

Sunday Reading.

The Safety of God's Saints.

BY THE REV. J. CLARK, NIOTAUX.

Ah, why should mortals wrong Thee, Lord,
And doubt Thy word and Thee,
As though a great God like Thyself
Could false or changeable be?
Are not Thy counsels fixed and sure
To all eternity?

In Thee alone our spirits rest:
If thou couldst fail no soul were blest.

Can those whom Thine own heart has
loved,
Whom Thine own hand has led,
Whom Thou hast clothed with righteous-

ness,
And at Thy table fed,
With matchless loving-kindness crowned,
With mercy comforted,
Be left, and loathed, and spurned by Thee,
To sink in helpless misery?

Can souls that Thou hast fired with love,
In measure like Thine own,
And made to soar in heavenly light,
Up towards Thy dazzling throne,
Sink down to realms of night and death,
Unloved, unblest, unknown,

Be formed by Thee for endless bliss,
And yet the gates of glory miss?

Can those for whom Thy well-loved Son
Endured so much below,
Wept, hungered, thirsted, agonized,
Felt deepest loss and woe,
That they might be brought back to Thee,
And Thy great goodness know,
Can they be wrenched from Thine em-

brace,
No more to feel Thy love or grace?

Can handiwork, so grand, so fair,
By Thy blest Spirit wrought,
In souls redeemed, renewed, restored,
And near to glory brought,
Be dimmed by time, be marred by sin,
By Satan brought to nought?

Heaven's crowning work be all in vain?
In vain the Saviour's toil and pain?

Ah, why do mortals wrong Thee, Lord?
Thy purposes must stand;
All forces, agencies, and powers,
Fulfill Thy blest command;
None, none can harm Thy ransomed
ones.

Or pluck them from Thy hand:
All are safe! Each radiant gem
Must grace Immanuel's diadem.

Away our doubts! Away our fears!
The Lord is on our side!
Lift up the grateful voice of praise;
Let God be magnified!

Within the shadow of His hand
He makes our souls abide;
Rejoice ye saints with all your powers:
Eternal life is ours! is ours!

—Spurgeon's *Sword and Trowel*.

Nehushtan.

BY REV. T. R. STEVENSON.

'And brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan' (2 Kings xviii. 4). God brings good out of evil. No flower is more fragrant and lovely than the rose, yet it often grows on the thorny briar. It is not otherwise with our human experience; the cross secures the crown, pain and sorrow develop purity and sympathy. But, alas, man brings evil out of good. There is nothing incapable of perversion. The holiest possessions may be abused; things venerable and profitable have again and again ministered to unrighteousness. Thus, the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness had been preserved by the Israelites. That was well. The relic reminded them of important truths. It taught the peril of ingratitude, the power of intercession, and the mercy of God. In the course of time however, superstitious honours were paid to it; hence Hezekiah destroyed it.

Look at things in their right light.—To the Jews the brazen serpent was as a deity, they treated it like a god, incense was burned before it. Not so the King. To him it was only a piece of brass; he beheld in it nothing but a quantity of old metal. And this is very characteristic of man's everyday history. The eye takes with it what it sees; the spectacle is in the spectator. Did not Paul say, 'To the pure all things are pure'? Three persons stand watching the clouds that gather around the setting sun. How differently do they regard them! One is a scientist, and he finds in them illustrations of physical laws and forces. A second is a husbandman, and he discovers in them the promise

of a good or a bad harvest—garrets well filled or granaries half empty. A third is an artist, and he detects in them exquisite tints and forms of a heavenly beauty. To quote from Goethe:—'The musician hears every instrument in the orchestra, and every tone in each whilst the unlearned ear perceives only the mass of sound. So, also, an ignorant man will see nothing but the agreeable surface of a green or flowery meadow, where the observant botanist will be struck with the vast variety of grasses and other plants.'

To the conscientious and devout the fact in question is most cheering. When the great bard said that there was 'good in everything,' he did not indulge in poetic hyperbole; it is solid and obvious truth. If we do not derive benefit from both dark and bright, bitter and sweet, the fault is our own. Only let us be right within, and then the outward vicissitudes of life will evolve and nourish those qualities of character which constitute the real dignity of humanity.

