

RUTH
THE
GLEANER
SEEKING
HER
INHERITANCE

By
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“The Lord will destroy the house of the proud; But He will establish the border of the widow.”—Proverbs 15:25.

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Preface

These lessons on Ruth and Esther appeared in Grace and Glory ten years ago. Now the Authoress has revised them and is sending them forth in book form. They are original and striking meditations. The interpretation of each book is given; then the dispensational setting of each is made plain. Finally, rich and racy personal lessons are deduced for our own individual interest and practical profit. These are two fascinating stories of two charming Bible characters. And our Sister's expositions of them also are alluringly interesting. Read and ruminat; then run with the glad tidings to others.

— (1926) The Publishers (Grace and Glory).

Note from Publisher (Grace Assembly):

Grace Assembly is privileged to publish and post this commentary on our Web Site, www.graceassemblysandiego.com. We believe these commentaries rank among the best for Bible students who desire to learn about the Word of God and the Pauline Revelation. These commentaries were written during the early days of the latter rain outpour of God's Spirit and they continue to provide enlightenment to the reader. These are the original writings of the authors. Grace Assembly has not made any changes or additions to these writings other than format changes for the convenience of the Bible student. In the left hand column we have added the King James Bible version as it applies to the commentary on that page. Where the authors have referred to scripture references without quoting the scripture in the text, we have added the scripture as a footnote. In some places the authors have referred to Bible versions other than the King James. Since Grace Assembly holds to the King James Version as the preserved text, we, therefore, have added in the text the same scripture from the King James Version. We trust these ancillary changes will be helpful to the Bible student.

The Introduction

“Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah. And they came to the country of Moab and sojourned there”—Ruth 1:1, 2.

In this simple, touching story of Ruth, lies hidden some of the deepest treasures of typical truth, waiting only the illumination of the Holy Spirit for its uncovering. Here are also deeply spiritual lessons which God has carefully prepared for us that we might be prepared for every good work and work.

The book of Ruth comes in between Judges and Samuel. This in itself is significant. Judges is the book of failure. The people whom Joshua brought into the land of Canaan in power and victory failed to hold their inheritance. Their enemies were soon in possession, as we see in Judges. Israel had failed in the wilderness to obey the law of God, failed to build up and maintain a righteousness of their own; but God went on with them. He showed them more grace, gave them the land of Canaan and urged them to enter in and take possession of all their inheritance; but they failed to do so. They proved themselves unable to take hold of what had been freely given to them. And the Lord was in all of their history. He wanted them to show their inability to keep the covenant of law, to which they so confidently made themselves a party. He desired that they prove their weakness and thereby teach the utter helplessness of mankind. In the book of Judges, their true character is plainly manifest. They could not even maintain the place which God had freely given to them. But this is just the extremity for man which gives God the opportunity to manifest Himself as the Savior. Hence, Ruth follows Judges. The kinsman redeemer, Boaz, is a most fragrant and striking representation of Christ, Jehovah-Jesus, upon whom hangs all the burden of His Father's house.

Judges not only gives us the history of an earthly people's failure, but far more. It is the figure of a greater failure, that of the visible Church. She has not maintained her heavenly place, nor her heavenly calling. Her decline and corruption, her broken condition, her strife and confusion, her captivity to innumerable errors are here depicted for our admonition; also God's wonderful manner of deliverance. The judges ruled for a while and there was victory. But after the death of a judge the decline was rapid and “the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord” (*“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD”—Judges 3:12 KJV*). Notice the evil was in God's sight. No doubt their neighbors and friends thought they were going on, wonderfully;

but “God looketh on the heart” (“*the LORD looketh on the heart.*”—*1 Samuel 16:7 KJV*).

The Judge ruling, figures some principle of truth for the Church which grips the heart in living experimental power and thereby causes an awakening among the people. In other words a revival is started. For instance in Luther’s day, it was foundation doctrine—justification by faith which caused the fire to blaze and burn for a number of years with unabated fervor; but alas, the Judge died—the power of truth declined, and soon the people were again in bondage. This happened many times. We see in the present day one of the Judges ruling. The truth of the Gift of the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, whom Jesus sent from the Father has come in living power to awaken and revive God’s heritage. But as in history each succeeding deliverance was of a weaker character, the last Judge, Samson, only began to deliver Israel when he died amidst the ruin which he himself brought upon his enemies. He cut off more of the Philistines (formalism), in his death than he did in his life. But they had first put his eyes out. This no doubt is the figure of the revival today. The people have been so tied to forms and ceremonies, to creeds and doctrines of men, that they are going to the other extreme. They are pulling down the whole edifice even though they themselves are caught in the falling debris. But bondage to the Philistine will be over when Samson gets thru with him.

The book of Ruth is an appendage to Judges. It was during this period “when the judges ruled” (V. 1), that Ruth came into the land of Palestine. In this little history, we have in type, not the Church, but God’s plan for Israel beginning to materialize even in our day; for the days of the “Judges’ rule” have not yet ended. The history of Christendom is not yet closed. God has not yet spued her out of His mouth. This is important. And observe it all comes in here in divine order just before the time of Samuel and Kings where we are shown in type the kingdom glory of Israel: first under Saul, the false king, the people’s choice, and later under David and Solomon, two aspects of the true King, God’s choice. Wondrously significant is all this divine history of an earthly people, freighted with wisdom so vast, purposes so infinite, narratives so interesting and lessons so instructive, that one is at a loss indeed, but for the Spirit, how to do it justice.

Elimelech and Family

The book of Ruth commences with a family. Elimelech, the father, is only mentioned in the beginning of the book. We are attracted at once to his name. It is majestic, meaning, “My Mighty One is King.” But his very first recorded action belies his name. There is a famine, a test in the land and he fails to trust His Mighty One. He leaves the land of the true bread; for notice, he lives in Bethlehem—“The House of Bread,” in the land of Judah—“Praise.” His profession is great; but his conduct is ignominious. Oh! how sad. We heard a

Chapter 1

1:1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

street preacher one evening, a fine illustration of this inconsistent conduct. He wanted to raise a certain sum and he was begging the people for it, not even mixing up the gospel with it. He had a good voice and a forceful personality. He coaxed and flattered the people at first; but when they did not respond, he changed his tactics, saying that they owed some of their money to God, and thus to him as a son of God. He gave this Scripture, “He that is born of God sinneth not” (“*whosoever is born of God sinneth not*”—1 John 5:18 KJV). He said he had a rich Father, and yet in the next breath denied it, by the fact that he insisted that the crowd raise the money for his needs or his rich Father’s needs. If God is a reality to us as a Father, we will not go to the world for help.

