Your grill is not falling apart, it needs to be cleaned. What you are seeing is a carbon buildup from the food that has been cooked on the plates. These are cast iron plates and just like any cast iron it needs to be thoroughly scraped, scrubbed, and seasoned to keep it in good shape and working to the best of its ability.

To clean off this buildup first warm up the unit. Only warm, not hot. Unplug the grill and then use a scraper to attack the buildup on each plate. If the grill cools down too much, plug it back in and heat back up, but ALWAYS unplug before cleaning.

After the majority of the buildup is removed you can use a brass brush to get the rest. Pickle juice or straight vinegar works very well at this stage. After all the buildup is removed use mild detergent and hot water. You need to be careful not to get the water into the electronics while washing and rinsing and you will have to rinse thoroughly to remove all the soap.
How-to season the plates

After the cooking surface has been thoroughly cleaned, it should be seasoned to prevent food from sticking. Before using and after use, thoroughly scour and season the cooking surface by heating the surface in the following manner:

1. Adjust the On/Off switch to the “On” position and adjust the temperature control dial to 350°F.

2. Use a clean cloth, not a spatula, and spread a thin film of cooking oil or fat over the grill cooking surface. This film should remain on the hot grill for 30 minutes.

   The grill surface and grease will be HOT.

3. Remove the excess oil/fat and wipe clean.

   The grill surface and grease will be HOT.

4. Apply another film of cooking oil or fat over the hot cooking surface for another 30 minutes. Remove the excess oil/fat and wipe clean.

The grill surface is now ready for use.

EVEN WITH CAREFUL SEASONING, FOOD MAY STICK TO THE GRILL COOKING SURFACE UNTIL THE GRILL PLATE IS “BROKEN IN”.

CAUTION: Surfaces will be hot