Call things by their right names.—He called it Nehushtan. This was admirable. What does Nehushtan mean? Brass. It was brass, and, therefore, he spoke of it as such. Very likely other and far different terms were used by the idolatrous people. No doubt some phrase of honour was applied to it. Hezekiah, on the contrary, said right out that it was only Nehushtan—nothing but brass.

Would that this brave man's example were more closely and frequently copied! The giving of a wrong name to a person or a thing may do great harm. It is perfectly true that 'a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,' but it is morally certain that many persons would not for a moment think it smelled as sweet. The title of a well-known sermon by Dr. South is in itself a disgrace.—'The fatal imposture and force of words.' Yes; certain words are deceivers, and even destroyers. 'Woe unto them that call good evil, and evil good; that put light for darkness, and darkness for light.'

Buddhism means enlightenment, illumination. A greater misnomer cannot be imagined. It is a system of atheism, materialism, and pessimism. Is this enlightenment? If so, there can be no such thing as darkness. The Romish Church calls itself Catholic. Now, the two main meanings of Catholic are 'universal' and 'liberal.' In neither of these senses is the Church of Rome Catholic. It is not universal. Though it has of late increased in England, it has decreased elsewhere. Italy and France are less papal than they were twenty years ago. Nor is the church of Rome liberal.

It perpetuates and employs the *Index Expurgatorius*, it prohibits its members belonging to a Good Templar or Freemasons' lodge; it publicly and annually invokes curses the most awful on all outside its pale. Catholic, indeed!

The words of our mouths, as well as the meditations of our hearts, are to be acceptable in God's sight. Oh, let us be brave and veracious in our language! If a man is accustomed to get drunk, don't talk about his getting 'somewhat inebriated.' When an empty-headed young fellow is living an irregular and prodigal life, never gloss it over by allusions to 'sowing wild oats.' Should a merchant or a tradesman prove grossly dishonest, there can be no wrong in boldly stigmatising him as a swindler. Our Lord called cunning, crafty Herod, 'that fox.' He declared prayerful and sincere Nathaniel to be 'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' James and John, impetuous and eloquent, were surnamed Boanerges; for thunder is both powerful and sublime. Simon, long ere his course was run, proved himself to be a Peter—firm and strong.

Give things their right treatment.—Hezekiah 'brake in pieces' the brazen serpent. No good could come of its retention; it was an incentive to evil. Wisely, therefore, he demolished it. Laying hold of the foolish fetish, he carried it forth, dashed it to the ground and put an end to the impious rites associated therewith. He reminds us of John Knox, who justified the destruction of monasteries by saying, 'While the rookeries stand, the rooks will remain.'

Idolatry is not confined to foreign lands. It exists in London and Liverpool, as well as in Calcutta and Colombo. When we put anyone or anything in the place of God, we are essentially heathen. None, surely, can forget the strong, apostolic expression, 'Covetousness, which is idolatry.' Are we guilty of it? Do we think too much of money? Is there a danger of our sacrificing principle to profit? Have we sometimes bartered goodness for gold? If so, we are guilty as Israel was when it burned incense to the brazen serpent. Let us pray God to shed abroad His love in our hearts, that it may expel base and unworthy affections. 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Act of Baptism.

IS BAPTISM A POURING OUT?

On the other occasion alluded to in my last letter, the speaker attempted to show that God had himself defined the meaning of 'baptism' by describing the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a 'pouring out,' or a 'sprinkling,' an act whose fitting and only symbol was baptism. Baptism, therefore, it was triumphantly asserted, can only be properly performed by sprinkling or pouring; otherwise we had no type of the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul. This was offered as a piece of evidence at once convincing and conclusive. But if it were true, the fitness of the symbol may well be questioned. Is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit on the soul fitly represented by the sprinkling of water on a baby's face? Is the effusion of the Spirit of God properly figured by the falling of a few drops of material water?

Come out, my friends, into the sunlight. Look up into the sun, and let his rays pierce the veil that now hides the truth from your view. Does he not 'pour out' his glowing light perpetually? Is he not 'shedding forth,' 'sprinkling,' and 'shooting out' his rays in every direction; and yet is not every object beneath him completely immersed in his light, entirely enveloped by his power? So is the Holy Spirit poured out and shed forth from above, while He envelopes and pervades those who are within His gracious influence. In the light of truth, how absurdly inadequate does the sprinkling of a babe appear as a symbol of the effusion of the Spirit of God.