Elimelech went to Moab, the place of mere profession; for this is what Moab figures. Israel are there today. Elimelech’s name means nothing to him. It is only a theory that his Mighty One is King. Unbelief is the cause of his departure. And he takes his family with him. There is nothing so contagious as spiritual heart-failure. It spreads rapidly. They found refuge in Moab (the house of the back-slider), a name to live, without life, a form of godliness to uphold without power. This is the final condition of every one who leaves the place of praise (Judah) in time of testing.

1:2 And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

1:3 And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

1:4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

We are next shown the self-delusion of such an one. It is written, “He went to sojourn in Moab” (“*went to sojourn in the country of Moab*”—V. 1 KJV), then he and his family “continued there” (V. 2), and later, they “dwelled there about ten years” (V. 4). They did not intend to stay in Moab; but they did stay. We do not get out of the place of Plenty and Praise in a moment; but when we do get out we generally stay out awhile. We become used to lower ground. Moab seems a pretty good place to that one who has consented, in his heart, to leave Canaan. And when one is satisfied to dwell in Moab, after having lived on a higher plane, it is only a mighty miracle of God’s grace that will ever bring deliverance. Such a miracle was wrought in Naomi’s case; but Elimelech died prematurely, an exile from his fatherland. Many Christians have the same experience. “Many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep”—1 Cor. 11:30.

The sons, Mahlon, “Sick,” and Chilion, “Pining,” tell us the same story. They are, the weakling fruitage of unbelief. They grow up out of fellowship with God, marry out of the covenant and against the law (¹Deut. 23:3), and we are not surprised to hear of their early death. “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away” (John 15:2)—a backslider’s experience.

Naomi, the one of this family with whom we are especially concerned,

¹ Deuteronomy 23:3 “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:”

has a sweet name. Its root is of frequent occurrence in Scripture, and has always the meaning of attractiveness. It means “Lovely One,” or “Pleasant One.” It is a name of faith—of blessed, conquering faith. The Shulamite lays claim to this name when she cries, “I am my beloved’s and his desire is toward me” (Song of Solomon 7:10). Naomi is faith’s apprehension of the divine favor towards her. But here in Moab, it is an empty name. It is in sharp contrast to her condition. She is rather repulsive than lovely. She admits herself that her name is not fitting. “Call me not Naomi (pleasant), Call me Mara,” (bitter)—V. 20. Naomi is a name of Canaan’s land. “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O Love, for delights”—Song of Solomon 7:6.

1:5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

1:6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

1:7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

1:8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

1:9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

1:10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

But there is hope; for we read, “She was left,” and “then she arose” (V. 5, 6). Her afflictions were the very means that the Lord used to cut her loose from her surroundings, and her steps turned homeward; for she, like the prodigal son, heard of bread in her father’s house. The Lord arranges wonderfully in dealing with His people. But now observe the backslider’s counsel to her daughter-in-law. She has an opportunity to bring them with her; but even their outspoken desire in this regard, meets with no response except the question, “Why will ye go with me?” (V. 11). In other words, what good can I do you? In millennial days, the restored Naomi (Israel) will have the answer to this question. For “many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord. In those days ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you” (“*Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*”—Zech. 8:22, 23 KJV)—Zech. 8. But this will be when Israel has an apprehension of their much graced condition—their pleasantness. That time is almost at the door.

Naomi trimmed her lamp, similarly to the five foolish virgins, whose light has become dim. Israel in their national character, out of their land, in unbelief and utter despair, are Naomi. Their testimony as to the power and might of their God, typified by Elimelech, is dead. Their natural strength and hopes, as shown by their children, weak and sickly, must be gone entirely before this chosen people will be restored to their own land. They must despair of themselves before God will take them into favor again. It will be grace alone for Israel in that day.

Ruth and Orpha represent two classes among the Jews as they are returning to their own land. This is the testing time of the professor. Soon it will be shown among the Jews who has real love for Israel in their bereavement and

1:11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

1:12 Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

1:13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

1:14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

1:15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

1:16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

1:17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

1:18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

1:19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is* this Naomi?

1:20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

forlorn condition, real love for their land and their national testimony. One part, like Orpha, will cling to their worldly hopes and earth-born ambitions, in other words “go back to their gods” (V. 15), as Naomi said to her. Another part, as Ruth, the godly remnant spoken of throughout the Scriptures, will cling to their national traditions, their hopes, their worship, their temple, their Scriptures, their land and their God. They will stay close to Naomi, yea will refuse to be separated from her.

In this great Zionist movement which commenced some years ago among the Jews and has made such rapid progress toward the attainment of its ends, we see both of these classes standing with Naomi. Ruth represents the Jews that we call orthodox—those who are earnest in their desire after God and honest in seeking His favor. They really want to return to the land of promise; for they believe that the word of their prophets shall be fulfilled. And in these days they are actually seeing things coming to pass, even as some of their seers have foretold. Hence they cannot but expect the entire fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Orpha, on the other hand, figures the rationalistic, infidel Jew, who is called the reformed Jew (but we call him deformed), who has been drawn a little way with those whose hopes are bound up with Israel, yet whose hearts are not sincere, nor unselfish. These, as Orpha, will soon leave Naomi, their national hopes, too after a little discouragement, or unbelieving persuasion and openly return to Moab—a mere apostate profession, and finally end in idolatry—a worshiping of the image to which the beast gives life—¹Rev. 13:15. For when the antichrist comes, this class will be the “many” with whom he, “the prince,” will make a covenant for seven years—²Dan. 9:27.

We do not intend to convey the thought that the apostate mass of the nation are not returning to the fatherland. Probably the greater number are of this character. Orpha’s turning back simply figures the heart attitude of the one part of the nation, the mere professor. It is their spiritual condition that is so strikingly portrayed by Orpha. Her heart was not touched, nor stirred with affection for Naomi, as was the case with Ruth. The Jews of that character will refuse to ally themselves with Israel’s pure, national testimony as the ancient people of Jehovah, even tho’ they may be in the land.

