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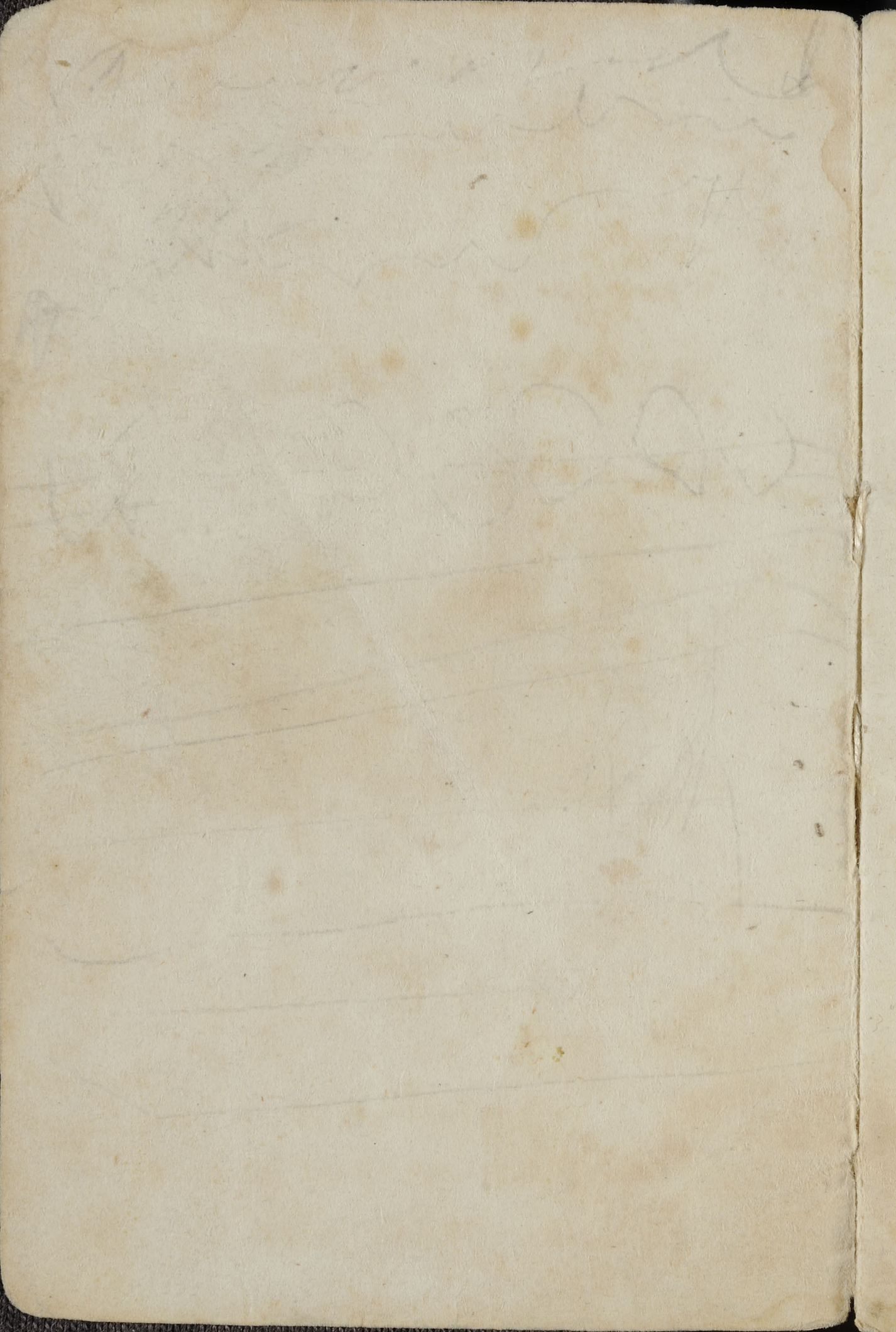
BREAD
THE
STAFF OF LIFE.



PUBLISHED BY THE
American Tract Society,
No. 144 Nassau-St.
New-York.

SERIES II.

NO. XVI.



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BREAD,

THE

Staff of Life.

THERE are a great many little boys and girls, who eat bread every day, but they do not know what it is made from, or how it is made. Perhaps they will like to read this little book, which will tell them about it? Bread is made from grain. It is called the Staff of Life, because we could better spare any other sort of food, than we could do without bread and other things made from grain. Children must go without puddings and many other good things, if there were no grain. When the Israelites were in the wilderness, though they had manna

(which was very sweet and good) and quails every day, yet they complained very much because there was no bread. Numbers, xxi. 3.