I pause here to note that our Lord himself declared the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' to be that special and wonderful manifestation of His presence and power which occurred at Pentecost, and which was described as 'the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.' They were all surrounded and enveloped by an overwhelming and pervading power. Certainly nothing less than a complete immersion could fitly typify this extraordinary occurrence. Those present were all converted disciples, and therefore this 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' was not, in the authority of our Lord himself, His ordinary regenerating influence, but a wholly unusual event, attended with the bestowment of miraculous powers on those who were already converted. I know of no repetition of that manifestation at the present day, though we frequently hear prayer offered for a 'fresh baptism of the spirit,' but if any one thinks that any similar 'baptism' has occurred in modern times let him produce the proofs like those which appeared on the day of Pentecost.

But, to return from this discussion, let us admit, for the sake of argument, that sprinkling is a fit symbol of the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit; still the question arises, Why administer it to an unconscious babe? Why apply the sign before the occurrence of the action signified? Is that not a piece of bald ritualism? What mean ye by this service?

BAPTISM AND THE NEW BIRTH?

The true meaning of baptism as a symbol of regeneration has been fixed by our Lord himself. It is a birth of water, as conversion is a birth of Spirit; and in immersion only is the requisite conditions fulfilled. Immersion alone affords an emblem of the death unto sin, and the new birth unto righteousness, through which the kingdom of God is entered; and in emerging from the water of baptism the new convert, if he be a true disciple, is born into, and enters upon a new life, a life of avowed consecration to the service of the Master, whom he has just 'put on.' In what way does sprinkling or pouring a few drops of water on the face figure a birth?

PETER.

For the Christian Messenger.

Reflections.

MR. EDITOR,—

Dear Sir,—What a work has been done within the pale of the Central Association! And shall there be this year such an increased amount paid from grateful souls, brimming over with deep gratitude to the great and loving Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son of Righteousness? Some one asks, amount paid? Amount of what? Amount of everything. 'Your bodies offered a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is

your reasonable service.' Your money, of which you are God's stewards shall be now devoted to a noble service. What cries are heard from far distant lands, 'Come over and help us.' Cannot you go? Well, there are men willing to go, but there is no money to send them. Home Missions are crying out for help. Poor, destitute fields where a great and, with God's blessing, a rich work can be done for Him. No funds to supply the need. The great North-West needs many men, but how can men go without being paid? I felt ashamed when looking at a map of our great West to see dots all over it, indicating mission stations of other bodies, and so few Baptist Mission stations. Would it be too great a burden to pay into the Convention Fund one dollar a year, or even two dollars a year, to be divided among the various objects needing help? What about the great grace and mercy of God to your soul? 'How much owest thou thy Lord?' And are you going to be an unjust steward? Does not the Lord pay you your money back with interest? Are you tired of hearing the continued cry for money? Does not God open your soul to see the need, and lovingly respond to His cry to you? Are you not proud that you can be the means of doing some service for your Master?

Then there is the College. Do we not now need as we never did before, men endowed with grace, and the glory of God in their eyes, and a thorough education of the best sort? There are a few men without education who are doing a good work; but does this say that all can do without it? It may be that even these few could do better work for God with education. No man can contend with the world for the truth unless he be deeply read in God's word. Education instead of hindering a man who is inspired with a love for souls, gives him a deeper insight into God's truth, makes him more capable of reaching all classes of persons, and of preaching such truth as not only arouses the dead, but teaches the living. There is often a something called preaching, but it is only a frothy multiplication of words, not an idea, nothing to inspire a soul to a higher, nobler life. The teacher to be a success must be in knowledge far above the taught. We want, or ought to have, the very best men, both in regard to piety, talent and education as teachers and professors at the Academy and College, and money must be had to do this and keep it going.

Then again there is something to be done in helping along the work of the Lord. Teaching in the Sabbath School, or if not qualified for teacher, being a good attentive scholar, assisting your teacher to make the class work redound to the salvation of some soul and the glory of God. Assisting your pastor in every way to carry on and make his ministry a glorious success in bringing souls to Christ. O the work which ought to be done by all the converted. No wonder we hear of so many backsliders. If their backs had been burdened with the work of the Lord they would not have found time to slide back into the world, neither would they have found the heart to have done so. Some are holding back their work until the Lord blesses them with the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. And wait they may, if all the church were of their mind, till Gabriel sounded the last trumpet. What we want is steady onward work, praying, hoping, working, and most of all living like Christ, then shall souls be crying, 'What shall we do to be saved?' What work shall these new converts do for Christ?

