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Poetry.

The Speechless Prayer.

"And looking up to heaven, He sighed."
Mark vii. 33.

Our Saviour sighed, but breathed His grief
Into His Father's ear;
His speechless prayer brought down relief,
Revealed that God was near.
A sigh! but O its power to raise!
A silent tongue broke forth in praise.

Of sighs God's bosom is the home,
Forlorn and stricken heart,
To this He ever bids thee come
To heal life's bitter smart.
And he can make a sigh a prayer,
If winged by faith towards His own ear.

How many sighs poured on the air,
From hearts which scorch and burn,
If winged like birds to God in prayer,
Would soon with joy return—
Fragrant their wings with Heaven's own
love.
To raise some soul all grief above.

O, were our sighs thus winged to God,
What wonders we should see;
And find e'en 'neath His chastening rod
Life's sweetest minstrelsy.
Our passing breath oft spent in vain,
Thus wisely used, our highest gain.

Like mists which float before the storm,
Our sighs are thin and poor,
But as they rise light doth transform,
And as they upwards soar,
Transfigured by the source of day,
Reveal a glory far away.

Our sighs like vapour oft ascend,
And vanish from our view,
But, when they reach our Saviour friend,
Descend again as dew;
For God will not that sigh despise
Which from a contrite heart doth rise.

O when we droop then upward look,
Follow the Master's sigh,
And sorrow, oft a hidden book,
Read in His upturned eye,
And silent grief and voiceless speech
Will show a meaning we can reach.

O would we open human ears
To faith's own music sweet,
We must look up, e'en through our tear,
When low at Jesus' feet;
So shall our sighs, e'en 'neath His rod,
Prove irresistible with God.

W. POOLE BALFERN.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Prayer and the Sick.

BY GRAHAM GREYHAIR.

Will God heal the sick in answer to prayer? Is a physical miracle probable, if the "prayer of faith" is offered? We turn to the Scriptures and find James writing as follows:—"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

These words were written in an age of miracles. Have they force in this age? We are told that they have not, that they had reference to a period of Christian history which ended when miracles were no longer needed to prove the heavenly origin of Christianity. This statement is plausible; but is it true? Facts say that it is false. It is an undoubted fact that the sick are raised up in answer to prayer.

The wife of a Baptist minister, pastor of a church in one of the largest cities in Massachusetts, had been afflicted with sore eyes for nine years. She could seldom read or sew. Oculists were consulted; but their skill accomplished nothing. Her eyes were no better. In her extremity, finding that man could do nothing, she began to entertain the thought of visiting Dr. Cullis of Boston, as she had heard of many faith-cures wrought through his intercessions. When she spoke to her husband about the matter, he did not favor the project, being skeptical in regard to its results; but he finally waived his objections, and accompanied his wife to Boston. They visited Dr. Cullis. When he heard a statement of the case he anointed Mrs. M. with oil, according to the Scriptures, and then prayed for her recovery. After the prayer was made, a few words concerning the

power of faith spoken, Mr. and Mrs. M., turned their faces homeward. For about a week no answer to the prayer came; but Mrs. M. would not give up her confidence. At the end of this time she was one day sitting with her Bible in her hand engaged in meditation. Suddenly a peculiarly strong desire for the power to read came upon her, and she cried, "O Lord, give me my eyes." At once she felt able to exercise more faith than ever before. She opened her Bible and read for an hour without experiencing the slightest inconvenience—a thing she had not been able to do for years. And from that day to this, her eyes have had perfect soundness. This is a plain statement of facts. I know whereof I affirm. I was intimately acquainted with the family before the cure was performed, and have been at their house frequently since. The circumstances of the case were told me by the lady herself, and by her husband. One moment the eyes were so sore that they could not be used, and the next moment they were wholly cured. This happened nearly three years ago.

Recently a similar case became known to me. A man was dying of a painful disease. Physicians said he could not live. He visited Dr. Cullis, who anointed him with oil, and prayed for his recovery. That night he was a well man. This happened less than two months ago. The particulars of the case were communicated to me by one who could not be suspected of misrepresentation or exaggeration.

These are only two cases of many, which are occurring yearly. God cures instantaneously. Miracles have not ceased. These direct and striking answers to prayer are significant, and they prove much. Let those who are drifting into skepticism confront facts like these, and they have met what cannot be explained until they confess that God is, and is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Let those who in an hour of sore temptation have doubted the efficacy of prayer examine such facts of experience, and their unbelief must fly.

Many of us have doubted in respect to prayer because our unbelief has hindered the answer. Anxious to exculpate ourselves, we have believed that the words of James are not applicable to the nineteenth century. This has been our folly. The prayer of faith saves the sick to-day according to the Word of God.

Zaccheus.

BY REV. D. W. FAUNCE.

