The Minister's Sunday Morning.

This is my opportunity!
I stand, O God, twixt these and Thee;
Grant me Thy light that I may know
How best the seeds of truth to sow.

The wea·y man, the little child,
The vigorous youth, the mother mild,
Lift up their eyes and wait for me;
What shall I say to them for Thee?

Theirs is the struggle and the strife,
Mine are the peaceful paths of life,
They are of deeds, I am of thought,
How shall I teach them as I ought?

We are close brothers, all we men
Sin, and are sorry, sin again,
And climb, and slip and yet aspire;
Thou. only Thou, canst bear us higher.

Lord, I will talk to them of Thee,
Let mine eyes Thy salvation see,
And with the tokens of thy love
Uplift their hearts and mine above.

Give me, O gracious Master, power
To read the signs and seize the hour
Nor let these people empty go
Because I may so little know.

Lord, unto Thee I lift mine eyes.
Inspire me, make me brave and wise,
And give me faith that I may see
How wide and large Thy precepts be.

Then Thine own message let me take
To these Thy people for love's sa e;
I use my opportunity
When longing hearts are glad in Thee.

O God, inspire me, make me strong,
I will not do Thy people wrong
To hide whate'er Thou givest me,
Nor put myself 'twixt them and Thee.

Give me Thy message now; not mine
The words they need but only Thine;
O Lord, these people wait for Thee,
Thine is this opportunity.

Marianne Farningham.

The Dignity of Self-Reliance.

Self-confidence, without self-reliance, is as useless as a cooking recipe,—without food. Self-confidence sees the possibilities of the individual; self-reliance realizes them. Self confidence sees the angel in the unhewn block of marble; self-reliance carves it out.

Life is an individual problem that man must solve for himself. Nature accepts no various sacrifice, no vicarious service. Nature never recognizes a proxy vote. She has nothing to do with middlemen,—she deals only with the individual. Nature is constantly seeking to show man that he is his own best friend or his own worst enemy. Nature gives man the option of which he will be to himself.

All the athletic exercises in the world are of no value to the individual unless he compel those bars and dumbbells to yield to him, in strength and muscle, the power for which he, himself, pays in time and effort. He cannot develop his muscles by sending his valet to a gymnasium.

The medicine-chests of the world are powerless in all their united efforts to help the individual until he reach out and take for himself what is needed for his individual weakness.

All the religions of the world are but speculations in morals, mere theories of salvation. until the individual realizes that he must save himself by relying on the law of truth, as he sees it, and living his life in harmony with it, as fully as he can. But religion is not a Pullman car, with soft-cushioned seats, where he has to pay for his ticket,—and some one else does all the rest. In religion as in all other great things, he is ever thrown back on his self-reliance. He should accept all helps, but,—he must live his own life. He should not feel that he is a mere passenger; he is the engineer and the train is his life. We must rely on ourselves, or we merely drift through existence,—losing all that is best, all that is greatest, all that is divine.

The man who is not self-reliant is weak, hesitating and doubting in all he does. He fears to take a decisive step, because he dreads failure, because he is waiting for some one to advise him, or because he dare not act in accordance with his own best judgment. In his cowardice and his conceit he sees all his non-success due to others. He is 'not appreciated,' not recognized,' he is 'kept down.' He feels that 'society is conspiring from him.' He grows almost vain as he thinks that no one has had such poverty, such sorrow, such affliction, such failure as have come to him.

The man who is self reliant seeks ever to discover and conquer the weakness within him that keeps him from the attainment of what he holds dearest; he seeks within himself the power to battle against all outside influences. He never stupefies his energies by the narcotic of excuses for inactivity. He realizes that all the greatest men in history, in every phase of human effort, have been those who have had to fight against the odds of sickness, suffering, sorrow. To him defeat is no more than passing through a tunnel is to a traveler,—he knows he must emerge again into the sunlight.