Ruth the Moabitess

The lovely, winsome heroine of this beautiful love story, figures, as was

¹ Revelation 13:15 “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

² Daniel 9:27 “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

1:21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

1:22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

Chapter 2

2:1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* Boaz.

2:2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

2:3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech.

2:4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

2:5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel *is* this?

2:6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

2:7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

2:8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

said, the godly remnant of the Jews of the last days of whom we read so often in the prophets. They will return hand in hand with Naomi, aged and bitter in soul, but with hope reviving when she hears the glad message, that God had visited his people. So these two dear women go on their journey, an expressive picture of what we are privileged to see in our day among the Jews. Ruth, a youthful spirit of lowly faith, that trusts alone in pure mercy, is found allied with Naomi, the ancient, desolate and widowed Israel. Thus they reach Bethlehem—the House of Bread, and lo, it is the “beginning of barely harvest,” a most opportune time. The harvest is prophetic and typical also of the end of the age (¹Matt. 13:39), when the wheat is gathered into the garner and the tares are burned. In Ruth and Naomi, we have the wheat, the children of the Kingdom, being made ready for their King. And notice it is the “barley harvest,” which was the first grain to ripen—²Ex. 9:31, 32. The full harvest comes later. This certainly pictures the earliest moment of the return of the remnant of Israel.

And now we learn that Naomi has a kinsman—Boaz, a mighty man of wealth; but Ruth does not yet know him. It is she who suggests that she go and glean after him, whose name means “strength,” Already her heart is touched. She wants to find grace in the strong man’s sight. Yes, grace alone will suit a poor Moabitess. “Her hap was to light on a field belonging to Boaz” (Chap. 2:3). This was a “hap” that never would have happened if Ruth has remained with her gods in Moab.

Boaz himself now appears upon the scene, and as we would expect such a mighty one to appear, with blessing on his lips. “The Lord be with you” (Chap. 2:4), is his greeting. And then he beholds our winsome heroine, and his heart is won immediately, won by the poor Moabitess who has nothing to herself to command his attention except her helplessness and need. Boaz makes her welcome in his field, nay more, desires that she glean nowhere else. He tells her of his interest in her and that he has given instruction to his servants regarding her. She is favored indeed. And what does she reply to all his kind words? She falls upon her face and worships this great man. Ah, what grace he displays. No marvel she loves him. It is truly love at first sight.

Listen to his gracious answer. “It has been fully showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband, and how thou hast left thy mother and the land of thy nativity and art come to a people which thou knewest not”—Chap. 2:11. In other words “I know your works” (“*I know thy works*”—Rev. 2:2 KJV). All the nearest and dearest claims of nature have

¹ Matthew 13:39 “The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.”

² Exodus 9:31, 32 “And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* balled. But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.”

2:9 Let thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn.

2:10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I *am* a stranger?”

2:11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

2:12 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

2:13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

2:14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched *corn*, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

2:15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:

2:16 And let fall also *some* of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.

2:17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

2:18 And she took *it* up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

been overthrown by the strength of another love—and a people and a God whom thou knewest not. “A full reward be given thee of the Lord of Israel under whose wing thou hast come to trust”—Chap. 2:12. Beautiful language of divine grace. Ruth is comforted and fed. “She did eat and sufficed and left” (Chap. 2:14), that is, she could not appropriate all He gave her. There was much remaining after she was filled and satisfied.

But even this does not exhaust his grace. He is still concerned for her and active for her interests. “Let her glean even among the sheaves and reproach her not”—Chap. 2:15. Literally, “make her not blush.” Give her the respect due to the one for whom I care. Like his blessed Anti-type, he refuses to allow anyone to cast reproach upon the freedom of faith. “Let her alone,” is always His admonition. We cannot trust our Boaz too much. Doubting alone wearies and grieves Him.

Boaz continues his instruction to his servants—“Let fall some handfuls of purpose for her”—Chap. 2:16. That is, he wants her to get something that is intended only for herself. Not so much that which her diligence has secured, but that which his love has freely given. And notice, dear reader, it was after Ruth’s heart-talk with Boaz, that she gleaned so successfully. She had received such a vision of his love and grace that she became bold to take all she saw. And then she beat out all the straw. She would carry away nothing but the grain.

“And so she kept by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest and she dwelt with her mother-in-law”—Chap. 2:23. Remember Ruth figures especially, the remnant of Judah of the last days. Those who are first awakened to their sorrowful condition and thus will appreciate every little crumb of grace they may be enabled to glean. It is thru this first faith that God will work for blessing to the whole nation. He will draw them closer and closer, as Ruth was drawn, until they too will claim relationship with Him and ask Him to spread His skirt over them and thus act the part of a Kinsman.

Chapter 2 KJV Continued

2:19 And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day *is* Boaz.

2:20 And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

2:21 And Ruth the Moabite said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

2:22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

2:23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

Chapter Three

“And Naomi, her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek a resting-place for thee that it may be well with thee?”—Chap. 3: 1.

Chapter 3

3:1 Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?

The solicitude of Naomi for Ruth is wonderful. She seems more interested in her welfare and future possibilities than she does in her own. And all is so strikingly figurative of spiritual things. Ruth learning wisdom from Naomi, simply tells us that the remnant which the prophetic word declares are a special people, learn from the Scriptures of the place that their people have in the counsels of God. They find by searching its pages that they are destined for great things, the Kinsman-Redeemer, promised to the nation, is related to them. They find that they have a right to the redemption which was certified to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the covenant of grace and they begin to insist on their rights. They may grope in darkness for awhile, as Joseph’s brethren did, before they can truly believe that the Christ of Calvary is the Messiah of Israel, and that He belongs to them. It may be days and months that they will pore over the ancient writings before they will dare to take liberties with their great Kinsman, and claim his protection and help in their dilemma; but finally the day will come when they will believe and seek Him with all their heart regardless of anyone, or anything.

Ruth Seeking Rest

3:2 And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.

