Neglected Truths.

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D.

A minister labors under one disadvantage by the very nature of his duties. He cannot often hear the preaching of his brother ministers. What they preach he can only learn, in a general way, and gather from the notices of the religious and secular press, and from printed works. He may easily be misled, therefore, and what is written here is to be taken with this limitation. At the same time the writer owns that in the matter of neglecting great truths he blames himself in some degree. If any other minister should even be led to review his ministrations and emphasize afresh what has been assumed to be known, the object of the writer will be realized.

Foremost among those truths to which reference is thus made is the Sovereignity of God. Is there not a vague prevalent feeling that the Creator having brought men into being is bound to take care of them? Is there no need to preach—with the evangelical prophet—such doctrine as this? "Woe unto to him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" (Isaiah 45: 9.) Does the statement of the Apostle Paul not suit some of the thinkers of our time, who are perfectly at ease in their judgment as to what God ought to do, and who are in succession to some of Paul's contemporaries, "Thou wilt then say unto me: Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9: 19, 20.) That men are all under guilt; that only divine sovereign grace saves; that predestination and election have their place in the Bible, and in the divine counsels, and in Christian experience—these are points set out fully in the creeds and confessions of most of the Protestant churches. "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose o' God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor." Such is the opening sentence of the seventeenth of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and the rest of the article is equally scriptural. The Westminister Standards and the Heidelberg Catechism it is not necessary to quote. Do these truths which strike at the root of human pride, and shut up to absolute dependence on grace, receive as much place in our pulpits as they have in the Scriptures?

2. Does human dependence on grace receive the place it is entitled to as a part of Revelation? We have learned much about will-power and individual freedom, and the exploits of strong men; and are we not in need of being reminded that by grace are we saved through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God? Does not a certain proportion of church-going people regard "making up one's mind" and receiving Christ as much like deciding on a place for the summer, or an investment in stocks? "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he can not turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God." So says No. 10 of the Articles above referred to. Is there not need to recall this in our self-complacent nineteenth century?

Is the dependence of men on the Holy Spirit for all spiritual work realized? Brilliant preachers, eloquent sermons, admirable and endless organizations, fascinating music, these and other means are in danger of superseding, in some minds, that divine Spirit, of whom it is easy to say in words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," and in works to deny Him.

3. Are the penalties of sin in the life to come given the place in our preaching that they have in the Scriptures? The righteous shall go into life eternal. This truth is not overlooked. How is it with the other part of the same verse? Is there no need to teach the people on this subject? They hear and read of the half truths given out regarding God's goodness and love, and of the attacks made on the Scripture views of the divine justice and wrath against sin, but they do not read nor hear statements in elucidation of such points. What we like we readily accept; what seems to be against us we reject. We magnify the present gains of godliness, and the present penalties of wrong-doing are held up in all manner of meetings and associations. But do we enforce this truth? "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law, or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature." This is No. 18 of the Articles above-named, and which we quote here rather than the better-known Westminster because it is common for certain not widely-read critics to push the latter aside as narrow.

4. Is the church getting the place in our pulpit labors which should be given her in our time? There is a silly High-churchism from which it is easy to be swept into reaction, and it to disregard of the real place God has given the organization of which Christ is the Head. Is not the church, with "the Word, sacraments and prayer," God's appointed means for edifying believers, promoting holiness, and witnessing for Christ? Is not the church God's appointed agent of reform, and promoter of purity? Are not all her members to be "living epistles," workers, a "holy priesthood?" Is there not danger in our active, fussy times of ignoring all this, and treating the church as a very respectable old institution, no doubt, but the workers to be developed and found in the multitudinous "associations" which grow out of her, live on her in a degree, but in many cases devise their own methods and assert themselves? If one "joins the church," but never does anything till taken in among Miss Buzzy's Golden Girdles, where she works "awfully," is not the fair inference, that the claims of the church were not understood? that the Word, sacraments and prayer had to be supplemented to develop a confessor of Christ, that the Master did not get her service till the Golden Girdles came along? And when two things come into competition, formal or virtual, one divine, the other human, is there not danger of average humanity preferring the human? Here is an illustration of an incidental danger from a leading New England religious paper of last week, in the words of Mr. Beal, of the Boston Ministerial Bureau:

