

BREAD-WINNING.

By REV. F. B. MEYER, in *Golden Rule*.

Almost the first question in every one's life is to settle the question that Satan put to our Lord in his first temptation. Where does bread and bread-getting come in? Is it to be the first consideration or last? According to Satan's way of looking at life, the bread question is paramount; according to Christ, secondary. Have you ever sat down and considered which policy is yours, and what you would do if you had to choose in any supreme crisis?

It is very remarkable that this was the first temptation, because it so constantly occurs in every life; and sooner or later, whether on a lone mountain side or in the crowded thoroughfares of life, the devil comes to us with the suggestion that we must live, and in the last push we must make or get our bread, leaving considerations of truth, honor, God, and eternity to come in second best.

The man that keeps his shop open on Sunday, because on that day he makes more than in all the rest of the week, says in effect, "Bread is my first consideration; my family and I must live." The young man that accepts a partnership in some lucrative business, against which his conscience raises urgent protests, says, "Bread is first." The girl that accepts a wealthy suitor with whom she can have no real sympathy, also says, "Bread is first." Some day you will have to choose between your situation and your conscience, between making a large income and following principle, between mammon and God. It may be God's will to give you success in life, but it is equally certain that He will require you to choose, altogether apart from other considerations, whether at all hazards you will manufacture bread, or whether you will live on every word that proceedeth out of His mouth.

Our Lord chose the latter. Had He willed, He could have supplied His hunger by the exercise of His power; but to have done so would have made it impossible for Him to become the bread of life, or to mul-

tiple the five barley loaves to feed thousands.

The martyrs elected to follow the high ideals of Christ, though they rotted in noisome dungeons, and starved. The reformers chose to prosecute their conceptions of a Christian State and Church, though they had to sacrifice everything that earth counts precious. The holiest souls are they that have been so taken up with the words that proceed from the mouth of God that they have been largely indifferent to the claims of their physical life.

At every turning point in the story of the inner life, these two methods are suggested. Christ says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the words of God."

Do you want strength to stand against the wiles of the tempter? There is nothing for it but to live on the words of God. For forty days our Lord had been meditating upon them, and so when the tempter came, though the hunger of His body was making itself felt, His spirit was nourished and equipped. Go thou and do likewise. Feed on the living bread which has come down from heaven. Fill yourself with God's purposes and ideals. Let the thoughts of God be the very bread of the inner man, and when the hour of temptation comes, it will not take you a moment to choose between snatching a morsel to satisfy the cravings of passion and waiting on God.

We are all liable to attacks of hunger in various parts of our nature, and Satan is perpetually insisting on our getting satisfaction somehow. The body hungers for food as we have seen; and Satan bids us snatch it. The heart hungers for love, and we are tempted to gratify it apart from God. The mind hungers for knowledge, and we are apt to seek it in quarters which are not illumined by the light of eternal truth. The imagination and fancy long for objects to stimulate and satisfy, and we are too prone to go to the world to find them.

There is no harm in any one of these masterful desires, when God's will and way and word are put where Christ placed them first. The harm comes in when we insist

on gratifying them at all hazards and fail to wait for the angels ministering as they did to Christ.

God, who gave these strong appetites and desires, knows that they need feeding. The body is more than meat; and if he gave the one, he is involved in the responsibility of meeting the other. He knew that Jesus must have food, and so as soon as the temptation was ended the angels came. Do you for a moment suppose they would have come had the Master not stood fast? God's angels will come to you, my friend, with what is needed to supply your hunger in whatever part of your nature it makes itself felt. The blessed angels of his help are even now on their way to you. They have been commissioned to bring with them supplies for every department of your life. Do not be impatient. Do nothing at the dictate of passion. In no way take your life out of God's hand. Throw the responsibility on him. They cannot be ashamed that wait for God. Remember that angel that prepared the meal on the desert sand for Elijah, and the provision for the tired fishermen on the shores of the lake. If you help yourself now in this supreme crisis, you will miss the divine help; but, if you dare to wait, even though there be but a step between you and death, my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.

Feed your lower nature as your first concern, and you will starve your real and better self. This is what the men of the world are doing, whose belly is their god, who glory in their shame, and who mind earthly things. Feed your highest nature at any cost to the lower, and ultimately the whole will become satisfied. Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto thee. "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land; and verily thou shalt be fed."

Thus, also, in a degree, less indeed than in the case of Christ, those that have learned to wait upon God become the bread of other men, nourishing the spiritual life of the world, and obtain the power of feeding thousands. The self-indul-