The nation that is strongest is the one that is most self-reliant, the one that contains within its boundaries all that its people need. If, with its ports all blockaded, it has not within itself the necessities of life and the elements of its continual progress,—then it is weak, held by the enemy, and it is but a question of time till it must surrender. Its independence is in proportion to its self-reliance, to its power to sustain itself from within. What is true of nations is true of individuals. History is the biography of a nation; biography is the history of an individual. So it must be that the individual is most strong in any trial, sorrow or need that can live from his inherent strength, that needs no scaffolding of commonplace sympathy to uphold him.

Man to be great must be self-reliant. Though we may not be self-reliant in all things, he must be self-reliant in the one in which he would be great. This self reliance is not the self-sufficiency of conceit It is daring to stand alone. Be an oak, not a vine. Be ready to give support but do not crave it; do not be dependent on it. To develop your self reliance, you must see from the very beginning that life is a battle you must fight for yourself,—you must be your own soldier You cannot buy a substitute, you cannot win a reprieve, you can never be replaced on the retired list The retired list of life is,—death. The world is busy with its own cares, sorrows and joys, and pay little heed to you. There is but one great password to success,—self-reliance.

The man who is self-reliant does not live in the shadow of some one else's greatness; he thinks for himself, depends on himself, and acts for himself. In throwing the individual thus back upon himself it is not shutting his eyes to the stimulus and light and new life that come with the warm pressure of the hand, the kindly word, and the sincere expressions of true friendship. True friendship is rare. Its great value is in a crisis,—like a lifeboat. Many a boasted friend has proved a leaking, worthless "lifeboat" when the storm of adversity might make him useful In these great crisis of life, man is strong only as he is strong from within, and the more able will he be to help others in the hour of their need. His very life will be a help and a strength to others, as he becomes to them a living lesson of,—the dignity of self-reliance.—William George Jordan.

Demas.

There is something pathetic in the simple statement made by Paul concerning this man: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." It was a time of severe trial, when the sympathy of even the humblest saint was like balm to his heavy heart. Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar he was sent; and at last his case was to be adjudicated. Among his companions in Rome was Demas, about whom practically nothing is known beyond the three references to him by Paul, whom he so basely betrayed in the crucial hour. But his name stands now by the side of that of the disciple who betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Associated for some time with Paul as a co-worker, he had exceptional opportunities to serve the cause for which Paul was so strenuously contending in Rome. Had he become thoroughly saturated with Paul's spirit, had he experienced religion in the complete and unmistakable sense in which Paul did, had he made sacrifices for the Lord's sake, such as Paul had made, he would have performed conspicuous and valuable service for Christ and humanity, and would have won imperishable glory. But he failed in these things, and for centuries men have regarded his name with contempt.

The desertion of Demas was due to a cause that has always been prevalent among the followers of Jesus: "Having loved this present world"—this sums it all up. No doubt Paul had noticed the growing influence of the world upon Demas, and there surely were exhortations and tender remonstrances and wise counsels and anxious solicitude and much prayer in behalf of Demas. He did not surrender to the domination of degenerating influences without a struggle for his deliverance, but the association with Paul and the earnest entreaty of the heroie apostle were insufficient to turn the worldly-minded Demas from his disastrous course.

It is to be feared that Demas is a type of and stands for many professed followers of Jesus at the present day. Two things go to establish a vital relationship with Jesus Christ, faith in Him and service for Him. Justification by faith has its complement in justification by works. Faith is well pleasing to the eye of God, and so is service, which is the fruit of faith. Faith pertains to the subjective and interior life of the Christian, while service is an outward manifestation of the inward state, and this latter is the standard by which the relation of the individual soul is measured by the world. If the interior life is feeble, and the faith is wanting in depth, vigor, and definiteness, it will fail to bear fruit in its outward manifestations. The necessity is apparent, then, of maintaining a vigorous and vital faith in Christ, in order that even in a hostile world the disciple may let his light so shine that others, seeing his good works, may be attracted by his life and be led to glorify the Father in heaven.

What we speak of as the spirit of the world is one of the most subtle, persistent, and destructive influences that conspire for the humiliation and overthrow of the Christian. All are subject to it, but none need yield to it. The danger is clearly pointed out, and if a man submits himself to this evil he does so in spite of the positive declarations of the Saviour, the apostles, and wise and experienced men, and in the face of the protests of his higher and better nature.