In this connection, we find Ruth no longer a gleaner. She is claiming now, seeking to be reinstated to the place and prestige which has been promised. According to her mother-in-law’s instruction, she seeks out Boaz as the kinsman, able to do for her what she is unable to accomplish for herself. Naomi has spoken all along about him and his relationship to them; but heretofore the fat has not been of any practical significance to either. But now things have changed. There is a new interest awakened. Ruth must have a resting place, and to find it she must seek it. Naturally Naomi begins to think of Boaz, and Ruth is bidden to put forth a personal claim upon him. How touchingly suggestive of the individual seeking after Christ today! We must all come to him for rest, and we will find even as Ruth that He is ready to receive us.

3:3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

3:4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

Naomi and Ruth’s attitude to the kinsman-redeemer is based upon the two following laws in Israel. The one, the law as to the redemption of an inheritance (¹Lev. 25:25) and that of raising up a brother’s name on his inheritance (Deut. 25:5-12); both of which things apply to Israel and are here clearly joined. Their inheritance must be redeemed as well as their name raised up. There must come the spiritual resurrection, the breathing of a new life upon the dry bones of Israel according to Ezekiel’s vision—Chap. 37. All this is

¹ Leviticus 25:25 “If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away *some* of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.”

3:5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

3:6 And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.

3:7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

3:8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

3:9 And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman.

taught with great tenderness and beauty in these typical things in the book of Ruth.

To sum up then, we see that the Moabitess (figuring the remnant of the Jews), learns from the dealings of God with the nation (figured by Naomi), lessons of redemption, but which only personal experience can interpret and bring results. Both heart and conscience must be searched out; the need must be truly seen and then there is something doing—the need is met. Yet at first there may be somewhat of a repulse which is difficult to understand; but the grace of Christ must be thoroughly seen before He can give them rest. The nearer kinsman’s rights and his power to redeem must be searched out and practically manifested as inadequate, before Christ can reveal His power to redeem.

“And it came to pass as midnight that the man was afraid and turned himself, and behold a woman lay at his feet: and he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine for thou art a near kinsman”—Ruth 3:8-9.

We have stated previously that Ruth is a representative figure, in her poverty, deep humiliation and altogether forlorn condition, of the godly remnant of Judah who will return to Palestine, seeking after the Lord in truth, and cleaving to their national hopes, as figured by Naomi. They will immediately commence to glean in the fields of their Boaz, namely Christ, their wealthy Kinsman. That is, they will very prayerfully and humbly search thru the Scriptures for the very smallest crumb of grace to satisfy their deep need. They will be satisfied with the least of the promises; for undoubtedly they will realize that the great promises are to the restored nation as a whole, of which they are but a small part.

Ruth faithfully followed Boaz’s great fields all thru barley and wheat harvest, and now her time of gleaning is past. She has grown in faith while she has been threshing out the grain. Naomi insists that Ruth must have a resting-place. She advises the seeking of Boaz as being their kinsman. Ruth, as the remnant, obeys the voice of Naomi, the ancient, to whom she cleaves, and claims her place under the protecting care of the kinsman.

We must be careful not to judge these simple, childlike Bible characters by the conventional standard of our day. It does not follow that our standard is right, or higher than theirs and that theirs was wrong or lower. High and noble motives may underlie actions that may seem to us unseemly. And then besides, we must ever remember that the power of the Most High overshadowed those scriptural characters, that these lessons might be written for our admonition, that we might be taught and thus exclaim with Paul, “O the depths of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (“*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge*

of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”—Romans 11:33 KJV).

Ruth’s approach to Boaz in this unconventional way, was no doubt a painful and humiliating ordeal for her sensitive womanhood. And this incident never would have occurred if the highest, purest motives had not actuated and sustained her. Her mother-in-law’s inheritance was lost forever and the family name extinct if there was no kinsman-redeemer. Just so it would be with Israel if there were no redemption. They have forfeited all title to their land, their name and their promises.

Naomi is correct in telling Ruth that she must have rest. Rest is only possible for a poor Moabite in a redeemer. When the Anointed of God cried to Israel in that far off day, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28); He was declaring Himself their Kinsmen, able and willing to redeem. The nearer kinsman, the law, only burdened them. It was “a yoke upon the neck”—Acts 15:10. It never gave rest. And this is the lesson which Ruth is about to learn as she takes refuge under the protection of the strong man, Boaz is winnowing barley at night in the threshing floor. And notice, Israel herself is the floor, according to the testimony of John, the forerunner of Christ. “Whose fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner and He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (“*Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” KJV)—Matt. 3:12. A night of awful affliction is coming upon Judah, in which the godly remnant will suffer as the wheat suffers under the flail of the thresher. It is thus loosed from the chaff. But blessed be God, “the fan is in His hand;” that is judgment must come; but it will be tempered with mercy. Thus it will work good for all them who love the Lord in that day. For this is a type of the dark night of prophecy—the time of “Jacob’s trouble.” Ruth will creep up close to her Redeemer, yea will lie down in utter abandonment at His feet and wait quietly until He awakens and takes notice of her. She will say, “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my love until He please”—S. S. 8:4.

Ruth Finding Rest

Assuredly this was a bold act, to claim this great man as her kinsman, but she has not been gleaning in the fields all summer for nought. Boaz’ special attention to her made her confident. She has learned something of the wondrous grace of Boaz and now, she is appropriating that sufficiency. And this is the rest into which our Kinsman-Redeemer is endeavoring to bring all His saints. He has said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls”—Matt. 11:29.

And this yielded attitude, of which Ruth sets us the example, is the only place in all the earth to find rest. Here we rest from toil and labor; here we rest from all responsibility. We put all our care for spirit, soul and body, on Him, roll everything over on the shoulders of our Boaz, our Strong One, and leave it there. We let Him stand up to our help, fight our battles and undertake for us in every respect. And here, in this utter abandonment of our own way and will, we find the rest that Jesus gives. It is that “good part” which Mary found and which Jesus said no one could take away from her. Martha, in her restless doing, did not realize that blessed rest.