Across the broad plain in the most fertile spot of all the land of Palestine,—so fertile, that it was called by the Jews "the divine district,"—there runs a well-shaded road that leads to the city of Jericho. Up that road comes a crowd of people who have not at all the appearance of a mob. They advance leisurely; for the one about whom they gather is talking with His disciple as they approach the city. All are intent upon hearing the words of Jesus of Nazareth, the new Teacher. Various are their motives. Some wish to find cause of offence in his teachings, some are hoping to see a miracle, some to hear what is new and strange, and a few are intent to listen to the truth, as His earnest disciples.

In this city a publican who has heard of Jesus and is seized with a strong desire to see the wonderful person about whom so many are constantly talking. This publican is a little hard-fisted and harder-hearted man. He is unloving, unloved. A Jew by birth, none will visit him socially, nor will the priests allow him in the Temple at Jerusalem. A hated gatherer of the Roman tribute, the people would have had his blood any day for years but for the Roman soldiery. And he has revenged himself for the scorn of the people by extorting from them every penny which hatred and greed, and injustice could demand and which arbitrary power could obtain. He is a man without character, save for evil; and he has no

man's love or respect, not even his own. Such is the person who, seized with a desire to see a distinguished stranger, runs before the crowd and climbs into the thick concealment of an overhanging sycamore, that, unobserved he might get a better view of one whom he may never see again.

As he sits there awaiting the coming crowd, does it occur to him to ask why he, a rich man and one in official station, has no love or respect from the people, while this man, without one advantage of birth, or position, or wealth or learning, is followed and praised? As he sits there, is thought busy with the remembrance of a mother's prayers, a father's teaching, his own resolves in the far-off times of his pure and tender childhood? Is there momentary longing for the innocence of those happier days? Near comes the crowd. The first words of Jesus fell on his ear. There is something wondrously winning in the tones of that voice. The countenance of the speaker and the holy words He utters singularly hold him. There is that which makes him feel thoroughly conscious of his own evil self in the presence of this excellence. And it may have been that there is the momentary longing to be a better man. He thinks Jesus and the crowd will pass on, and he himself will remain unnoticed. The thought crosses his mind, when retreat is impossible, what if He should stop to rest beneath that very tree.

His fears are realized. Coming in under the grateful shade, Jesus stops for a moment with the great company about Him, and their eyes follow His as He looks up to this man who has thus pilloried himself. What are the feelings of the people as they see their oppressor where he has no chance of escape? There will be now, they think, a miracle of judgment. The new Prophet, if He is really from God, will smite this guilty man with fire from heaven, a prophet in the olden times smote the enemies of Israel. Unless He does something of the kind, His enemies will set him down as the unholy man who favors wickedness. But if He shall condemn him, they will accuse the new Teacher of treason against Roman law. Ah! the miracle-waiters shall see now a miracle; the disciples shall behold the "fire from heaven" which on another occasion they craved, but it is to be a miracle of grace; and the descending fire shall touch the dead altar in this man's heart into a living flame! And poor Zaccheus himself, how does he feel, as he looks down upon the angry mob beneath his tree? Guilt must have made him fearful. Was some blasting judgment now to fall upon him? Was he to be made a beacon of warning, an example of the doom of an apostate Jew? How he repents of his curiosity which had led him into this unfortunate position! Into one countenance he can look and find in it pity—and yet stern disapproval with the pity. If Jesus would but go on and carry with Him the crowd, what a relief to the guilty man! Instead of this, Jesus speaks to him: "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." The words ring again and again in his ear before he can comprehend their meaning. He must look more on that compassionate countenance before he can believe that he hears rightly. He sees that it is no trap to get him down from his place and deliver him to the people. It is no voice of judgment. And yet there is a something about those words, their tone, the half-hidden meaning in them, the whole aspect of the speaker, that must be obeyed. And they walk together Jesus the pure and Zaccheus the impure, to the great scandal of the unspiritual in the crowd. Even the disciples wonder that their Master can so compromise His cause as to walk with Zaccheus, and above all, to become a self invited guest of this despised and guilty man.

Not a word of reproach, as yet falls from Christ's lips for Zaccheus. None are needed. The man is busy with his thoughts. How strange that walk! He must have shrunk at one moment from

contact with the pure Being at his side, cowering and abashed, and the next, he is drawn to Him by some kindly word. Zaccheus feels that Jesus knows him thoroughly, and as thoroughly disapproves of him, and yet that Jesus is seeking, in all this, to restore him to goodness. It is his opportunity to begin a new and better life. And that this man Jesus, whose reputation was as great for purity as for miracle, any recognition in the way of helping him back to his lost position, should condescend to come to his house—it is too much. Zaccheus' heart is breaking. What took place at the feast we are not told. It was doubtless in harmony with the walk. The discourse of Jesus, then as ever, was about the new kingdom of righteousness, which all penitent and returning souls might enter. But the result is to be given in these words: "And Zaccheus stood up and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore unto him fourfold." Here is the miracle. Here is the fire from heaven. No more men shall reproach Jesus, as they see that His experiment is a success. No more the disciples shall fear that the good is compromised, when the cause has such a convert. When wickedness is subdued in such sort as this, all men shall glorify God. This man reached, changed, made a disciple and giving the best evidence of piety that such a man could possibly exhibit, it is now the turn of the Master to speak in exultation. And Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." And His finished work is the best commentary on His matchless word.