"The churches now demand young men. There are comparatively few chances to place ministers who are getting along in years, or even those who are in middle life. A few years ago it was different. Then age was no obstacle; it was even a recommendation. Now the cry is, "Send us a young man!" I attribute the fact to the rise of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, and to the increased attention now given to Sunday-school work. Churches are changing their methods. They are making special efforts to reach the young. There is a feeling that men in middle life can not adapt themselves to the new conditions; so they are relegated to the back-ground."

This may be true, or it may be a mistake; but it is certain that the church, as such, with her officers and divinely given means of grace, can never give way to an elective system without some consequent weakness. All her members are to be workers; all the trees in the Lord's garden are to be fruitful; all is to be for Christ's sake and the sake of the Golden Girdles, an element of weakness comes in, no matter how good the intentions. The "White Caps," no doubt, mean well; but whenever they stand on the same level with the constituted authorities there will be inconvenience. Is not the right understanding and use of the church, with the training of all her members as such for work, with the divinely appointed instrument, God's truth, the thing needed? Is it not the want of this which justifies these well-intended and often lovely parasites, all whose strength and beauty ought to be developed in the divinely organized body?—*New York Observer.*

The Lord's Furnace.

[From a sermon by Dr. Alexander Maclaren, recently published in the London *Freeman*, we take the following abstract. The text is from Isaiah 31: 9, "The Lord whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem."]

In the Church God is present as a great reservoir of fervid love.

Every language has taken fire as the symbol of love and emotion. We speak so naturally of warm love, fervent feeling, glowing earnestness, ardent enthusiasm, and the like, that we are scarcely aware of using figurative language. We do not usually ascribe emotion to God, but surely the deepest and most blessed of the senses in which it is true that fire is His emblem is that He is Love. His fire is in Zion. He dwells in His church, a storehouse of blazing love, heated seventy times seven hotter than any creatural love, and pouring out its ardors for the quickening and gladdening of all who walk in the light of that fire and thaw their coldness at its blaze.

Then, if so, how comes it that so many Christian churches are ice-houses instead of furnaces? How comes it that they who profess to live in the Zion where this fire flames are themselves so cold? If God's blazing furnace is in Jerusalem, it should send the thermometer up in all the houses in the city. But what a strange contradiction it is for men to be in God's church, the very focus and centre of his burning love, and themselves to be almost down below zero in their temperature! The Christian church ought to be all aflame in all its members with the fire of love kindled and alight from God himself. Every community of Christian people ought to radiate warmth and light which it has absorbed from its present God. Our love ought to answer His, and, being caught and kindled from that mighty fire, should throw back to its source some of the heat received, in fervors of reflected love, and should pour the rest beneficently on all around. Love to God and love to men are regarded in Christian morals as beams of the same fire, only travelling in different directions. But what a miserable contrast to such an ideal the reality in so many of our churches is! A fiery furnace with its doors hung with icicles is no greater a contradiction and anomaly than a Christian church or a single soul which professes to have been touched by the infinite loving-kindess of God, and yet lives as cold and unmoved as we do. The "Lord's fire is in Zion." Are there any tokens of that fire amongst us, in our hearts, and in our temperature as Christian churches?

There is no religion worth calling so which has not warmth in it. We hear a great deal from people against whom I do not wish to say a word about the danger of an "emotional Christianity." Agreed, if by that they mean a Christianity which has no foundation for its emotion in principle and intelligence; but *not* agreed, if they mean to recommend a Christianity which professes to accept truths that might kindle a soul beneath the ribs of death and make the dumb sing, and yet is never moved one hair's-breadth from its quiet phlegmaticism. There is no religion without emotion. Of course it must be intelligent emotion, built upon the acceptance of Divine truth, and regulated and guided by that, and so consolidated into principle, and it must be emotion which works for its living, and impels to Christlike conduct. These two provisos being attended to, then we can safely say that warmth is the test of life, and the readings of the thermometer which measure the fervor measure also the reality of our religion. A cold Christian is a contradiction in terms. If the adjective is certainly applicable, I am afraid the applicability of the noun is extremely doubtful. If there is no fire, what is there? Cold is death.