Yours truly,

S. J. ARCHIBALD.

New Ross, May 2nd, 1884.

From Burma.

MISSIONARIES ON FURLOUGH.

RANGOON, March 29th, 1884.

Seldom they get the opportunity to visit their brethren at other stations, or more properly, take the opportunity, for they are not required to ask leave of absence from any one, and travelling is almost as easy and comfortable as in America. The great amount of work always on hand, the anxiety lest something might go astray during their absence, however, fasten them to their respective stations year after year, till shattered health sometimes necessitates a long and expensive voyage. A short vacation once in two years at most, and a season of such delightful intercourse as is to be found among their fellow-laborers might be the means of keeping them in working order for a much longer period. The Tavoy missionaries concluded to try what such a change would do for them after more than seven years of constant work at their stations, and last Sabbath embarked in

the mail steamer for Rangoon. The voyage was a real delight. The steamer comfortable and well found in every respect; the sea as calm and peaceful as could be desired. Rangoon River was entered early Tuesday morning, and at noon we were up to the city. The last mile or so being tedious, as on account of the great number of vessels in port steamers are required to turn round and come up backwards. If a collision is feared they can drop anchor or move forwards on short notice. We found a hearty welcome at the pleasant home of Dr. Smith, with whom his father-in-law, Dr. Stevens also resides, and where order, harmony, and Christian cheerfulness so reigns that to enjoy their hospitality is a benediction. If any one supposes the children of missionaries cannot be trained to be gentle, polite, amiable in every word and movement, they should visit this model household. Bessie, ten years old, and Emma, five, are a great joy to their parents and grand parents. Mary, five years ago, at the age of eight, was called to the better land. Although the delight of the household, and of all who knew her, so firm was her faith, and strong her assurance that she was going to be with Jesus, that it seemed wrong to wish to detain her longer on earth. At that time the readers of the Messenger were favored with some account of the beautiful vision God vouchsafed to this young disciple.

The evening of our arrival was the time for the regular fortnightly prayer-meeting of the missionaries, which was held at the house of Mr. Brayton. Twenty missionaries were present. Rev. W. Bushell led the meeting, reading the fiftyfifth of Isaiah, and making a few appropriate remarks from the eleventh verse. Prayer was offered for the children of Mrs. Haswell, who the Sabbath previous had been called on to part with their affectionate mother and devoted missionary. She died at Maulmain, having completed forty-eight years of missionary service. Our brethren and sisters at Bhamo, who have been exposed to great peril on account of the revolt of the Ka Kyens and Shans against the King of Burma, were also made subjects of prayer. We have since heard that the revolt has been suppressed by the King's troops. In that meeting were Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, who came to Burma fifty-four years ago, and are still finding much they can do to help on the good work. On the 20th inst. occurred the birthday of Mr. Bennett, and the missionaries and other friends, including our good Chief Commissioner, Mr. Bernard, and his wife, celebrated the occasion by a surprise party at the residence of this honored couple. After some time had been spent in conversation, the more formal part of the meeting took place, and was begun by singing—

"How firm a foundation," &c.

After which Rev. Dr. Stevens addressed these veteran missionaries, congratulating them on the great work God had permitted them to perform. He referred to the printing of the entire Bible in the Burmese, Sgau, Karen, and Pwo Karen languages, as well as portions of the Scriptures in Shan and other dialects, which had been done by Mr. Bennet, besides thousands of tracts which have been scattered broadcast over the land, conveying light and healing to those sitting in darkness. Mr. Bennet found it difficult to respond, so full was his heart of gratitude to God for the mercies of these four score years, and thankfulness to his brethren for their words of cheer and appreciation. Rev. Mr. Brayton was called upon to offer prayer, after which the friends sang—

"Abide with me,"

and closed by singing the doxology.

