a seed of reviving or terrifying truth:—*It endures FOR EVER* as a two-edged sword to defend the just, or to wound the wicked; to protect obedient believers, or to pierce disobedient believers, and obstinate unbelievers:—*It endures FOR EVER* as a sweet *savour of life* to them that receive and keep it; and as a bitter *savour of death* to them that never receive it, and to them that finally cast it away, and never *bring forth fruit to perfection*.

But altho' the seed of the word can NEVER be lost with respect to *both* its effects, yet (as we have already observed) it is too frequently lost with regard to its *more desirable* effect: If Mr. Hill doubts of it, we refer him to the parable of the sower, where our Lord observes that the good seed was *thus lost* in three sorts of people out of four, merely thro' the want of co-operation or concurrence on the part of free-will, which he calls *good* or *bad ground*, *soft* or *stony ground*, &c. according to the good or bad choice it makes, and according to the steadiness or fickleness of that choice. And if Mr. Hill exclaims against the obvious meaning of so well-known a portion of the gospel, the world will easily see that, supposing *his doctrine* of grace deserves to be called
chaste

chaste, when it prompts him to vindicate as openly as he dares, the profitableness of adultery and incest to fallen believers; it by no means merits to be called *devout*, when it excites him to insinuate, that our Lord preached a “*shocking, not to say blasphemous*” doctrine.



The FICTITIOUS CREED:

ARTICLE X.

“ I BELIEVE that Christ does not always give
 “ unto his sheep eternal life; but that they often
 “ perish, and are by the Power of Satan frequently
 “ plucked out of his hand.”

The GENUINE CREED:

ARTICLE X.

WE Believe that Christ's sheep mentioned in John x. are obedient persevering believers; that is, as our Lord himself describes them, John, x. 4, 5, 27. persons that HEAR [i. e. obey] his voice,—and whom he KNOWS [i. e. approves:] Persons that know [i. e. approve] his voice;—that know not [i. e. do not approve] the voice of strangers;—and flee from a stranger instead of following him:—In a word, persons that actually follow the good shepherd in some of his folds or pastures; In this description of a sheep every verb is put in the present tense, to show us that the word *sheep* denotes

a character, or persons actually possessed of such a character: So that the moment the character changes; the moment a man who once left all to follow Christ, leaves Christ to follow a stranger, he has no more to do with the name and privileges of a *sheep*, than a deserter or a rebel has to do with the name and privileges of his majesty's soldiers or subjects.

According then to our doctrine, no *sheep of Christ*, that is, no *actual follower of the Redeemer* perishes. We think it is shocking to say, that any of them are plucked out of his hand. On the contrary we frequently say with St. Peter, *Who will harm you [much more, who will separate you from the love of Christ] if you be followers of that which is good [i. e. if you be sheep;]* and we insist upon the veracity of our Lord's promise, *He that endureth unto the end in the character of a sheep, i. e. in the way of faith and obedience, the same shall be [eternally] saved.* And we maintain, that so long as a believer does not make shipwreck of the faith and of a good conscience—so long as he continues a *sheep*, an harmless follower of the Lamb of God, he can no more perish than God's everlasting throne can be overturned. But what has this doctrine of our Lord to do with Calvinism?

With regard to the *Sheep* mentioned in Matt. xxv, 33, 34, whom our Lord calls *BLESSED of his Father*, we believe that they represent the multitude of obedient persevering believers, whom two apostles describe thus: *BLESSED are they that do his [God's] commandments that they may have right [or if Mr. Hill pleases, privilege] to the tree of life, and enter &c. into the city.* Rev, xxii. 14.—*BLESSED is the man that ENDURETH temptation; for WHEN he is tried, he shall receive the crown of LIFE, which the Lord hath promised to THEM THAT LOVE HIM.—And this.*

