Hope.

What though the wintry winds blow cold,
And the shivering trees toss shriveled arms?
What though the storm is harsh and bold,
And fills my way with dread alarms,
And all around there seems a dearth -
Save at the hearth — of joy and mirth?
The years have seasons; spring will come/
The boughs will leaf and softly sway,
The fields resound with cheery hum,
And joys attend me on my way.

What though life's cares seem heavy now,
And strange forbodings bring grave fears?
What though stray lines enstamp my brow,
Or my weary load I bear in tears?
I'll list to nature, through whose voice
God surely speaks, and bids rejoice.
Life hath it seasons, too; the times
Of grief or doubt will yet give way
To joy and peace and laughter's chimes,
And life regain its summer day.

—Herald and Presbyter.

Doubts and Difficulties.

There is a sense in which to doubt is to breed innumerable difficulties. Thomas, save for his Lord's merciful manifestation of himself to that hard-to-convince disciple, might have gone on all his life questioning the reality of his Lord's resurrection, and his difficulties would have been far greater than those he had afterward to contend with.

The doubting of David is of another order. It is the doubting that arises through sinning. It was actual transgression that made David doubt. It seems when we carefully peruse this psalm, that the inevitable conflict between good and evil was going on in the mind and soul of this man of God. His sins separated between God and himself, and as a natural result he was perplexed and dismayed. He saw before him as an ever-present reality his sins. His iniquities had laid hold upon him, and they came like an eclipse shutting out God's presence, so he sees the horrible pit and miry clay.

Doubts that we have of sin and transgression always have for their posterity a large family of *difficulties* to support and bring up, and this family of difficulties always stay at home and live off their parents. If they were to go out and leave the old homestead they would die, but like a large family dependent upon their parents, their wants are more numerous as they increase in years. He who lives in the light of a holy life; he whose steadfast purpose it is to serve God according to the pattern given in the mount; he who elects to do God's will is not troubled with doubts. Nehemiah, whose stupendous task is the marvel of all eyes, was not troubled with doubts. If he had given up to this kind of evil ones that beset many of us, the restoration of the Jews would never have been accomplished. No one of the heroes of faith Paul so beautifully portrays in Heb. xi. ever let difficulties daunt them, because their *life* was *right* and their purposes pure. And so they overcame when the doubter would have been paralyzed with difficulties, and would have failed ignominiously. If our strength, like that of Sir Galusha's is to be as the strength of Levi, it must be because our heart, like his, was pure; and when we daily pray, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me," our difficulties will be minimized and our doubts will vanish.

If we seek God we shall rejoice in him (verse 16). David says, "Let all those that seek God rejoice in him." Let us put it in the positive sense and say: All who seek God sincerely will rejoice in him. "He that doeth the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine." John in prison doubted. Jesus showed *his life* work as a remedy for doubt. Go tell John what you see. Men are touched with a divine uplift. Blind eyes are opened, deaf ears are unstopped, the lame leap for joy, and to the poor the gospel is preached. God's true servants who serve continually are not the *doubters*, and along these lines they encounter no difficulties. But they who leave the Lord and Bishop of their soul and turn again to work unrighteousness are the perplexed ones. There is not a pastor of any experience but what has noticed, as I have, that when you find your church members, especially the young men, beginning to neglect his house and his service, you will find they have an "evil heart — unbelief," because they have forsaken Jehovah for Baal. They have hewn out for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Let us keep our heart pure; from it are the issues of life. If we, by wandering in By path Meadow, as Christian and Faithful did (in Bunyan's immortal Pilgrim's Progress), and while sleeping are captured by Giant Despair and put in Doubting Castle, where he will cudgle us severely and keep us forever. If we get there, let us remember the way out—Prayer and Praise are the keys. But better still, let us remember we never will get into By-path Meadow if we keep in the path Evangelist points out to us. And if we keep out of By-path, we keep out of Doubting Castle, and also out of many difficulties.—*Chris Standard.*