Ah, what depths of humiliation some of the people of God have entered into of which others, dear, righteous souls, know nothing. What a bold, shameless act, according to man’s verdict! How the critics, the self-righteous would have sneered and made her a public example, if they had known. But blessed Boaz! He understood her attitude and later, as we read, he forbid anyone to let it be known that a woman had entered there. He knew the heart; he knew she was there, not only for herself; but her mother-in-law’s interests were involved. A great inheritance was at stake. Great issues called for instant and aggressive action. What did her shame and modesty amount to when weighed in the scales of the blessings that would accrue to the family of God at her expense? She saw the end, which was so wonderful, that her eyes were blinded to the present. Like the Lord Jesus Himself, she endured the shame, if she did not despise it, for the joy that was set before her—¹Heb. 12:2.

Observe too, beloved, that it was at night when Ruth slipped into the threshing floor, to the feet of Boaz. It pictures the time of sorrow which drives us to the feet of Jesus. There we learn more of His love and compassion in those few short hours of trial than in all the bright days, or years of prosperity which have preceded. It is in the night, the Psalmist tells us, that He giveth songs. There is still in us that which needs constant judgment; and indeed the nearer we walk with the Lord, the less of the flesh He allows. “How can two walk together except they be agreed?” (“*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*”—*Amos 3:3 KJV*). We pray for a closer walk; we pray that we may know Him better; we pray that we may grow in grace. Instead of the answer coming in the way we expected, it comes by way of deeper trials. We are sent to the feet of Jesus, necessitated to cling to Him, by the anguish and the need; humbled into the dust by the sorrow, or maybe the shame that is our portion. But oh, the glory in the morning, when the Lord talks to us and tells us that He understands and will arise for us. This more than compensates.

And now, for the first time we hear Ruth claiming. She claims Boaz as a kinsman-redeemer and insists upon her rights, as it were. This puts him under

¹ Hebrews 12:2 “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

3:10 And he said, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter: *for* thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

3:11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman.

3:12 And now it is true that *I am thy* near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

3:13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

3:14 And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

3:15 Also he said, Bring the veil that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and she went into the city.

3:16 And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

3:17 And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

3:18 Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

obligation and he does not shift the responsibility. He appears to appreciate the confidence she shows in him and tho' he admits that there is another with a prior claim to the place of kinsman, yet he asserts the fact that he will make him do his part, or tell the reason why. Ah, Ruth has found a powerful friend. Things are looking up for her. Boaz has more influence than anyone in Bethlehem, to speak in modern language. To have him on her side is to be safe indeed. He constitutes himself her protector. The fact that she claims him as such is wonderfully suggestive of our attitude to Christ. We do not come into all our inheritance without putting in our claim to it. We must take up our portion, settle down there and insist that our Kinsman-Redeemer protect and defend our inheritance. And He will do so according to our faith in this respect.

Boaz speaks with the keenest appreciation of Ruth's course toward himself. He does not upbraid her in the least. He encourages her. Thy latter kindness, he says, has been greater than thy former. Then thy confidence in Jehovah brought thee from thy country and thy kindred; but now thou hast shown still greater faith in Jehovah. Thou hast put aside all that was of mere nature; thou hast taken on the only place that a Moabitess can take—that of need and helplessness—and hast found grace in my sight. "Fear not. I will do all that thou requires" (V. 11 R. V.), he says. Yet he must add, "Howbeit there is a nearer kinsman than I. If he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part"—V. 12, 13. He promises to take up her case at the earliest possible moment. She is comforted, and rests with him until the morning, when she departs with her veil filled with six measures of barley. Only "the rich are sent empty away" ("*the rich he hath sent empty away.*"—*Luke 1:53 KJV*). The secret of all our blessing is to realize our unworthiness in anything we are, or can do to merit salvation. The Jew, as the nation, must yet learn the lesson which we, as individuals, are learning today.

The Kinsman-Redeemer

Chapter Four

“Then went Boaz up to the gate and sat him down there; and behold the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, Ho, Such a one; turn aside; sit here. And he turned aside and sat down”—Chap. 4:1.

Boaz did not let the grass grow under his feet. He wasted no time after Ruth’s touching appeal to him. The fact, that she so humbled herself to get his interest awakened in Naomi’s behalf as well as her own, was a powerful stimulus to his ardor. And it proved that he loved her. The poor Moabitess had won his heart by her surrender of all her pride and self-sufficiency to seek his protection and aid. He is not going to let her faith in him be disappointed in any respect. From this time forth, he intends to make her interest his business. She has a “strong ally” now—Boaz in his name.

Hence he is astir easily. The pressing service upon his heart requires haste. He seeks the gate of the city, the most public place available. It is the gate devoted to righteous judgment—¹Deut. 17:5. It was called Miphkad—“place of review,” in Nehemiah’s reconstruction—²Neh. 3:31. Satan may do his work in the dark, but not Boaz; for whether type, or all-glorious antitype, he calls all to witness to His power to redeem; “For this thing was not done in a corner”—Acts 26:26. The word gate seems to give character to all that was accomplished. It was done openly that all might know the happy consequences regarding Ruth’s inheritance.

Immediately upon the scene appears Elimelech’s nearer kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken. He addresses him somewhat disrespectfully. “Ho, Such a one,” he calls him: “turn aside and sit down here”—V. 1. His name is not given us and this is in itself important in this book where we are carefully informed of every character, that we may find the significance of everyone. Surely then, we are justified in saying that there must be equal significance in the fact of its omission at this place. Of course his name is known and presently we may be enabled to guess the riddle. And this much we may gather at the outset that Boaz does not think much of this fellow that has a prior right, as it were, to redeem his friend’s inheritance. There is no honor attached to Such a one, and the reason of this we shall shortly see.

After he is seated and ready for business, Boaz requests ten elders also

¹ Deuteronomy 17:5 “Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.”

² Nehemiah 3:31 “After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner.”

Chapter 4

4:1 Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

4:2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

4:3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which *was* our brother Elimelech's:

4:4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy *it* before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*: but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: for *there is* none to redeem *it* beside thee; and *I am* after thee. And he said, I will redeem *it*.

4:5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

4:6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem *it*.

to sit down and witness to what is about to follow. There is to be a trial as it were. The court is set in order and then Boaz proceeds. He opens the case to the nearer kinsman and presses on him his duty as regards the redemption of the land which had belonged to Elimelech and his family. Such a one admits his duty in this regard and professes perfect willingness, as well as ability to redeem the land, tho' he displays none of the loving interest that is manifested by Boaz. He would even pass by as did the priest and Levite the man on the road to Jericho if he had not been halted by Ruth's defender and friend. The latter, Boaz, is set upon her redemption whether it will be his right, or the other fellow's right. She shall have the inheritance and the family name restored in Israel, or he will know the reason why.