At the prayer meeting to which I have referred were also Mr. and Mrs. Brayton, and Dr. and Mrs. Stevens, who came out in the same ship forty years ago, and are still doing good service. Mr. Brayton rejoices that he has been enabled to translate and carry through the press the entire Bible in Pwo Karen. Mrs. B. is feeble but is able to ride out every morning. She has tracts and portions of the Scriptures in the various languages of the East, and as she goes along the street distributes these to any who desire to have them, giving a word of exhortation to those she can address, or a pleasant smile to those whose language she does not understand. A brief call on one or more of her co-laborers completes her morning ride. Dr. Stevens appears more like a man of forty than seventy, and makes some of us younger missionaries feel a little ashamed. He is at work early and late, all day and every day, preaching, translating, proof-reading, directing native laborers, all his work so systematically arranged that it goes like clockwork.

On Wednesday morning we attended

a wedding in the chapel of the Theological Seminary. The happy couple were Telugu Christians, Jeremiah and Elizabeth. Dr. Stevens performed the ceremony. The bridegroom had formerly been a servant to Dr. S., and some of us thought the good doctor forgot for a moment the new relation existing for the time being, for he began a brief address by, 'Now, Jerry.' The service completed, we were favored with several songs in Telugu, and at the same time plentifully sprinkled with Florida water and a rose handed to each one present. Cake and lime juice were passed round and the company dispersed.

On Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning the newly appointed Trustees of the Seminary met to organize and consult together on the concerns of this institution. The Board consists of Drs. Cross and Vinton, Bros. W. Bushell, W. F. Thomas, and your correspondent. These Trustees are favored mortals. To these is entrusted the management of the school and the using of whatever money is necessary, and all funds are provided by the Missionary Union.

Monday, March 31st.—To-night we go on board the steamer, and early tomorrow morning begin our return journey. Our furlough has been short but pleasant, and we feel more and more attached to our dear fellow-laborers. But our hearts turn with longing to our own field and to those who look to us for counsel and encouragement. How much may take place before we again grasp the hands of these dear brethren and sisters. May be some or many of these aged ones, shall have finished their course before we can have another such furlough. Perhaps it may be our turn. We have no time to ponder over these matters, but earnestly give ourselves to the work we have undertaken, knowing that whether we live or die we are the Lord's.

H. MORROW.

For the Christian Messenger.

God and Natural Laws.

I will endeavour to explain as clearly as I can what Joseph Cook means when he says that *natural laws are He*. Mr. Cook has again and again repeated in this course of lectures that *natural laws are simply the methods of the working of God*. In themselves they are nothing, no power, no substance, no life, no real being.

Now let us reason together. If natural laws are the methods of the action of God, the Divine energy must be present in natural laws. But where the Divine energy and life are, there is God. For God according to the Scriptures is a universal Spirit. Is it not then quite proper to make the statement that *natural laws are He*? Do we not in this way destroy the assertion of the materialist that in natural laws themselves is the power to carry on the affairs of the universe?

The Divine immanency in this vast universe of God is a first principle of all theology and philosophy and true science. We become confused and lose our way when we think of natural laws as a something, an entity in themselves. On the contrary, according to Mr. Cook, they are but the regular and eternal methods of the Divine, immanent energy. The old, mechanical conception of the universe is quite unscriptural and unscientific.

It has been admitted that natural laws ensnath us, fill everything above us, below us and within us. Now what follows? That the Divine energy or life ensnathes us. Therefore, if a very real and true sense it is God and Spirit who ensnathes us. St. Paul says that *In Him we live and move and have our being*. This is rendered possible for the very reason that we live and move and have our being in natural laws. Therefore natural laws are essentially He. It is admitted and believed that natural laws are as infinite as infinity and as eternal as eternity and that in them we live and move. The statement of St. Paul differs only in form when he says that *In God we live and move*.

The great Apostle to the Gentiles furnishes us with another magnificent statement of this vast and arcane doctrine: *One God and Father of all, over all and in all and through all*. And this universal life is ever working in the universe, manifesting itself in higher and higher facts, laws, organisms, worlds. Herein is the true philosophy of evolution. The hitherto highest manifestation of God in the being of humanity is in the principle of spiritual life which is so abundantly brought to light in the blessed Gospel of the Christ. This spiritual life may be denominated the eternal life.

Just why the Perfect Life of God has chosen to be manifested through a creature in which there appears to be much of evil and error and imperfection is the problem of all the problems. One