We want no flimsy, transitory, noisy, ignorant, hysterical agitation. Smoke is not fire. If the temperature were higher, and the fire more wisely fed, there would not be any. But we do not want a more obvious and powerful effect of our solemn, glorious and heart-melting beliefs on the affections and emotions of professing Christians, and that they may be more mightily moved by love to heroisms of service and enthusiasms of consecration which shall in some measure answer to the glowing heat of that fire of God which flames in Zion.

Then and Now.

I often wish that some of the cavaliers who are forever sneering at Christian missions, could see something of their results in the Fiji Islands. But first they would have to recall the Fiji of years ago, when every man's hand was against his neighbor, and the land had no rest from inter-tribal wars, in which the foe, without respect of age or sex, were looked upon only in the light of so much beef; the prisoners deliberately fattened for slaughter; limbs cut off from living men and women, and cooked and eaten in the presence of the victims, who had previously been compelled to dig the oven and cut the firewood for the purpose; and this not only in time of war, when such atrocity may be deemed less inexcusable, but in time of peace, to gratify the caprice or fancy of the moment. Then, further, think of the sick buried alive; the array of widows who were deliberately strangled on the death of any great man; the living victims who were buried beside every post of a chief's new house, and must needs stand clasping it while the earth was heaped over their devoted heads; or those who were bound hand and foot and laid on the ground to act as rollers when the chief launched a new canoe, and thus doomed to a death of excruciating agony—a tame when there was not the slightest security for life or property, and no man knew how quickly his hour of doom might come; when whole villages were depopulated simply to supply the neighborhood with fresh meat.

Just think of all this, and of the change that has been wrought, and then just imagine white men who can sneer at missionary work in the way they do. Now you may pass from isle to isle, certain everywhere to find the same cordial reception by kindly men and women. Every village on the eighty inhabited isles has built for itself a tidy little church, and a good house for its teacher or native minister, for whom the village also provides food and clothing. Can you realize that there are nine hundred Wesleyan churches in Fiji, at every one of which the frequent services are crowded by devout congregations; that the schools are well attended, and that the first sound that greets your ear at dawn, and the last at night, is that of hymn singing and most fervent worship rising from each dwelling at the hour of family prayer?—*Sunday Magazine.*

The Two Steps to Salvation.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

God brought Israel *out* of Egypt before He brought them *into* Canaan. So there are two vital steps to be taken by every one who sincerely desires to be saved: the one is a step *from*, and the other is a step *towards*. Peter, the earliest revival preacher in the Christian church, addressed an assembly of awakened sinners by condensing the first step into the single word "repent." Repentance means far more than shedding tears, or rising for prayer, or being alarmed at the thought of hell. It is taking a right view of sin, and then determining by God's help to quit it. The good old Westminster Catechism describes it as that act by which the sinner, with a true sense of his sin, and with grief and hatred of his sin, doth *turn from it* unto God. Whether it be one specific sin or evil habit, or whether it be a whole life-course of ungodliness, the thing to be done is the same. Sin must be loathed, and then left. Many a drunkard loathes himself and his bottle; but he does not leave off. The dishonest railway contractor, who is only ashamed because he is detected, but would repeat his peculations if he could get another chance, is not a true penitent. A great many people's lives are an alternation of sinning and sorrowing, sorrowing and then sinning again, but yet they become no better. My friend, when you have looked at your own heart as wicked, and your own conduct as utterly wrong; when you have prayed God to change your heart, and to help you change your conduct, you have taken one vital step towards your salvation.

