

The
Romance of
Redemption

As revealed in
The Book of Ruth

1/- net

1/2 post free

By
Alfred Mathieson

*Author of "Chart of the Study
and Structure of Revelation"*

THE STUDENT'S LIBRARY OF BIBLE HELPS AND EXPOSITIONS

Uniform Binding in Black Art Cloth. Gold Title on Back.

BIBLE STUDENT'S COMPANION, THE. A Cyclo-
pedia, Concordance, and Commentary in one volume. 5/ net.

BIBLE TEXT CYCLOPEDIA. A complete classification of
Scripture Texts under List of Subjects. By Jas. Inglis. 5/ net.

CRUDEN'S COMPLETE CONCORDANCE, with Life
of Author, Proper Names, etc. *Square Shape.* 10/ net.

EARTH'S EARLIEST AGES, and their connection with
Spiritism and Theosophy. By G. H. Pember, M.A. 5/ net.

EMBLEMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Detailed Studies
of the Different Emblems. By F. E. Marsh. 4/ net.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, THE. A Verse-by-
Verse Commentary, with Notes Analytical and Exegetical
By C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, M.A. 6/ net.

EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS, THE. A com-
plete Commentary. By C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, M.A. 4/ net.

EVANGELISTS, THE. Choice Meditations upon the Four
Gospels. Full of soul-satisfying food. By J. G. Bellet. 4/ net.

EXPOSITION OF THE REVELATION and Prophetic
Outlines, with Articles on The Coming Week, etc. By Walter
Scott. 5/ net.

FACTS AND THEORIES AS TO A FUTURE STATE.
By F. W. Grant. A Masterpiece on this Subject. 6/ net.

FIVE HUNDRED BIBLE READINGS. Heavenly Light
from the Divine Lamp of Truth. By F. E. Marsh. 4/ net.

FULLY FURNISHED; or, The Christian Worker's Equip-
ment. Thirty-four Concise Studies. By F. E. Marsh. 4/ net.

GOSPEL AND ITS MINISTRY, THE. A Handbook on
Evangelical Truth. By Sir Robert Anderson. 3/6 net.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, THE. A devotional exposition
with notes. By William Kelly. 6/ net.

GOSPEL OF LUKE, THE. A Devotional Exposition with
Notes and several Indices. By William Kelly. 6/ net.

JOURNEYS OF JESUS CHRIST, The Son of God. With
large Chart in colours. By A. T. Schofield, M.D. 3/6 net.

NEW ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, THE; or, The Marvels
of Modern Missions. By A. T. Pierson. 5/ net.

ONE THOUSAND NEW BIBLE READINGS. A book
of Suggestive Themes to Busy Workers. By F. E. Marsh.
6/ net.

PLAIN PAPERS ON PROPHETIC SUBJECTS. A
Comprehensive Survey of Prophetic Glory. By W. Trotter.
5/ net.

STUDY OF THE MIRACLES, THE. A complete bird's-
eye view of the subject. By Ada R. Habershon. 5/ net.

STUDY OF THE PARABLES, THE. A treatise eminently
stimulating and suggestive. By Ada R. Habershon. 4/ net.

Postage extra: 1 Copy 6d.; 2 Copies 9d.; 3 Copies 1/.

PICKERING & INGLIS, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS
229 Bothwell St., Glasgow; 14 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4

The Romance of Redemption

AS

Revealed in the Book of Ruth

BY

ALFRED MATHIESON

Author of "Chart to the Study and Structure of the
Book of Revelation," etc.



PICKERING & INGLIS

14 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4
229 BOTHWELL STREET, GLASGOW, C.2

OFFICES AND AGENTS.