FLOUGHING.

I DARE say you know that grain grows out of the ground, but there is a good deal to be done, or it will not grow properly. Farmers must first plough the ground, for it is hard, and the seed will not grow unless the plough loosens the earth, and makes furrows in it ready to receive the seed. Two persons one day were looking at a man who was ploughing. One of them said to the other, "This

field reminds me of the state of my heart, for my heart was as hard as that ground is before it is ploughed up; and I should never have received the good seed of the word of God, unless God had broken it up by the power of the Holy Spirit." This is very true of us all, and we should recollect that it is only God the Holy Spirit, who can prepare our hearts to receive His words.



SOWING.

WHEN the ground is ready, then the Sower comes. He walks over the field and throws the seed on each side, till he

has sown the field all over. Then the earth is drawn into the furrows by a harrow, and the seed is covered over. The word of God, that is, the preaching of Christ crucified, is compared to seed; it is sown in the heart, when you hear it preached and believe it. When the seed is sown, the birds come and try to pick it up: it is necessary to set some one to watch the field and drive them away. When we are praying to God, evil thoughts crowd into our minds, and make us forget what we intended to say. We must pray that they may be driven away.

Christ compares himself to a sower, and he, by the power of the Holy Spirit, sows good seed in the hearts of men, causing them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Do you recollect the parable of the Sower? May you be one of those who receive the seed in good ground.

We may remember, that whatever seed is sown, the produce will be the same; wheat produces wheat, and the other sorts of grain do the same. The Bible alludes to this when it tells us that "he that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity," and "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap."



REAPING THE GRAIN.

TIME goes on, the autumn comes, and the grain is ripe. Then the reapers cut it down and tie it up in bundles or sheaves. This is the happiest time of the year for the farmer: he has been many months anxiously watching his grain, and now he reaps the fruits of his toil. So will a true believer reap the fruits of his faith in the day when Christ comes; and he will be gathered by Christ into heaven, as the sheaves are gathered into the barn.

The labourers are paid higher wages during harvest time than usual, and they also look forward to this season with pleasure. So the followers of Christ receive their best rewards at the last. Now it is seen whether any thing has hurt the grain while growing or not; if insects or any thing else have injured it, the effects are now seen; nothing can be now done to make it better. Weeds often grow mixed with the grain, and injure it a good deal; when the time of harvest comes, they can do no more mischief. So in heaven the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. The harvest is often mentioned, to remind us of the day of judgment. We are invited to come to the Saviour, and are told

now is the day of salvation, but when death overtakes us, then it is too late. Remember the promise, "Those that seek me early shall find me." Do you recollect the history of Ruth? I think she sought the Lord betimes.

SEPARATING THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF.

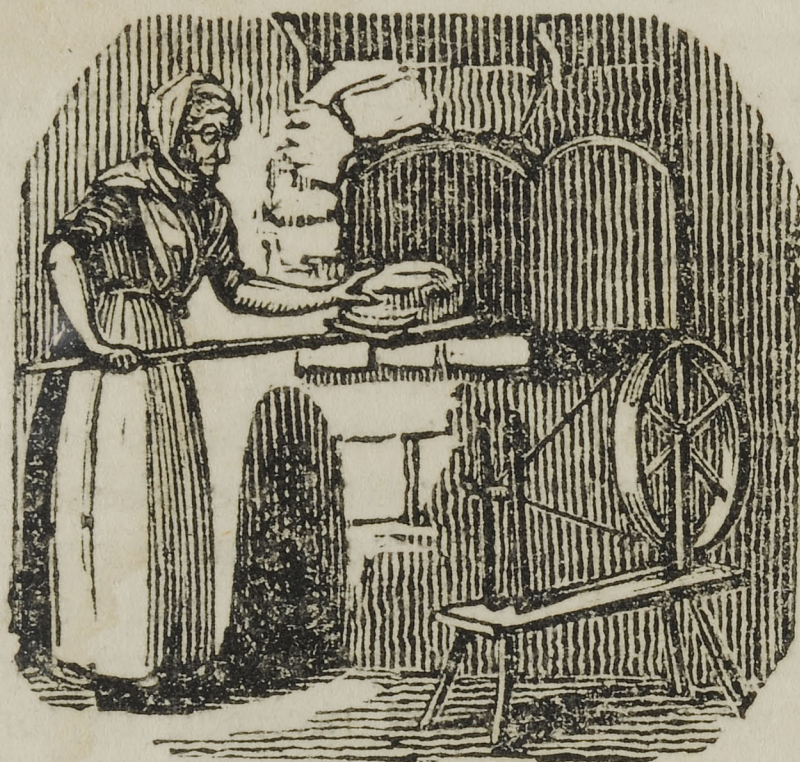
WHEN the grain is reaped, it is carried home. The sheaves are placed in stacks, and covered over with thatch, or else stored in barns. When the farmer thinks it is a proper time to send his grain to market to be sold, he has it thrashed out; that is, a man beats it with an instrument called a flail, and separates the grain from the straw and chaff. The grain is then put into sacks. The chaff is very light, and easily blown away by the wind; it is of little value compared to the grain. So our Saviour compares wicked men to chaff, and those who love him are compared to wheat.