this is the love of God that we keep his commandments. James, i. 12.—1 John v. 3.—For such ENDURING, OBEДИENT believers a *kingdom of glory is prepared from the foundation of the world*; and to it they are and shall be *judicially* elected; while the goats, i. e. unbelievers, or disobedient fallen believers, are and shall be *judicially* reprobated from it. Hence it is, that when our Lord accounts for his judicial election of the obedient [whom he parabolically calls *sheep*] he does not say, *Inherit the kingdom, &c. for I absolutely finished your salvation*: but he says, *Inherit the kingdom, for ye gave me meat, &c. ye fed the hungry from a right motive, and what you did in that manner, I reward it as if you had done it to myself.* In other terms, Ye heard my voice, and followed me, in hearing the whispers of my grace and following the light of your dispensation; and now I own you as my eternally-rewardable elect, my *sheep*, which have followed me without finally drawing back.

Again, when our Lord gives an account of the judicial reprobation of the finally-disobedient, whom he parabolically calls *goats*, he does not say, *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I then absolutely finished your eternal reprobation.* No: this is the counterpart of the gospel of the day. But he says, *Depart, &c. for ye gave me no meat* by feeding the hungry in your generation, &c. That is, ye did not believingly follow me in following your light and my precepts. Either you never began your course, or you drew back before you had finished it. Either you never voluntarily listed under my banner, or you deserted before you had fought the good fight out: Either you never believed in me the light of the world, and your light; or, instead of keeping the faith, you voluntarily, avoidably, unnecessarily, and resolutely made shipwreck of it, and of a good conscience.

And

And therefore your damnation is of yourselves. You have *personally* forfeited your conditional election to the rewards of persevering obedience, and *personally* made your conditional reprobation from those rewards sure by your *final* disobedience.

From these evangelical descriptions of the *sheep* and of the *goats*, mentioned in John x. and Matt. xxv. it appears to us indubitable: (1) That these *sheep* [i. e. obedient, persevering believers] *shall never perish*, altho' they MIGHT perish, if they *brought upon themselves swift destruction* by denying the Lord that bought them: (2) That they shall all be eternally saved, altho' they MIGHT have missed eternal salvation, if they had finally disregarded our Lord's declaration, *He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be [finally] saved.*—(3) That the Good Shepherd *peculiarly* laid down his life for the *eternal redemption* of obedient, persevering believers; and that *these* believers are sometimes *eminently* called God's *elect*, because they make their *conditional* calling to the rewards of perseverance, sure, by actually persevering in the obedience of faith.—(4) That the *peculiarity* of the *eternal redemption* of Christ's persevering followers, far from being connected with the *absolute* reprobation of the rest of mankind, stands in perfect agreement with the doctrine of a *general temporary redemption*; and of a *general, initial salvation*; and with the doctrine of a *gratuitous election* to the blessings of one or another dispensation of God's saving grace—and of a *conditional election* to the rewards of voluntary, unneccitated obedience.—(5) That our opponents give the truth as it is in Jesus two desperate stabs, when they secure the *peculiar eternal redemption* of finally-obedient believers, and comfort mourning backsliders in so unhappy a manner, as to overthrow the *general, temporary redemption* of all mankind; and to encourage or countenance the present disobedience of Laodicean believers.—(6) That the calvinian doctrines of grace, which

which do this double mischief under such fair pretences, are of all the tares which the enemy sows, those which come nearest to the wheat, and of consequence those by which he can best feed his immoral goats, deceive simple souls, set Christ's moral sheep at perpetual variance, turn the fruitful field of the church into a barren field of controversy, and make a deistical world think that faith is enthusiastical fancy; that orthodoxy is immoral nonsense; and that revelation is nothing but an apple of discord.—(7) And lastly, that the doctrines of grace which we maintain, do equal justice to all the divine attributes;—defend faith, without wounding obedience;—oppose pharisaism, without recommending antinomianism;—assert the truth of God's promises without representing his most awful threatenings as words without meaning;—reconcile the Scriptures, without wounding conscience and reason;—exalt the gracious wonders of the day of atonement, without setting aside the righteous terrors of The great day of retribution;—extol our heavenly Priest, without pouring contempt upon our divine Prophet;—and celebrate the honours of his cross, without turning his sceptre of righteousness into a solidian reed, his royal crown into a crown of thorns, and his *law of liberty* into a *rule of life*, by which his subjects can no more stand or fall in judgment, than an English-man can stand or fall by the *rules of civility* followed at the French court.