Witnessing a Good Confession

The word confession has, to a considerable extent, lost its original meaning in connection with Christian life. It is now, as a rule, confined to the acknowledgment of sin or the profession of faith on entering the Christian Church. As it was used in the early Church it meant the daily acknowledgment of Christ, the constant witness to him. Its full meaning is bought out in Paul's statement about Christ himself who 'witnessed a good confession' before Pilate—*i. e.*, bore testimony to the principle that governed his life and action. During the succeeding centuries it was this thought that was uppermost in the minds of Christians. They were not merely witnesses once, or on special occasions, but they were to show by their daily life their constant acknowledgment (confession) of the position that they held as servants of Christ. It was not sufficient that they enrol themselves as members of the Christian community in a public manner; they must so bear themselves as to make it constantly apparent that they belonged to the company of believers. With them confession was really the expression of their loyalty.

It did not necessarily involve aggressive condemnation of those who refused to join their number. Christ himself waited for Pilate to put his question before making his confession; and the zealots who so emphasized their witnessing as practically to court martyrdom were rebuked by those whose lives were proof that they shrank from no result of a confession which was as unmistakable as it was unobtrusive.

This truth has a special force at this season. In their own homes and in familiar surroundings few honest Christians fail greatly in their confession. There is, ordinarily, very little misconception among their associates as to their standing. When, however, the circumstances change and the restraints of familiarity are removed, there is too often danger lest the confession be less clear. People who at home would never fail to attend the regular services will pass by entirely the church, the Sunday-School or the prayer meeting. Practices that ordinarily are not thought of are allowed, and in general there is a letting down of the high standard of Christian living. Were these people to be told that they were failing in their confession they would, perhaps, resent the charge as unjust; and yet they are doing just what the early Christians did when they dropped a little incense before the idol or gave up their Gospels to the officers. If we look for the motive, is is propable that we shall find it to be simple laziness. They are tired under the strain of Christian work, and imagine that they will find rest by lowering their standard of Christian living. They make a woful mistake. The injure themselves, for no man can give place to temptation and not suffer from it. They injure others, not merely by the contagion of their example, but by their failure to give positive help. They grieve the Master, who never failed in his confession, and who is waiting to confess them before the Father, but who cannot do that if they fail in their confession of him on earth. *The Independant*

Glorifying God.

I have frequently asked people, in social religious meetings, what they thought was meant by the so frequent Scripture injunction that we glorify God. I do not just now remember that I ever got a quick and clear answer to the qestion. People had a kind of hazy notion about it. But we should have a definite notion. Let us attempt to gain it.

For example, our Lord says, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' Our question is, How can the Christian, by his fruit-bearing, glorify God? Already God shines with a glory limitless. How can any fruit-bearing, of mine add to a glory already infinite? How can you add anything to an over-brimming fullness?

But when we are exhorted in scripture to Glorify God, it does not mean that we are to attempt to add to, or to imagine that we can add to, the already sumless glory of the infinite God; it means that we are to display his glory, to become the surfaces, so to speak, striking on which it shall go reflected forth.

The wavlet can not add to the glory of the sun, but it can so catch and scatter its sunlight that the benign radiance shall be seen more beautiful. The flash of the diamond does not make the sun more luminous, but opening its clear heart to the entranc of the sunbeam, it does so fling it out that you have a new joy in the sun's effulgence.

She was not a very pleasant member of the family. She was fretful, complaining, irritating, set on a ministry of uncomfortableness. They sent her away to boarding-school. It was a good riddance. But there the Lord met her and she became a genuine Christian. Getting home, she was seen to be another person—patient, cheerful, kind, beautiful, with a steady service of usefulness. A skeptical cousin looked at her askance for some time, attributing the change to any reason but the right one, and sure the old unpleasantness would soon display itself. But it did not. So he asked her the cause of the transformation. The reply was, the grace of God had given her another sort of heart. He said to himself: 'I don't believe that God has anything to do with it, though she thinks he had,' And he set himself to trying to be as good as she. But where she all the time succeeded, he failed; until, at last, certain she had some help he missed, and giving his skepticism to the winds, he sought and found what new heart and power of continuance had come to her.