GRINDING THE GRAIN INTO FLOUR.

THE grain must next be taken to the mill; there it is put between two stones,

one of which turns round, and the grain is soon ground to powder between them. It is then called flour. There are several sorts of flour, some sorts are much finer and better than others, and the best white bread is made from the finest. The Israelites were told to offer flour in their sacrifices to the Lord, and it was to be the best and finest flour. Let us remember, that in serving God we should try to do his will in the best manner we are able. We all receive many mercies every day, but we are apt to forget them; and we are the most inclined to forget the greatest mercies; those which relate to our eternal happiness. Oh, may we not forget these things as we are naturally inclined to do!





MAKING BREAD.

THE flour is now ready to be made into bread. For this purpose it is mixed with water and a little salt, and kneaded together; it is then called dough. Yeast or barm is next added, which makes it light and pleasant to eat. The oven is heated; when it is ready, the dough is cut into loaves, and they are put into the oven and baked. An oven is made very hot indeed. The prophet Malachi, speaking of God's judgment on the wicked, says "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and

the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Oh, then, my dear children, turn to the Saviour; he is ready, he is willing to save, and he alone can save you from the wrath to come. Whenever you eat bread, think of the blessed Saviour, who is the true bread that came down from heaven to feed and nourish our souls. He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven; whosoever shall eat of this bread shall live for ever." St. John, chapter vi.



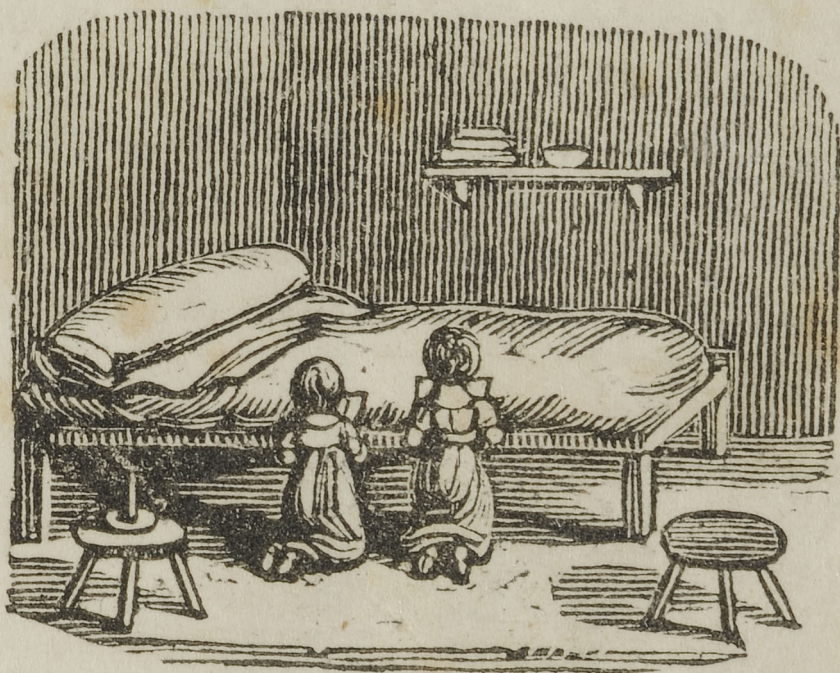


CONCLUSION.

You have now read about grain, how it grows, and how it is made into bread. Perhaps you did not think how much trouble it was to make bread. Do you recollect why there is all this trouble? When Adam sinned, God told him, "in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," meaning that he should not obtain bread to eat without much labour and toil. But it is also written, that "man shall not live by bread alone." Bread can only nourish his body, it cannot feed his soul; for this, even for our salvation, Christ came down from heaven. He said, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hun-

ger," meaning that all who felt the misery of sin, and the fear of God's wrath, and came to Christ, should have pardon and peace, and love from God, and be made to love Him, and enabled to do His will. This is true happiness. Will not you say, like the disciples, "Lord, evermore give us this bread?"