Such a one says, "I will redeem the land"—V. 4. So far so good, says Boaz; but there is more than the land in question. At the same time you must take Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead and raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the erstwhile redeemer has to acknowledge his inability. I cannot redeem it for myself lest I mar mine own inheritance. Then he goes further and acknowledges Boaz's right and power to redeem, inasmuch as he has failed in this respect. "Redeem my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it" (V. 6), he says. And this is exactly what Boaz desires. He can proceed now with all haste; for the nearer kinsman has given over the charge to him, admitting that he is the next nearest in the line of redemption.

Oh, this is all so wonderfully suggestive of deep things and so fragrant of spiritual realities that we dare not pass over this part too hurriedly. The word of God is without a peer in the wisdom displayed in just such hidden, perplexing questions, that shut us up entirely to the illumination of the Holy Spirit. No one discerns "Such a one" without divine guidance; but when once named, all is clear. It is the law of God, the covenant of Mt. Sinai, that is thus apparently disrespectfully addressed by Boaz. As we hear him say, "I cannot redeem," the Spirit at once turns our thoughts to the book of Romans, chapter eight. There we are introduced to the nearer kinsman who is a failure—"What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh"—Rom. 8:3. It is used there in a different connection, it is true; but the force of truth is the same. Whether for the obtainment of practical righteousness from the flesh-life, or for redemption, its weakness is apparent in either case. And every one of its ten commands bears witness to confirm its inability to redeem.

But what about the land? Some one enquires. Oh, it is easy to redeem the land; for it never has been sold. We read, "The land shall not be sold forever; for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me"—Lev. 25:23. But we hear the Apostle exclaim, "I am carnal, sold under sin"—Rom. 7:14. The law has no difficulty as to the redemption of the land, but the poor Moabitess' redemption is out of the question. It was the principle of the law by which she

was condemned. Observe that the title Moabite is continually emphasized regarding Ruth, despite all her attractiveness. Therefore, in the face of this conceded truth, how is it possible for the law, the nearer kinsman, to redeem her, when it is written that “a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation forever” (*“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:” KJV*)—Deut. 23:3. Certainly the law cannot redeem those whom it thus condemns. Its own inheritance would be jeopardized. The law is absolutely against her. It accuses, convicts and cannot justify a Moabite. For if it admitted those whom it was pledged to keep out, where would be the power of the law?

But someone may ask, How is “Such a one” a nearer kinsman than Boaz?—the law than Christ? We must remember that this was not said until Naomi, in full harmony with that legal spirit which we have seen her to represent, directed Ruth to claim relationship. As soon as a man claimed anything, he was always referred to the law. It is the nearer kinsman to man in the flesh; especially is this true of Israel. The question, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18) is the same thing in principle. It is Naomi again claiming kinship with Boaz for the Moabite. And immediately the questioner is referred to “Such a one,” “What is written in the law? How readest thou?” (Luke 10:26) is the answer. We, as well as Israel, must all dispense with the law, before we can come into our full redemption rights in Christ.

We are now to view a peculiar symbolic custom founded upon a divine origin. The nearer kinsman, admitting his weakness, takes off his shoe and hands it to Boaz, saying, “Buy it for thee”—V. 8. But the ordinance is not strictly carried out. It appears to have degenerated into a mere formal tradition. According to Moses, the one unable to redeem was treated with the strongest mark of contempt. His face was spat upon, and he not only lost his name of respect, but had another name given to him. Henceforth he is to be known as “He that hath his shoe loosed” (*“And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.”—Deut. 25:10 KJV*)—Deut. 25:9-10. Here then at last, we have found out “Such a one’s” true name.

In the latter time of Israel’s history the ordinance had lost much of its reality. There was no evidence of shame being connected with it. “Such a one” goes away with undiminished reputation and respectability. No one is daring enough to cry out his name, far less to spit in his face. And he has a very similar standing in our day, being treated with almost equal honor with the true Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Such a one” calmly looses his shoe and gives it to Boaz, as much as to say, “Stand in my shoes; take my place: I give you the right to redeem the Moabite and the inheritance.” He seems very little affected one way, or the

4:7 Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a testimony in Israel.

4:8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

other. And this too is a principle of law. It has no heart. “Such a one” cares nothing for Ruth, the Moabitess. He does not love her, nor her cause. He can give her up with perfect composure, without a sigh, or a tear. This is a true picture. The law cannot show mercy. It knows nothing of love, or pity, or grace. Hence we ought to rejoice that we see its shoe unloosed and passed on to another, the One who is mighty to save. As a Scripture teaches. “There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof”—Heb. 7:18. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death: for what the law could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh”—Rom. 8:2-3.

Thus we see that the legal principle is set aside entirely. It has been made void, disannulled. It has no “shoe,” no standing as a redeemer; for it cannot set free and justify the sinner whom it curses and condemns. No more than can the law of the land show mercy and free the breaker of its commands. The law cannot pay the penalty, or give bail for the fellow it sentences to prison. Another may come in and do that for the transgressor, the breaker of the law; but such is not the part that the law plays. Hence, He that hath his shoe loosed should be kept in his place. He is not weak in himself. It is only in the place of redemption that his weakness is apparent. Another stands in his shoes. The covenant of law has been superseded by the covenant of grace. The able Kinsman-Redeemer, Christ, has come and no more has “Such a one” any right to the place of the kinsman. And yet we know that there are many who hold him in reputation, even many who believe, still have respect for the fellow that has his shoe loosed. The Galatian saints of Paul’s day rather liked his gloomy face and dwelling. They lived in his house under his restrictions for awhile; but they had to keep all the shades down, else some of the sunshine of God’s heart of love would penetrate its gloom and banish the self-occupation and self-glorification. God Himself is dissatisfied with “Such a one.” He finds fault with the law as a redeemer; for it is written, “Behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”—Heb. 8:8. But if the first covenant, the law, had been able to redeem, then there would have been no need of another. Christ would not have come into the world and have died for us, and introduced the covenant of grace. Hence if God finds fault with “He-that-hath-his shoe-loosed,” calling him weak and unprofitable, why should we tolerate him in the capacity of redeemer in any measure?