Protestantism in Spain.

Spain is one of the most interesting countries of Europe. There was a time, especially during the reign of Charles the Fifth, when Spain more than rivaled France and England, and its nobles were the mightiest as well as the proudest aristocracy in the world. But, as Thomas Carlyle has pointed out, Spain knew not the day of her visitation, proscribed the Bible which might have been the charter of her liberties, and and persecuted by her unholy Inquisition the messengers who brought her glad tidings of great joy. Centuries of darkness followed the rejection of light, and ruin, swift and sure, fell on haughty and superstitious Spain. We sometimes think that the God of the nations of the earth has resolved on the regeneration of Spain. Protestantism, with the Bible and the Gospel, once again seeks admission. Spain no longer closes the door and refuses to listen to the offer made. There are sixty congregations of Protestants, it is said, with an attendance of 20,000, and as many schools as congregations where 7,000 children are instructed in the faith which Luther preached and Evangelicals hold. Who can tell but that Spain may be to Protestants what it once was to Popery? It has suffered for its sins. May light and liberty overcome all the darkness within its borders.—*Freeman*.

The *Church News* blurts it out after this fashion:—

"What we should like to know, has the Church of England to do with the spirit and principles of the Reformers, except to get rid of them as soon as possible? We have nothing to do with such a set."

This spirit is so far honest, that it has nothing to conceal; and so far atrocious that it endorses all the enormities against which the Reformers protested unto blood!—*The Covenant*.

It was George Herbert who said a handful of good life is worth a bushel of learning.

Prayer is the pulse of the renewed soul; the constancy of its "beat" is the test and measure of the spiritual life.

A Peculiar Ceremony.

WASHINGTON SAINTS' FEET IN AN UP-TOWN CHURCH.

The Church of God, a sort of denominational compromise between the Methodists and Baptists, at Berks street and Germantown avenue, was the scene of a peculiar ceremony last night. It had been advertised that the "washing of the saints' feet and the Lord's Supper" would come off at eight o'clock. At the hour the small edifice was crowded. The Rev. J. M. Corvell, pastor, after a few preliminary remarks, announced that they would now proceed in accordance with the ordinance to wash the saints' feet and requested the congregation to sing some familiar hymn, while those who were to thus give testimony to their faith came forward. Twelve or fifteen persons of both sexes rose and went forward, the women taking seats before the altar on one side, while the men took seats on the other. Two or three women then, with basins in their hands came forward, while a number of men on the other side did the same thing, and taking off the shoes of those before them, began gently to wash their feet, women doing the service for the women and men for the men. The minister then related the authority from which this ceremony was derived, and exhorted the saints to strive to walk in the path of Him who set the example to them. As soon as the washing was completed, the feet were dried with ordinary coarse towels, the stockings and shoes replaced, and, in the midst of another hymn the saints took their seats. Afterward the sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered.

CLOTHING.—There is no thus saith the Lord for the clothing the clergy should wear. The defect is now remedied. The synod of the Reformed Episcopal Church to prevent "perplexities," "divisions," "heart-burnings," and to mark "its desire for unanimity," (what holier motives could move men?) "resolved that the bishops and clergy of this synod be requested in their public and official ministrations to wear the black gown only."—*Covenant*.

WOULD LIKE NOTHING TO DO.—The children were discussing what they would like to be and do, and most of them wished for a position with little work and big pay. One of them said, "Well I should like to sit on the roof all my days, and have nothing to do, just like Joseph in Egypt." Very naturally the attention of the family was excited by the remark, and the boy was asked to explain himself. He at once quoted the passage, "And Pharaoh put Joseph over his house." "There," he said, "that's what I should like,—to sit on the roof, and have a large salary."

The *New York Examiner & Chronicle* says:—A good Baptist friend of ours went Sunday before last to hear Dr. W. M. Taylor, of the Broadway Tabernacle. The house was very full and just before the sermon the excellent doctor descended from the pulpit to "baptize," as it is called, three "candidates." All three were babies a few months old, and each was held by his father. But a more vigorous protest was never made by three candidates for any service. One of the little ones took fright and began to cry at his highest key. The two other "candidates" chimed in, and nothing was heard in the house but the terrified cries of three babies. Poor Dr. Taylor's voice was not heard at all. The cries were loud enough before, but when he put the "little drops of water" on the little faces the screaming became somewhat terrific. Everybody's head was down; the mortification was intense. If this was a real baptismal scene, surely it was one of the sorrowfullest ever administered. What could have been done under a more vigorous protest?

To have ideas, is to gather flowers; to think is to weave them into garlands.