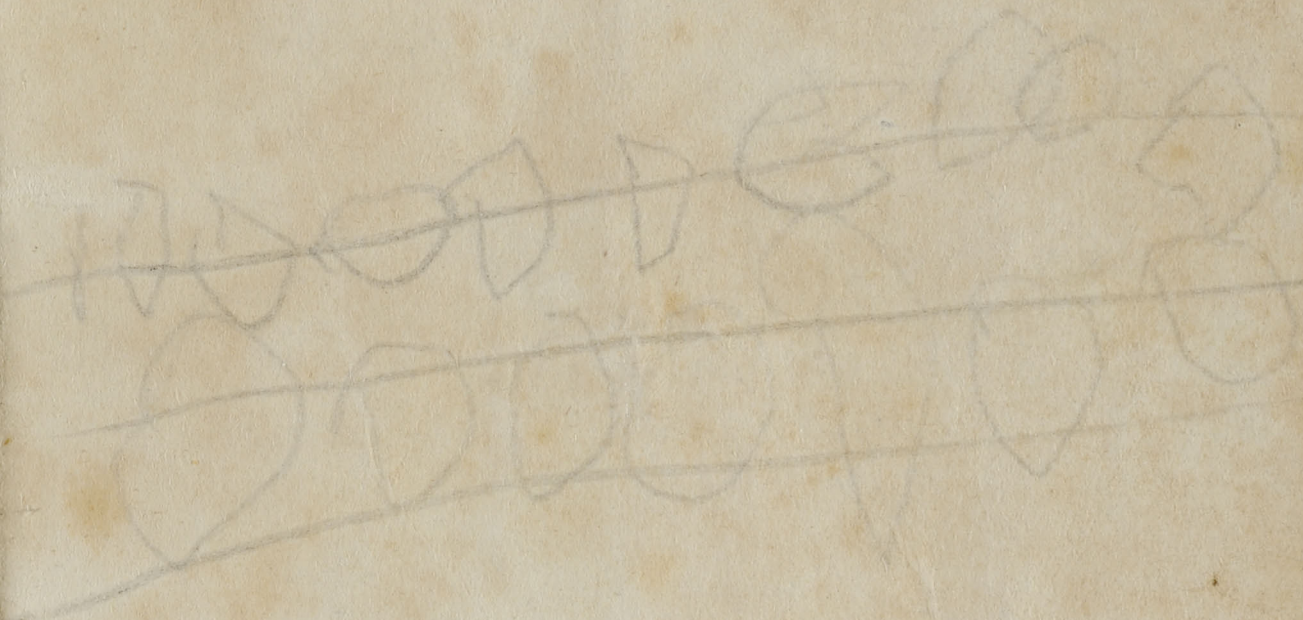
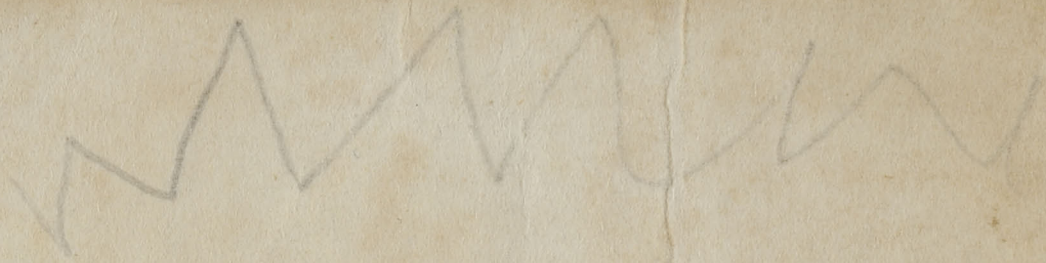
My dear children, if you really feel the evil of your own hearts, the misery of sin, and evil ways, then pray to Jesus and he will hear you. He said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Pray that God, the Holy Spirit,



may lead you to see your need of the Saviour, and his salvation. Also remember, that bread nourishes and strength-

ens the body; thus the Saviour, who called himself the bread that came down from heaven, strengthens the soul. He came from heaven, and suffered the death of the cross, to wash us from our sins in his precious blood. It is Christ only that works in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, causing us to will, and to do according to his good pleasure. Bread makes people hearty and strong, and able to bear fatigue. So Christ can strengthen us, and enable us to perform his will. We need bread every day. We need grace and strength from Christ every day, and all day long. The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and thus we ought every day to seek for Christ, beseeching him to be ever present with us, and reminding him of his promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."





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