I am sure you can see plainly that, while the Christian maiden did not add to the measureless sum of God's glory she did manifest forth and commend his glory, and so did, in the most real way, in the precise way in which the Scripture means, glorify God.—*Wayland Hoyt, D. D. in Examiner.*

Hiding The Word.

BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D. D.

The Word, if hid in the heart, will certainly be manifest in the life. For not only is it impossible for a man who deeply and continually realizes God's will, and lives in touch with Jesus Christ, to prevent these experiences from visibly affecting his life and conduct, but also in the measure in which we have that conscious inward possession of the Divine Word and the Divine Christ we shall be impelled to manifest them to our fellows by every means in our power. What, then, is the inference to be drawn from the fact that there are thousands of professing Christian people who never felt even the slightest touch of a necessity to make known the Master whom they say they serve? They must be very shallow Christians, having no depth of experience, or that experience would insist on coming out. True Christian emotion is like a fire smouldering within some substance, that never rests till it burns its way to the outside. As one of the prophets puts it' 'I said I will speak no more in thy name.' He goes on to tell how his resolve of silence gave way under the pressure of the unuttered speech—'Thy Word shut up in my bones was like a fire, and I was weary of forbearing and I could not stay.' So it will always be. Every genuine conviction demands utterance. A full heart needs the relief of speech. If you feel no need to show your allegiance and love to Christ by speech as well as by life, I shrewdly suspect you have little love or allegiance to hide.

Further, the more we show, the more need there is for us to cultivate the hidden element in our religion. If I were talking to ministers I should have a great deal to say about that. There are preachers who preach away their own religion. The two attitudes of mind in imparting and in receiving are wholey different: and if one is allowed to encroach upon the other, nothing but harm can come. 'As thy servant was busy, here and there, he was gone!' That is the short account of the decay of personal religion in many a life outwardly diligent in Christian work. If there be a proportionate cultivation of the hidden self, then the act of manifesting will tend to strengthen it. It is meant that our Christian convictions and affections should grow in strength, and in transforming power upon ourselves, by reason of utterance; just as when you let air in, the fire burns brighter. But it is quite possible that we may dissipate and scatter our feeble religion by talking about it; and some of us may be in danger of that. The loftier you mean to build your tower, the deeper must be the foundation that you dig. The more any of us are trying to do for Jesus Christ, the more need there is that we increase our secret communion with Jesus Christ. *The Christ. Work.*

The Duty of Giving.

A prominent member of a church in one of our large towns remarked the other day that, though they made an excellent financial showing this year, yet, in fact, nearly all the giving was done by about twelve families, though there were some two hundred in connection. There are very few churches, perhaps, where the same thing does not occur. And these few families, while not poor, are generally not among the wealthiest. This is really a serious matter. What sort of Christianity is that which is neither interested in nor conversant with the financial work of the church? What right has any family to put the financial burden on the shoulders of a few, and even forget that it is resting there? The church is not merely the place to which we are to look for benefits to ourselves. It is God's own instrument for good in the world, and it has a right to look to each one of us for liberal support in all its undertakings. We have serious duties to render to it, as well as benefits to draw from it. The duty of giving applies to all. The circumstances of a man must be desperate when he cannot be expected to give. Yet what church is there where people do not complain habitually that they cannot give; they find it hard enough to live! If they were rich they would do great things. How many men will hold back when a subscription list is circulated until the small amounts are reached, or give what the person before them subscribed, though their income is twice or three times as great. An examination of the list of contributors to church funds of various kinds would show in a most startling way what hypocrisy there is in many a congregation. Apart altogether from the necessities of Christian work, this question of giving is a very serious one. It may have to do with the material and temporal, but it is intimately connected with the deeply spiritual. No tests is perfect, but there are few, if any, better tests of the Christianity of an individual than the disposal of his money. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," said Jesus. Trace a man's money, and you know just where his affections are. The practical application from the pulpit of the principles of the Gospel to the use of money is something much needed in our day. Some clergymen shrink from asking for money or making any pointed reference to giving. It savors, they say of begging. But the duty of the clergy is to preach the Gospel and apply it to the daily life of men; and if the use of money is to be excluded, then one great side of life is to be totally neglected. To bring home with power the truth of those words of David—"All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee"—is in itself to do a noble work.—*The Presbyterian Recorder.*

Curious Sermons.