Have you ever noticed the manner in which our dear Apostle Paul dealt with the nearer kinsman? Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he spit in the face of “Such a one” and loosed the shoe of the weak and unprofitable kinsman, for our edification and instruction. He said, with surprise to some that venerated him, “But after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in

bondage?” (“*But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*” KJV)—Gal. 4:9. He speaks contemptuously of “Such a one.” He dares to name the nearer kinsman, the principle of law (that was so dear to those people; for upon the doing of its requirements they depended for salvation), as weak, incapable and impotent to give to, or do anything for them. In fact he says that so far from giving man any power to save himself by its help, it robs him of even that little which he has. Surely we ought to loose the shoe of “Such a one” when Paul, our dear Apostle, so insultingly spits in his face.

A Necessary Distinction

We would note a clear distinction, which the Scripture makes, between the covenant of law, given by God as His standard of righteousness, and as used by man. In the case of the former, it is “holy, just and good” and the new man recognizes this aspect of the law and delights in it—¹Rom. 7:22. In this case, as God’s standard of righteousness, it is anything but weak. “Such a one” still has a shoe on one foot. It can and does condemn all of mankind; for they all come short of its requirements. It levels all men to one measure, the common plane of “guilty before God,” shut up before the bar of justice without hope of doing better, weak, helpless and undone—²Gal. 2:19. On the other hand, as a principle of redemption for condemned and sinful men getting back to God, or as a means of holiness after they are saved, it is utterly weak, unprofitable and beggarly, for then it is put up as a rival of Christ. It is set in his place. Do not marvel then that the Spirit of God spits in its face, as it were, and puts it on a level with the heathen idolatry in which the Galatian Christians had been living before they were saved—³Gal. 4:19. “How turn ye again?” (Gal. 4:9) He asks them.

Boaz Redeems

“And Boaz said unto the elders and all the people, ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s and all that was Chilion’s and all that was Mahlon’s of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife; to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day”—Chap. 4:9.

The full confession of “Such a one,” that he is unable to redeem Ruth the Moabitess, is at once followed by Boaz appealing to the ten witnesses—the

4:9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

¹ Romans 7:22 “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:”

² Galatians 2:19 “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.”

³ Galatians 4:19 “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”

4:10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye *are* witnesses this day.

4:11 And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:

4:12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

ten commandments. He insists that they stand forth and testify that he had righteously acquired all that was Elimelech's, Mahlon's and Chilion's, as well as Ruth the Moabitess. He is able to redeem her, as well as the land, and thru her to restore the inheritance to the family of Naomi. Several commands of the Decalogue witnesses the incompetency of the law to redeem. If always these ten witnesses and no others were called in question, how soon and simply could the case be settled. But folks make this great mistake by reasoning that because God is merciful, He will not demand the righteousness which the law requires and which the ten commandments specify, but will accept the best we can do. Whereas He never lowers His standard. His ten fiery laws must be obeyed. He never can accept less than that which is lawful and right. Moreover Christ is no helper to the acquiring of a human righteousness, or an over-plus to our deficiencies. It is either the nearer kinsman, the law, or Christ as our Redeemer. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"—Gal. 2:21. And the very law itself is a witness to Christ, declaring every self-judged believer in Jesus to be justified freely by His grace thru the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—¹Rom. 3:21, 24. And now it is Satan's mouth that is shut up, while the saint has his mouth opened to show forth praises of Him who has called us unto the perfect acceptance of the Beloved.

There are several other instances in the Scripture of the proclamation of the same perfect justification of the believer from the lips of even his enemy, as it were. Listen to Balaam's prophecy. It begins with a challenge to the one who had sent the prophet to curse Israel. "Rise up Balak, and hear! Hearken, thou son of Zippor!" (*"Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor—Numbers 23:18 KJV*). Listen! Pay close attention! Come up to the gate! I am going to justify the ungodly, and what can you say against it? No doubt He is addressing the spiritual Balak, the "destroyer," behind the man, whose business it is to seduce and then to accuse the people of God before His throne day and night. He endeavors to put God into the same dilemma that the Jews intended to put Jesus, when they brought the woman taken in adultery—John 8:1-11. He is either not a just God, or no Savior. The devil insists that He cannot be both, and gets men to reason the same way. But God has found a way out of the dilemma. In full view of the enemy, He has set forth His own Son as the propitiation for sinners, that He might be a just God and yet at the same time a merciful Savior. By allowing His own Son to be slain, He has put away the sin that would otherwise make His blessing of man impossible. And this is the glory of God, that "His own right hand has brought salvation." He will brook no rival here. He is mighty to save! Our Boaz is strong to redeem.

¹ Romans 3:21 "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;"

Romans 3:24 "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

Dispensational Outline

“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and the Lord gave her conception and she bare a son. And the woman said unto Naomi, Blessed be thou of the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel”—Vs. 13, 14.

4:13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

4:14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

4:15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy* life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

4:16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

4:17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

We have now, in the remainder of the book, figures of marvelous dispensational truths. A babe is born to Ruth, after she becomes the wife of Boaz, who has redeemed her. The child is hailed with great rejoicing; but none welcomes its arrival with more deep delight than Naomi. She now confesses to her beautiful name. She is no longer Mara—“bitter,” but Naomi—“pleasant.”

With the advent of the newcomer, Boaz is apparently crowded out. The babe occupies the centre of the stage. He is said to be the kinsman-redeemer, the restorer of life to Naomi and the support of her old age, the hope of the house of Elimelech. Yet while type gives way to type, in all and ever, we view the One blessed Antitype; in every age the One matchless Figure upon the screen, to whose worthiness and power to redeem the universe of God shall shortly bear witness—Rev. 4.

Naomi, as we intimated, represents Israel, not apostate, infidel Israel, but legal chastened Israel, identified with the covenant of law. She is thus, “old and ready to vanish away” (“*Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*” *KJV*)—Heb. 8:13. Yet before she is put away, she shall have a young life laid in her arms, the fruit of another, a better and enduring covenant, that of grace. And marvel, of marvels, Naomi becomes nurse to the child that is thus born. It is only thru him that the family name is restored. Yes, truly, only thru Christ joined to the feeble remnant of the Jews in the end, who accept His grace, will the nation of Israel be restored in the earth.