To the best of my knowledge, Reader, thou hast been led into the depth of *our* doctrines of grace. I have open'd to thee the mysteries of the evangelical system, which Mr. Hill attacks as the heresy of the *Arminians*. And now, let *Impartiality* hand thee up to the judgment-seat. Let *Reason* and *Revelation* hold out to thee their consentaneous light. Pray that the *Spirit of Truth* may help thine infirmities; Turn *Prejudice* out of the court: And let
Candour

Candour pronounce the sentence, and say, if it is our principles or those of Mr. Hill, which "inevitably" draw after them "shocking, not to say blasphemous" consequences.

I shall close this answer to the Creed which that gentleman has composed for *Arminians*, by an observation which is not entirely foreign to our controversy. In one of the three letters which introduce the fictitious Creed, Mr. Hill says, "Controversy I am persuaded has not done me any good;" and he exhorts me to examine closely whether I cannot make the same confession. I own that it would have done me harm, if I had blindly contended for my opinions. Nay, if I had shut my eyes against the light of truth;—if I had set the plainest scriptures aside, as if they were not worth my notice;—if I had overlooked the strongest arguments of my opponents;—if I had advanced groundless charges against them;—if I had refused to do justice to their good meaning or piety;—and, above all, if I had taken my leave of them by injuring their moral character, by publishing over and over again arguments, which they have properly answered, without taking the least notice of their answers;—if I had made a solemn promise not to read one of their books, tho' they should publish a thousand volumes;—if, continuing to write against them, I had fixed upon them (as "unavoidable" consequences) absurd tenets, which have no more necessary connexion with their principles, than the doctrine of general redemption has with calvinian reprobation: If I had done this, I say, controversy would have wounded my conscience or my reason; and, without adding anything to my light, it would have immoveably fixed me in my prejudices, and perhaps branded me before the world for an *Arminian bigot*. But, as matters are, I hope I may make the following acknowledgment without betraying the impertinence of proud boasting.

Altho'

Altho' I have often been sorry that controversy should take up so much of the time, which I might with much more satisfaction to myself have employ'd in devotional exercises:—and altho' I have lamented, and do still lament, my low attainments in the *meekness of wisdom*, which should constantly guide the pen of every controversial writer; yet, I rejoice that I have been enabled to persist in my resolution, either to wipe off, or to share the reproach of those, who have hazarded their reputation in defence of pure, and undefiled religion. And, if I am not mistaken, my repeated attempts have been attended with these happy effects: In vindicating the *moral* doctrines of grace, I hope, that, as a *man*, I have learned to think more closely, and to investigate truth more ardently, than I did before. There are *rational* powers in the dullest souls, which lie hid as sparks in a flint. Controversial opposition and exertion, like the stroke of the steel, have made me accidentally find out some of these latent sparks of reason, for which I should never have thanked my Maker, if I had never discovered them. I have frequently been thankful to find, that my horse could travel in bad roads better than I expected; nor do I think that it is a piece of pharisaism to say, I am thankful to find that my mind can travel with more ease than I thought she could, thro' theological roads rendered almost impassable by heaps of doctrinal rubbish, brought from all parts of Christendom, and by briars of contention which have kept growing for above a thousand years. —To return: As a *divine*, I see more clearly the gaps and stiles, at which mistaken good men have turned out of the narrow way of truth, to the right hand and to the left.—As a *protestant*, I hope, I have much more esteem for the scriptures in general, and in particular for those practical parts of it, which the Calvinists had insensibly taught me to overlook or despise. And this increasing esteem is, I trust, accompanied with a deeper conviction of the

E truth.