In a Drumtochty story contributed by 'Ian Maclaren' to the very attractive April number of *Pearson's Magazine*, 'Domsie' recalls some anique sermons he has heard. There was one that 'Old MacFree of Glenogie used to preach on the Monday after the Sacrament' from the text, 'The voice of the turtle is heard in the land,' and this was the introduction:—

I. A new posture evidently implied, when an animal that has gone upon its belly for ages shall arise on its hind legs and walk majestically through the land, and

II. A new voice distinctly promised, when a creature that has kept silence from generation to generation will at last open its mouth and sing melodiously among the people.

He also recollected the divisions of the action sermon given every year before the winter Sacrament in Bourtrie-Lister:—

1. Let us remember that there is a moral law in the universe.

II. Let us be thankful there is a way of escape from it.

'Domsie' chuckled, 'with a keen sense of irony at the theology underneath,' as he related this to 'the Doctor' and 'Drumsheugh.' After a pause he continued.

For the summer Sacrament we had a discourse on sin, wi' twa heads, 'Original Sin' and 'Actual Transgressions': and after Maister Deuchar finished wi' the first, he aye snuffed, and said with great cheerfuiness. 'Now let us proceed to actual transgressions.

Living at our Best.

Do not try to do a great thing; you may waste all your life waiting for the opportunity which may never come But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come, from a great motive, for the glory of God, to win his smile of approval, and to do good to men. It is harder to plod on in obscurity, acting thus, than to stand on the high places of the field, within the view of all, and to do deeds of valor at which rival armies stand still to gaze. But no such act goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ.

To fulfil faithfully the duties of your station; to use to the uttermost the gifts of your ministry; to bear chafing annoyances and trivial irritations as martyrs bore the pillory and stake; to find the one noble trait in people who try to molest you; to put the kindest construction on unkind acts and words, to love with the love of God even the unthankful and evil; to be content to be a fountain in the midst of a wild valley of stones, nourishing a few lichens and wild flowers, or now and again a thirsty sheep; and to do this always, and not for the praise of man, but for the sake of God—this makes a great life.—F. B. MEYER.

Small Things.

Living to Christ in small things, and living for Christ every day, is the secret of large fruitfulness. A peach or an orange tree does not leap into a bounty of fruit by one spasmodic effort; an orchard does not ripen under a single day's sunshine. Evey raindrop, every sunbeam, every inch of sub-soil does its part. A fruitful Christian is a growth. To finish up a godly character by a mere religion of Sundays and sermons and sacraments and revivals and special seasons is impossible. A man can be converted in an instant, but he must grow by the year. The tough fibre of the slender branch which can hold up a half bushel of oranges is very different from a little willow switch. It is the steady compacting process that makes the little limb like a steel wire. Such is a healthy and holy believer's life. Every honest prayer breathed, every cross carried, every trial well endured, every good work for our fellow-men lovingly done, every little act conscientiously performed for Christ's glory, helps to make the Christian character beautiful and to load its broad boughs with 'apples of gold' for God's 'baskets of silver.'—*The Examiner.*

A Good Sermon.

There are two things needed to a good sermon—good preaching and good hearing, and the second is often the more important of the two. A poor sermon may be blessed to us if we are in the right frame of mind, and will make the best of it. The poorest preacher uses sacred words, which may be a theme of profitable meditation if we will ask ourselves just what those words mean in themselves. The best sermon may be defeated by inattention, distraction, or idle curiosity as to the preacher's manner, language, and the like. Paul probably preached as well at Troas as at any other point of his missionary journeys; but Eutychus, who fell asleep, got little good of the sermon, and just escaped neckbreak.—*Sunday School Times.*

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