Perhaps you may say "I thought that coming to Christ was the first step, and the only step that I need to take." Let me tell you that you are never likely to come to Christ as you ought, until you see yourself as you are, and feel your need of a Saviour. There is a very light way of inviting sinners to Christ, that makes very light work with their souls. They hear a certain kind of invitation that makes them believe that they can come to Jesus, and bring their favorite sins along with them. Christ himself did not ignore repentance; the very first recorded text that He ever preached from, was the short, sharp word "*Repent.*" Peter rang out the same text at Pentecost. Paul worked on the same lines, for he tells us that he preached "Repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." The step *from* must precede the step *to*. Even the prodigal did not set his face towards his father's house until he had come to himself, and began to loathe himself and his horrible sins.

2. As the first vital step is a penitential step *from* sin, so the second vital step is a step *towards* the crucified Saviour. When an anxious enquirer asked Paul what he must do to be saved, the Apostle gave back the swift reply, "Trust on the Lord Jesus Christ." That was not an emotion or an opinion, but an act. I have but little patience with a class of crude but well meaning Christians, who talk to inquiring souls as if faith was a sort of passive resting in the arms of Jesus, as a baby drops to sleep in the arms of its mother. There are times in life when a soul may do this, but not in the decisive step of conversion. If I fall off the ferry boat, and a rope is tossed over to me, my act of faith in that rope must be a pretty sturdy grip of the rope, and a fast holding to it. If it holds me, I must hold on to it. The trust on Christ that saves you, must be an energetic grasping of Him and clinging to Him, and uniting your very soul to His loving and all powerful self. Faith is your *doing*. Divine support and upholding grace is Christ's *doing*. In the process of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, there is a certain sense in which the soul is passive, just as Bartimeus was passive while Christ was opening his blind eyes for him. Yet Bartimeus was thoroughly active in praying to Christ, trusting Christ, and coming to Christ for healing. "Come unto Me," is Christ's invitation to you; but coming implies a step towards Him, and taking steps is an active process, not a passive recipiency.

3. From the moment that you surrender yourself to Jesus, you must let Him have His way with you. Saul of Tarsus had been used to having his own way, and a wretched way it was; as soon as Christ had conquered him, he cried out, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Paul did not bargain to be made "happy," or expect any raptures; neither must you. The great Apostle's joy was to do his Master's will; his crown was the work he nobly wrought, and the souls he won. Search through all the old hero's biography, and you will seldom find him talking about his own enjoyments, except when he tells us that he "rejoiced in his tribulations," and rejoiced in his Lord always.

Now, then, my friend, I have tried to set before you the two essential steps to your own salvation. They may be condensed into the single sentence: Quit your sins and follow your Saviour. These mean repentance towards the God you have displeased, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ who died for you. Sin would hold you back; cut it off. Christ would draw you to Him; yield and obey. When you give up a single sin to please Him, and do a single duty to honor Him, the work of conversion has begun. Begin to obey Christ. If when your heart gives way, a flood of joy comes with it, be thankful. If you experience no ecstacies, don't be disturbed; hold out steadfastly, bravely, and unselfishly to the end, and you will get raptures in the first hour of heaven, to requite you for all the sharp trials and tough conflicts on the road. If two decisive steps make you a Christian, there will be one more step by-and-by, that will usher you into the resplendent throng of the crowned conquerors.—*Evangelist.*

Sharpening His Knife.

My neighbor, Mr. Slowcum, came over last Sunday afternoon to have a talk with me. In his dull, drawling way he said: "Now, Senex, don't you think that we ought to get a smarter preacher? The sermon this morning was so dull that I couldn't keep awake, all I could do, and my wife had to pinch me or I would have snored out loud."

"Are you sure that the fault was in the preacher, and not in the hearer? Didn't you work very late this morning? Didn't you have to hurry so about your chores that you had no time to read your Bible or to pray before you went to church? Were not both your head and your heart too full of your worldly cares and business when you entered the house of God? If the preacher had told about some better or easier way of farming, or about the prospect for a rise in the price of wheat would he not have interested you? Let me tell you a story that I read in a newspaper the other day.