The Christian is to keep himself unspotted from the world, for the friendship of the world is enmity with God, and whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. He must be a separatist, coming out from the world, from its associations, its ambitions, its allurements, and its sinful influences and tendencies, and allying himself with those spiritual and material agencies that make for the peace of his mind, the expansion of his soul, the satisfaction of his heart, and for his greater efficiency as a co-worker with the Saviour in the redemption of mankind from the bondage of sin, being well assured that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—Chris. Advocate.

On Keeping Promises.

The sacredness of promises is too carelessly considered. There seems to be a growing laxity in regard to keeping them, and very few realize that a promise made and accepted in good faith, when broken without good cause, comes dangerously near that point where it may be called a lie. The tendency towards broken promises seems to be on the increase, and not many are as scrupulous about keeping their word as they should be. Occasionally one hears a fellow-being who is so reliable that his or her "word is as good as a bond," but such cases are rare, and in most instances it is safest to know the character of the one concerned, most thoroughly before trusting too much to either his veracity or his sincerity.

Much of this indifference to keeping promises is the result of early training. Children have their sense of truth dulled by the frequent habit some parents have of promising what they never intended to do. Unwise mothers in their haste, promise or threaten their children, even from the cradle, with rewards and punishments which they never mean to give, and at so imitative a period the children can hardly fail to be impressed by such examples. Many teachers follow the same line of conduct until, in almost every treatise on school government the would-be successful teacher is warned not to threaten or to promise without fulfilling.

Dishonesty of purpose is painfully common in every grade of social and business life. There is no security in buying. There was a time when merchants in former years were so faithful to their contracts that the buyer was certain of receiving exactly the thing promised. Now this is changed, and the purchaser, in general, must keep a shrewd lookout for fear he may be over-reached, and even with the closest scrutiny one is never sure that he is getting just what he bargained for.

Insincerity seems to flourish everywhere; persons make contracts and break them with careless indifference. Teachers will contract for a school term and then, for the sake of a better position or for some trivial reason, will resign. Women in this particular, are special sinners, and it is no uncommon thing for a teacher to give up her school in the middle of the term without a thought of the embarrassment the vacancy will cause. Nor is the case any better in society. This seems to be a field where insincerity finds fertile soil, where "promises are lightly made and lightly broken." Sometimes promises must be broken, hindering circumstances prevent their fulfilment, but this is not often, and in the main they may, with a little effort, be kept. It is well to pay scrupulous attention to even trifling ones, for the habit of neglecting these leads to the neglect of graver ones and thus lowers the moral standard, for broken promises mean broken faith.—Dom. Presbyterian.

The Missionary.

What constitutes the mission call? There are two parts to it—first, the call to Christ; then the call to his work. There is but one response to be made—consecration. Surrender the will. The rest is only a matter of judgment according to providential indications. Men have forced their way into the mission field against almost every possible obstacle. This was the experience of Carey and many other pioneers. Others have been led along by providential appointment, where every step taken was against their own preference, until at last they found themselves set down in mission work.

God deals with men as individuals and most diversely. There are calls contained in repulses, and tests contained in invitations. Sometimes the call consists of the simple presentation of facts to the mind and conscience, which, when calmly weighed, seem important enough to decide the choice of the will and the work of the lifetime. The mission field is then entered with precisely the same calm business spirit as that with which another would enter a mercantile employment—only it is done in the service of the King. God calls men through the reason as well as through conscience and providence and the Holy Spirit.

There is room and demand for a great variety of talent abroad, far greater than in the ministry at home. But it is the very best men who are most wanted. The call is rather for more man than more men, and for the whole man. We want the men who can become evangelists of nations, heads of schools, fathers and bishops of churches, founders of institutions, creators of literature—leaders in all things. They are precisely the men who are most called for at home.

The qualifications for mission work are spiritual, physical, mental, and social.—Dr. E. A. Lawton.

Sensitive Ears.

It is told that a telegraph operator at Springfield, Mass., was kept at his post of duty for many hours receiving special news. After losing two nights' sleep, he was relieved from duty to get some rest. He went to his room at the hotel, and soon was fast asleep. When the time came for him to return to his instrument he could not be awakened. Loud pounding on the door did not result in arousing him. An operator then, with his knife handle, tapped 'Springfield" on the door, in imitation of the clicking of the instrument. At once the sleeping operator sprang from his bed, and was soon ready to continue his work.