And the prophets witness of the glorious supernatural result of such a union. “The children that thou shalt have after thou has lost the other shall again say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me. Then thou shalt say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children? Behold I was left alone; these where were thy?” (“*The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?*”—*Isa. 49:20, 21 KJV*)—*Isa. 49:21.*

The prophet speaks of many children while the babe born to Ruth is but one, yet they signify the same. So closely does Christ identify Himself with His people that there is real unity between them. Obed, the name given to the child by Naomi’s women friends (type of the nations that rejoice with Israel in her

renewal of life), signifies “servant.” The Messiah is constantly brought before us in this role in the book of Isaiah, from chapter 41 to 53; but after the latter chapter, with its clear for-view of Christ’s sufferings, we read no longer “My Servant,” but “My servants,” to the very end of the book. These latter, the pious remnant, are from now on owned by Jehovah according to the value of the atoning work of Christ. Therefore that little babe in Naomi’s bosom, figures both the Messiah of Israel and the beginning of the nation of Israel.

Not For the Church

Some have seen in the book of Ruth personal lessons referring to the Church, typical of Christ and the bride; but while the principle on which Israel and the Church come into blessing is the same, pure sovereign grace, yet in the book of Ruth, Israel is in view, we are sure. “Jerusalem that now is, is in bondage with her children” (*“Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.”—Gal. 4:25 KJV*), the Apostle wrote almost two millenniums ago; but she is not always to remain in this condition. The voice of all Scripture is in sweet harmony to the contrary. God will have a new Jerusalem on earth, builded to express Himself there, as well as in the heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore tho’ we may see in Ruth beautiful personal lessons of God’s way with us, as also our ways with God; yet the earthly people are primarily in view in this book. And we are not rightly dividing the Word if we teach otherwise.

Nameology in Ruth

The book closes with a string of names, which would have but very little interest, or profit for us, if it were not for the marvelous meaning, as we search them out. There appears to be one consistent idea running thru all of them, the expression and expansion of the divine life in Jehovah’s beloved Israel, after He, the King, comes to the throne. The first,

Phares—“a breaking forth,” is not difficult of interpretation as relating to anyone in whom resurrection life is implanted. They must break forth on the right hand and on the left—¹Isa. 54:3.

Hezron—“to be green,” the second name in the series, surely is indicative of the vital energy that will be pent up in the nation. The green blade will come after the breaking forth of the seed. Then the next result;

Ram—“exalted,” surely harmoniously informs us of growth, just as the blade increases into the stalk with its “ear,” finally in evidence. So is the unfolding of divine life in the soul whether in the individual, or in Israel. The next name shows us more.

4:18 Now these *are* the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

4:19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

¹ Isaiah 54:3 “For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”

4:20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

4:21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

4:22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

Amminadab—“my willing people,” is the result of the true spiritual growth. It manifests itself in a spontaneous delight in God and in His will. The Perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, so beautifully exemplified this delight and so expressed those sentiments in His words, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight”—Matt. 11:26. And everything, apparently, was going wrong at the time. It is into this joyous obedience that every child of God is sanctified—¹2 Pet. 1:2. It is that submission of will that brings rest—²Matt. 11:29. It is a sign of perfect redemption in its result, whatever the dispensation, when the rebel, man, thus can be brought into such harmony with God. It is fruit in full ear. The following name continues to emphasize experience.

Nahshon—“to shine,” teaches that the one who grows will shine. The “willing people” are always the luminaries in their day. It is so now; and it will be so in the time of Israel’s regathering. They will be the light of the whole world. Their city set upon a hill cannot be hid in the millennium. The next name emphasizes another phase of salvation.

Salmon—“raiment,” speaks of the garments of salvation with which the people are clothed, waiting the Kinsman-Redeemer to whom they will be united.

Boaz—“strength,” is He. They will recognize and accept Him as the One willing and able to redeem—their Lover and Husband. And then they will serve as none ever served, as the next name indicates. **Obed**—“servant,” becomes their happy occupation. They will say, as the Psalmist, “O, Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, the son of Thy handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds” (“O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.” *KJV*)—Ps. 116:16. Redemption is thus the power of service. It gives character to the ministry of the saints in any and every age. The next name,

Jesse—“Jehovah is,” tells the reason of the exaltation of service. Jehovah becomes a servant. He is linked up with those that serve. We see Him thus in the Gospel records. Especially in Mark’s narrative, do we view Him in this character. Then the following name is in fullest harmony,

David—“the beloved king,” most wonderfully prophetic, not only of Christ, God’s beloved Servant and King, but also of Israel, the nation that will reign over the world. They will be exalted on the earth when Christ as King is on His throne in the heavenlies. The energy of the Divine life will manifest itself to the fullest extent in that nation of destiny, so demonstrative and unusual in

¹ 2 Peter 1:2 “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,”

² Matthew 11:29 “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

even their national development. Oh, what a time awaits this old world! A jubilee indeed, when one whole nation, at least, will be regenerated, willing and obedient to God, and reign in the fear of the Lord. The angels will surely desire to look upon such a scene. The metamorphosis will be so startling that they will indeed marvel. A nation of rebels will be changed to a nation of willing subjects, devoted servants to Jehovah, in one day, and own His lordship with delight. That may well astonish the universe.

The story of Ruth ends beautifully. We can almost hear the refrain which is familiar to many of us, who have read novels, "They were married and lived happily ever after." But in this case there is the typical significance to give reality and add value to the narrative. We believe that they did live happily afterward and love each other to the end of their life, because it figures Jehovah and his people in a union, never again to be dissolved. It will be a marriage under the covenant of grace, God Himself the party of the first part, as well as the party of the second part; and the covenant allows of no divorce. Jehovah takes upon Himself, not only to be faithful to them, but stands back of them and guarantees their faithfulness to Him. The nation will be one with their King and the earth will be such a scene of transformation and reconstruction as no vision can portray, no tongue can tell. Well may we all exclaim,

Oh, happy earth,

Where all is mirth,

When Jesus reigns supreme.