"A man was dining at a first-class hotel. He ordered a beefsteak, tender and rare. It was brought. He began to carve it, but in a moment stopped, called the waiter, and said: "This steak won't do. It is tough. Bring me a better one.' The obsequious gentleman of color bowed, took the dish away, returned in a few minutes with another. This was tried with the same result. It too, was sent away. The guest seemed hard to please. A third steak was brought, tried and rejected. The other guests became interested, and watched the result with side glances. The third time the waiter took away not only the steak, but the knife and fork of the guest. He was absent longer than before. He came back with a smile that was almost broad enough for a grin, and said: 'Guess I got one tender enough this time.' The guest took up his knife, cut the steak, and replied: 'Yes this is first rate.' Another guest, anxious to understand the mystery of beefsteaks, called the waiter to him and said in an undertone: 'Pompey, how did you get a beefsteak at last tender enough for that man?' Steak the same all the time, sir. But I sharpened his knife, sir.'

"Now, that man did not even taste his steak before he rejected it. It did not cut easily, and hence he hastily concluded that it was tough. The fault was not in the steak, but in the knife. So with many people when they go to church. Their ears are dull. Their minds are preoccupied. Because the preacher don't startle them with something as brilliant as a flash of lightning, they don't get interested. They think of something else. They are weary from overwork. They begin to doze. Now, the voice of the preacher whose ideas they have not grasped, or tried to, becomes a sort of lullaby, and because they find it hard to keep awake, they call the sermon dull."

Neighbor Slowcum looked a little cross at first. But he was a good natured fellow, and after a while he brightened up and said: "Senex, I believe that you are more than half right. The fact is that I work too late Saturdays, and hurry too much Sunday mornings. I am all tuckered out and worried, and not fit to listen to a sermon. I must try to sharpen myself up. I remember when I was a boy at home, my good old father would have us all quit work an hour or two before sundown, on Saturdays. Then we would do up beforehand as many of the Sunday chores as we could. Then we would all take a bath, and go to bed early. Sunday morning we would get up early, feed our stock, get our breakfast, have family worship, and sit down and study our Sunday-school lessons until church time. After church we had a cold dinner, and while eating it we all had to tell what we could remember of the sermon. We didn't talk about the people we saw at church, and how they looked, and who of them had new bonnets. But we talked about what the minister said and father made us feel sometimes as if it was God who said it, rather than the minister. People now-a-days wouldn't endure such sermons as we had then. They were never less than an hour long; and they wore not full of stories, but on quotations from the Scriptures, and of solid arguments based upon them. The preachers discussed the doctrines, such as "Depravity," "God's Sovereignity," "Election," and "The Perseverance of the Saints;" and even the children listened to them, and remembered what they said. They were trained to do it by the example of their parents, and by being catechised at home.

I am afraid that there are a good many Slowcums in our churches every Sunday. And I would be willing to take a contract to make the preaching twice as interesting as it now is, if I could make the hearers prepare for the Sabbath and the sanctuary as they did in olden times.—"*Senex*" *in Journal.*

Mr. Brown's Subscription.

"Tell ye, I can't give another cent, Deacon Wilds!"

"Wish you could see your way clear to do so. I think we could unite on on this man if each could only pay a little more."

"Can't, I tell you. A little more! Why, I can't give *so much* as I gave last year."

"Do you like Mr. Akers?"

"Yes. Like him first-rate. Good gospel sermons. Gives it to the Pharisees and hypocrites good. I hope the people will unite on him."

"But, Brother Brown, its no use to unite on the minister unless we unite our purses, too. A few of us cannot pay for the preaching of the many, especially when the many are better off than the few. We must pay the laborer."