It is said that firemen hear in their sleep the signal calling them to duty, while they sleep right on through any number of signals which do not concern them. In an article on "Heroes Who Fight Fire," in the Century, Jacob A. Riis tells of a fire department chief who has a gong right over his head at his home. every stroke of which he hears, although he never hears the baby, while his wife hears the baby if it so much as stirs in its crib, but does not hear the gong.

We hear that for which we listen. The sensitive soul, attuned to hear the voice of God, is surrounded by distracting noises of all kinds, and yet it responds instantly to the call of duty or to words of warning. The gentlest whisper of conscience is sufficient to call to action the one who has trained himself to hear that voice. A single text from God's Word is a louder call than all the noises of the world to the one who trains himself to obey that voice.—The Christian Guardian.

Try Your Wings.

A friend of mine, who told me the story, had an eagle. He caught it when it was young, and had brought it up, as far as he could, like a domestic fowl Having, in God's Providence, to go to the other side of the world. he was selling off everything. He wondered what he should do with his eagle, and the happy thought came to him that he would not give it to any body, but would give it back to itself—he would set it free. And he then opened the place in which it had been kept, and brought it to the back green, How he was astonished! It walked about, feeling as if this were rather bigger than its ordinary run; but that was all. He was disappointed, and, taking the big bird in his arms, he lifted it up and set it up in his garden wall. It turned and looked down at him! The sun had been obscured behind a cloud; but just then the cloud passed away, and the bright, warm beams poured out. The eagle lifted its eyes and pulled itself up. I wonder what it was thinking? Can an eagle recollect the crags and cliffs, the revelling in the tempests of long ago, the joyous thundering and the flashing lightnings? Pulling itself up, it lifted one wing and stretched it out—'by prayer and supplication'—and it lifted the other wing—'with thanksgiving'—and outstretched it. Then it gave a scream, and soon was a vanishing speck away in the blue heaven. Anxious, disturbed Christian, you are an eagle living in an old henhouse! Try your wings!—Rev. John McNeill.

Faith and Peace.

There is a type of religious faith which brings to the soul possessing it a sense of peace and satisfaction with reference to the things of the present life, and of assurance and security concerning the life that is to come, which is beyond the comprehension of those who do not possess it.

This was illustrated in some remarks made in a prayer-meeting a short time ago, when the public mind was overwhelmed with the tidings of a frightful ocean disaster. The speaker said that he had followed the sea for many years, and that when a boy he sailed in the vessel of which his father was captain. He had been through many storms at sea, but, while others on his ship had been anxious, alarmed, and even terrified, he never felt afraid. He was but a boy, and had unbounded confidence in his father; and when he saw his father at the helm, which was always his station when a storm was raging or peril was threatening, he felt sure that everything was safe. And so it always proved to be, and his confidence in his father's skill and wisdom was unshaken. The faith he had in his father was typical of that he reposed in God, and he had the privilege of believing from his personal experience, that, as his earthly father had guided his ship safely through the storms, so his heavenly Father takes the helm in his own hands, and sails his ship in accordance with his own holy will and purposes.—The Christian Advocate.

The Cackle of Fools.

"Infidelity," says the Chicago Times-Herald, is barren of good works. It takes from human hope the crutch of faith, and replaces it with a sneer, which provokes the cackle of fools, but 'heals not a passion or a pang entailed on human heart.'" How true all this is. What comfort did infidelity ever pour into the soul of the mortally-wounded soldier on the battle-field? What solace did infidelity ever minister to the sorrow-smitten hearts of bereaved ones? What inspiration to a purer, nobler life did infidelity ever impart to any of earth's tempted and tried ones? What hope in a dying hour did infidelity ever breathe into the soul of poor eternity-bound mortals? Ah, echo answers, "What!" Well may it be said that the laughter provoked by the gibes and sneers thrust by infidelity into the face of Christianity is but "the cackle of fools."—Telescope.

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