

it, but that it must be carried outside to that strange man. She had to deny herself ; and we must learn that we cannot do much good if we are not willing to deny ourselves.

(3.) The little cake was baked by a widow who obeyed the Lord. The story tells us that God had commanded her to feed the prophet. We don't know how the command had come, most likely in a vision, but the woman knew that the Lord meant her to do it. And so when she went out of the village to gather a few sticks in the wood the prophet was there, and asked her first for a cup of water, and then to bring him a bit of bread as well. Oh, how her heart would ache as she thought of the handful of meal ! She had only a handful, just enough to make a little cake, then hunger and starvation for her and the boy ; and even that handful of meal is to be eaten by a stranger. But then she had the commandment of God, and with it the promise, "The barrel of meal shall not waste." Now, what must she do ? It was her faith that helped her to obey. It would be much easier for us all to obey if we believed what God says.

Who Ate the Little Cake.

(1.) A holy prophet. You have heard of Elijah ; he was one of the best men that ever lived, and was able to make even the wicked king Ahab tremble before him. At that time most of the people were idolaters, and would have liked to have killed all the faithful ; but God did not think there was any soil holy enough to make a grave for Elijah, so he took him to heaven, as you know, without dying. But while he stayed in the world he must eat and drink. God had therefore bade him go to live in a secret place by the brook Cherith, and we are told some birds used to bring him bread and flesh night and morning.

(2.) The little cake was eaten by a man mighty in prayer. St. James tells us that "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain ; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." The famine came in answer to Elijah's prayer. How came he to pray for such a sad calamity ? I will tell you what I think. We do not read that the prophet offered this prayer in private. No ; very likely he came to some grand ceremonial where the priests of Baal were offering some sacrifices to their filthy idol and the grand solitary champion, for God told them of their sin, and then knelt down and prayed that it might not rain, and so could say, as we read in the first verse of this chapter, to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I