"Can't help it. It's hard times. Tater bugs are eatin' all my patch. Hay crop looked as though 'twould amount to somethin', but we ha'n't had a bit of weather to git it in. Mine's spilin'. Look down in that medder. Ten tons there nigh 'bout rotten. Beats all what nasty weather we do have."

"Excuse my plainness, Brother Brown, but who ordered the weather? Seems to me this is a good time to do what you were asking us to do last night."

"What's that?" said Mr. Brown, whose words in prayer-meeting did not very often mingle with his week-day thoughts.

"I think I heard you say, last night, you wished to glorify God in all things. Seems to me, brother, this is a good time to glorify Him."

"What on airth air you drivin' at? I don't see."

"Why, anybody *not* a Christian can glorify God when the potatoes are flourishing and the skies are clear, and the hay crop all right; when the purse and barns are full, and everything goes to his liking. Seems to me it is a good time for God's children to trust Him when things look dark. A good time to say to the world, we have a wise and good Father, who knows what He is about, and what we need. I am not going to pray 'Thy will be done' and then fret because God does it. Isn't this a good time to trust?"

"'Tain't in natur'."

"So it isn't, brother; but isn't it in grace? You like the minister, then, and think that we had better keep him?"

"Sartin."

"But who is to pay him? Excuse my plainness, but God has intrusted to you about as much of *His money* and land as to any of the church. If all gave less instead of more, we should starve the minter, supposing he was foolish enough to come."

"Have you seen Esquire D——, and Colonel S——? How much'll they give?"

"Oh, they say it is hard times, too. Colonel S—— says he's lost a lot on the Mt. Clank railroad. Esquire D—— is hard pushed on account of building his new house."

"Humph! They've both on 'em got money enough; got a pile on't."

"Perhaps so; but I tell you what, brother—let's, you and I, do just what we think the Lord would have us, no matter what the squire and colonel give. If they give less perhaps we ought to give more. Everybody has some excuse for not giving. Suppose we find excuses for giving: We need a minister. He must be supported. He ought to be well supported. Let us show the world that we can give, and trust in God to lend us the means, for it is all His. Come, brother, let's put our names down. Supposing we give more than we did last year, in spite of potato bugs and bad weather, and our own stingy hearts. Let us glorify God by giving and trusting in Him."

"Strange I never saw that way afore. Guess you've got the right on't, deacon. Put me down for ten dollars more'n last year."—*Sarah B. May, in Congregationalist.*

FREDERICK T. ROBERTS, M. D., Professor of Clinical Medicine at University College Hospital, London, England, says: "Bright's Disease has no symptoms of its own and may long exist without the knowledge of the patient or practitioner, and no pain will be felt in the kidneys or their vicinity." All the diseases to which the kidneys are subject and to which they give rise, can be prevented if treated in time." Warner's Safe Cure is the only recognized specific. R. A. Gunn, M. D., Dean, and Professor of Surgery of the United States Medical College; Editor of the "Medical Tribune;" Author of Gunn's New and Improved Hand-book of Hygenie and Domestic Medicine," says: "I am willing to acknowledge and commend this frankly the value of Warner's Safe Cure."

There are, indeed, types of gladness that cannot be reproduced after a first heavy sorrow. We can never again look upon the world with the same eyes. They are void places in our earthly loves that must remain void while we stay here. But there is a profounder love for those who stay with us, a gentleness, tenderness, sweetness of affection, unknown before. Our love gains by loss, grows by amputation. Above all, there is a more vivid sense of heavenly realities, a consciousness of unbroken union with those that seem divided from us, an intimacy with higher fellowships opened for us by those who have gone from us, a more clinging sense of dependence on the Infinite Love, and hence a joy purer and loftier, though its pristine buoyancy be forever lost. Especially as life wanes and the shadows lengthen, may the treasures laid up in heaven give us a familiar, home-like feeling as to the mansion where they shall be ours again, and the very hopes whose failure cast a cloud over earlier years may thus shed over our declining days a genial light that shall grow brighter and brighter till it is merged in the pure radiance of heaven.—*Dr. A. P. Peabody.*

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