

pecked at the grains, swallowed them rapidly, then, with one glad sweet note of thanks, flew away to its nest in the leafy hedgerow.

"Pretty little creature," murmured the farmer, as he watched it fly away; "so bright and knowing! No wonder some fanciful people say that song-birds are like spirits or souls. Only souls don't want food like this little thing.

"Well, I'm not so sure of that," he continued, after a moment's pause. "I suppose after all that our souls want food as much as our bodies; but we do starve them terribly. I know my soul has had no food to-day."

It was quite true. The good man had overslept himself that morning, and then had "got out of bed the wrong side," as people say; had hurried away without stopping for a word of prayer or a single text—one of those tiny crumbs of which the Lord can make enough to richly feed a hungry soul.

No, without a single thought of his Master, he, a professing Christian man, had hurried away to meet the day's trials and difficulties. No wonder everything had gone wrong! No wonder he had already slipped and sinned in tongue and temper!

"It is not too late," he suddenly thought. "Why should not I, like that little bird, pick up a few grains of help and comfort here?"

Time was precious, but the men had stopped work to eat the food they had brought with them, and Robert Bridge seized the opportunity, went into the next field, and in a few brief words told the Lord his needs. Then, as he walked back to rejoin the men and unpack the basket which his wife had filled for him, he let his thoughts dwell upon one of the precious texts with which his mind was happily stored: "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." And although he worked both with hands and brain during the rest of the day, he found how blessed and helpful it was to live with his soul resting upon God while his mind and body were actively employed.

How many of us feed our bodies carefully and well, yet literally starve our souls!

The only truly satisfying food for the soul is Christ Himself, the Bread of Life. We feed upon Him when we draw near to Him and commune with Him. Helped by His Holy Spirit, we get our supplies of nourishment at the mercy-seat; and the channels through which we draw these supplies are prayer and meditation, the reading and study of His Word, and companionship with His people; and the neglect of these brings poverty and starvation to the soul.

Some people take in a large supply of spiritual food on Sunday, the feast-day which the Lord has graciously appointed, and then live meagerly all the week, or take at the most one meal a day. What an allowance! It is regarded as one of the terrible penalties of a Hindoo widow's lot that she is permitted but one meal a day. And yet many people habitually keep their souls upon that scanty allowance, living sometimes upon nothing for a day or

two, by way of a change. Is it surprising that there are so many starved and stunted souls?

But there are plausible excuses made for this state of things.

One man has got into a lax, careless way of forsaking the assembling of the saints, and gives as his reason that he lives in a country district, and there is no good preacher in his neighbourhood, and he "doesn't seem to profit much" by the words spoken, or any part of the service.

Another complains of deafness, and cannot hear all the words.

But is it wise or right to stay away? Christ has promised a special blessing which you cannot afford to lose. He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

And cannot the presence of His people help to cheer and comfort you upon whom the Lord has laid the burden of deafness? You may hear scraps occasionally, and Christ can make for you a full meal from these fragments. Gather them up, that nothing be lost. Only put them in His hands, and look to Him expecting to be fed.

"But I have no time to feed my soul," says someone. "The cares of earth are so pressing and numerous, and take up all my time; the world moves so fast, and we must move with it, and business must be attended to."

And must not your soul have attention also? You find time to eat, in spite of all your business, and it is just as necessary for your soul to have food as for your body. Time is precious, you say. And so is Jesus precious to those who trust Him,—so precious that they cannot do without Him, but must feed continually upon His grace and mercy.

"But I have no appetite," says another; "I have no taste for spiritual food."

Then you have never known the joy and satisfaction of feeding upon Christ, the true Bread of Life; have only tried the outer husks of religious ceremony, which have seemed to you so dry and empty that you have turned from them with loathing to the bitter-sweets of earth.

Pray that God may give you the Divine appetite which He alone can satisfy. He has said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." And some are hungering for they know not what—dying of hunger while a rich provision is made for them, starving and famine-stricken in a land of plenty.

Why die of want, when food is freely offered, when Jesus holds out to you the Bread of Life?

"I am the living bread, which came down from heaven," says Christ; "if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever."

"He that cometh to Me shall never hunger."

It is an easy matter to stretch out our hands to take our daily bread, and why do we not take the heavenly bread of which there is such abundance? There is no limit to God's supply—enough and to spare. Enough to feed us daily, and to make us strong men in Christ Jesus, if we will but take from Him daily the rich bounty He offers.

L. B.