truth of christianity, and with a greater readiness to defend the gospel against infidels, pharisees, and antinomians.—As a *preacher*, I hope I can now do more justice to a text, by reconciling it with seemingly contrary scriptures.—As an *anti-calvinist*, I have learned to do the Calvinists justice, in granting that there is an *election of distinguishing grace* for God's peculiar people, and a *particular redemption* for all believers who are faithful unto death ;—And by that means, as a *controversialist*, I can more easily excuse pious Calvinists, who, thro' prejudice, mistake *that* scriptural election for *their* antinomian election ; and who consider *that* particular redemption as the only redemption mentioned in the scriptures. Nay, I can, without scruple allow Mr. Hill, that his doctrines of *finished salvation*, and *irresistible grace*, are TRUE with respect to all those who die in their infancy.—As one who is called an *Arminian*, I have found out some flaws in *Arminianism*, and evidenced my impartiality in pointing them out, as well as the flaws of Calvinism. [See the Preface.] As a *witness* for the truth of the gospel, I hope I have learned to bear reproach from all sorts of people with more undaunted courage. And I humbly trust, that were I called to seal with my blood the truth of the *doctrines of grace* and of *justice* against the *pharisees* and the *antinomians*, I could (divine grace supporting me to the last) do it more rationally, and of consequence with greater steadiness.—Again, as a *follower of Christ*, I hope I have learned to disregard my dearest friends for my heavenly Prophet : Or, to speak the language of our Lord, I hope, I have learned to *for sake father, mother, and brothers for Christ's sake and the gospel's*.—As a *disputant*, I have learned that solid arguments, and plain scriptures, make no more impression upon bigotry, than the charmer's voice does upon the deaf adder ; and by that means, I hope, I depend less upon the powers of reason, the letter of the scripture, and the caudour of professors, than I formerly did.—As a *believer*, I have been brought

brought to see and feel, that the power of the spirit of truth, which teaches men to be *of one heart, and of one mind*, and makes them *think and speak the same*, is at a very low ebb in the religious world; and that the prayer which I ought continually to offer is, O Lord, baptize christians with the spirit of truth, and the fire of love. Thy kingdom come! Bring thy church out of the wilderness of error and sin, into the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.—As a member of the church of England, I have learned to be pleased with our holy Mother, for giving us floods of pure morality to wash away the few ~~blemishes~~ Calvinian freckles that remain upon her face.—As a christian, I hope I have learned in some degree to exercise that charity, which teaches us boldly to oppose a dangerous error without ceasing to honour and love its abettors, so far as they resemble our Lord; and enables us to use an irony with St. Paul and Jesus Christ, not as an enemy uses a dagger, but as a surgeon uses a lancet or a caustic: And lastly, as a *Writer* I have learn'd to feel the truth of Solomon's observation, *Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh: Let us bear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man*, and the sum of the anti-solifidian truth, which I endeavour to vindicate.

I do not say that I have learned any of these lessons as I should have done; but I hope, I have learned so much of them as to say, that in these respects, my controversial toil has not been altogether in vain in the Lord. And now, Reader, let me intreat thee to pray, that if I am spared to vindicate more fully what appears to us the *scriptural doctrine of grace*, I may be *so* helped by the Father of lights and the God of love, as to speak the *pure* truth in *perfect* love, and never more drop a needlessly-severe expression

expression. Some such have escaped me before I was aware. In endeavouring to render my style nervous, I have sometimes inadvertently rendered it provoking. Instead of saying that the doctrines of grace (so called) represent God as "*absolutely graceless*" towards myriads of "*reprobated culprits*," I would now say, that, upon the principles of my opponents, God appears "*devoid of grace*" towards those whom he has absolutely "*reprobated*" from all eternity. The thought is the same, I grant; but the expressions are less grating and more decent. This propriety of language I labour after, as well as after more meekness of wisdom. The Lord help me and my antagonists to *keep our garments clean!* Controvertists ought to be clothed with an ardent flaming love for truth, and a candid humble regard for their neighbour. May no root of prejudice stain that flaming love! no bigotry spot that candid regard! no malice rend our seamless *garments!* And, if they are ever *roll'd in blood*, may it be only in the blood of our common enemies, destructive Error, and *the man of sin!*

The E N D

