

who had the love of Christ in his heart.— These were the days of *moderation*, in Britain, and other cities besides Cambridge had their share of the evil. A class of men arose in the reformed churches who expressed the greatest contempt for those who preached the doctrines of the reformation. At this time says one well capable of giving an opinion* “Along with the elegant literature of our sister country did the meagre arminianism of her church make invasion among our clergy; and we certainly receded for a time from the good old way of our forefathers. This was the middle age of the church, an age of cold and feeble rationality, when Evangelism was derided as fanatical, and its very phrasology was deemed an ignoble and vulgar thing in the upper classes of society. A morality without godliness—a certain prettiness of sentiment, served up in tasteful and well-turned periods of composition—the ethics of philosophy, or the academic chair, rather than the ethics of the gospel—the speculations of natural philosophy, and perhaps an ingenious and scholar-like exposition of the credentials, rather than a faithful exposition of the contents of the New Testament—these for a time dispossessed the topics of other days, and occupied that room in our pulpits, which had formerly been given to the demonstrations of sin and of the Saviour.” As might be expected, good men could not stand aloof when they witnessed the doings of such men as these—they could not remain silent when they found christian ministers preaching the doctrines of Socrates and Seneca rather than of Christ, and subverting as far as they could the testimony of the fathers of the reformation to the doctrines of the Scriptures—and accordingly we find Mr. Hill shortly after his enrolment at Cambridge, joining in that company who separated from the *ruling* party and took up a testimony for the truth of the gospel. This step brought down upon him much and serious opposition, and he was induced at the time to ask counsel of the celebrated George Whitfield. Mr. W’s answer was worthy of his great and excellent character. He urges him to steadfastness in the path on which he had entered, as at once that of duty and safety. “About thirty years ago” he says writing in December, 1766, “the master of Pembroke college where I was educated, took me to task for visiting the sick and going to the prisons. In my haste I said, “Sir, if it displeaseth you, I will go no more”—my heart smote me immediately—I repented—and went again—he heard of it—threatened—but

for fear he should be looked upon as a persecutor, let me alone—the hearts of all are in the Redeemer’s hands. I would not have you give way, no, not for a moment—the storm is too great to hold long—visiting the sick and imprisoned, and instructing the ignorant, are the very vitals of true and undefiled religion. If threatened, denied degree, or expelled for *this*, it will be the best degree you can take. A glorious preparation for, and a blessed presage of future usefulness.” This, with other advices which the letter contained, was sufficient to strengthen the purpose of Mr. Hill. He now began (January, 1767) to preach the gospel in divers parts of England, and although he was discountenanced in this work not only by his tutors at college, but by his parents, he was not discouraged. He believed he saw the Lord’s work prospering in his hands, in the awakening of many souls from the sleep of death, and he was comforted. After gaining the degree of B. A., at Cambridge, he was very desirous of obtaining orders in the church. In this however, he was sadly disappointed. No fewer than six applications from as many bishops were successively refused. He had pious friends however, in the church who consoled and encouraged him in his labors, and he continued to preach the gospel over the country to the edification of souls, making his father’s house an asylum during the months of winter. Mr. Hill was calvinistic in his religious principles, and when others who at this time were engaged in the same professed work with himself, spoke of the antinomian tendency of calvinism in no very measured terms. Referring to this, we find Mr. Hill thus expressing himself—“I bless God, it is our mercy (who are called calvinists) that we can appeal to heaven, as well as to the consciences of all our hearers, that in the integrity of our hearts, we are ever bearing the swiftest witness against all iniquity, without the least reserve; and that we are making it the subject of almost every discourse, that without holiness, personal and universal holiness, no man shall see the Lord. Yet with the greatest injustice, is Mr. Wesley ever branding us with the detested name of Antinomians.”

Mr. Hill was married on the 23rd of May, 1773, and through the influence of his brother-in-law, he was raised to the office of Deacon, in the church, in the hope of becoming a priest, but in consequence of his irregularities he was refused full orders by the Bishop of Carlisle. It does not appear that Mr. Hill felt much dis-

* Dr. Chalmers.