LONDON: PICKERING & INGLIS, 14 Paternoster Row, E.C.4
GLASGOW: PICKERING & INGLIS, 229 Bothwell Street.
NEW YORK: THE BOOKSTALL, 113 Fulton Street.
NEW YORK: LOISEAUX BROTHERS, 1 East 13th Street.
NEW YORK: GOSPEL BOOK DEPOT, 65 Bible House.
NEW YORK: CHR. ALLIANCE PUBLISHING Co., 260 W. 44th Street.
CHICAGO: WM. NORTON, 826 North La Salle Street.
BUFFALO: S. S. TRACT SOCIETY, 37 Market Arcade.
BOSTON: HAMILTON BROS., 120 Tremont Street.
PHILADELPHIA: GLAD TIDINGS Co., 6133 Catherine Street.
LOS ANGELES: BIBLE INSTITUTE, 536 South Hope Street.
DETROIT: CENTRAL BOOK DEPOT, 703 Fine Art Buildings.
BALTIMORE: A. HARDCASTLE, 709 Culvert Buildings.
MINNEAPOLIS: J. H. FLEMING, 123 Seventh Street.
PORTLAND, ORE.: A. BAIN, 602 Stock Exchange Buildings.
CLEVELAND, OHIO: I. C. HERNDEN, 7313 Wadepark Ave.
SPRINGFIELD: PUBLISHING HOUSE, 336 W. Pacific Street.
ST. LOUIS, MO.: FAITHFUL WORDS PUBLISHING Co., 2933 Park Av.
YORK: GRACE PUBLISHING HOUSE, 325 W. North Street.
OAKLAND: WESTERN BOOK DEPOT, 1817 Telegraph Ave.
TORONTO: A. SIMS, 5 Simpson Avenue.
TORONTO: TRACT SOCIETY, 8 Richmond Street, E.
TORONTO: EVANG. PUBLISHERS, 858 College Street.
TORONTO: BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOT, 1109 Bay Street.
WINNIPEG, N.—W. BIBLE DEPOT, 184 Alexander Ave.
CHETHAM, ONT.: C. J. STOWE, 231 Lacroix Street.
ORILLIA, ONT.: BIBLE BOOK AND TRACT DEPOT.
KITCHENER: CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE PUBLISHING Co.
SASKATOON: BIBLE DEPOT, 223 W. 22nd Street, East.
VANCOUVER: E. M. JACKS, 2290 Fourth Avenue, W.
VICTORIA: VICTORIA BOOK DEPOT, 1025 Douglas Street.
SYDNEY: A. DALRYMPLE, 189 Hay Street.
SYDNEY: CHRISTIAN DEPOT, 170 Elizabeth Street.
MELBOURNE: BOOK DEPOT, 288 Little Collins Street.
MELBOURNE: T. K. BAGSTER, Flinders lane.
BRISBANE: QUEENSLAND BOOK DEPOT, Albert Street.
AUCKLAND: H. L. THATCHER, 135 Upper Symonds Street.
AUCKLAND: SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION, 325 Upper Queen Street.
DUNEDIN: BATES & LAWSON, 38 George Street.
PALMERSTON NORTH: JAMES G. HARVEY, Main Street.
CHRISTCHURCH: G. W. PLIMSOLL, 84 Manchester Street.
BELGAUM, INDIA: W. C. IRVINE, Christian Depot.
BANGALORE: A. M'D. REDWOOD, Frasertown.
ITALY: A. BUTIRUM, Galleria Guerci, Alessandria.
HONG-KONG: M'KENSIE, 13 Cheung Chow Island.
TOKIO: JAPAN TRACT SOCIETY, 30 Tambi-ika, Akasaka.

And through most Booksellers and Colporteurs.

Contents.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Introduction,	5
	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOOK,	6
	THE HOUSEHOLD,	9
	THE HOME,	10
II.	The Emigration,	11
	THE DECLENSION,	12
	THE FIRST AFFLICTION,	13
	THE AFFILIATION,	14
	THE SECOND AFFLICTION,	15
III.	The Restoration,	17
	THE DESOLATION,	17
	THE AFFECTION,	19
	THE DECISIONS,	20
IV.	The Renunciation,	22
	THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION,	23
	THE SEPARATION,	25
	THE APPROPRIATION,	27
	THE CONSECRATION,	28
	THE RECEPTION,	31
V.	The Relation—Found,	35
	THE GLEANING,	35
	THE GREETING,	38
	THE GRACE OF BOAZ,	40
	“HANDFULS OF PURPOSE,”	43
	“GOEL,”	45
VI.	The Relation—Claimed,	48
	THE KINSMAN,	50
	THE CHARACTER OF RUTH,	54
VII.	The Redemption,	56
	EFFECTING THE REDEMPTION,	56
	THE “NEAR KINSMAN,”	59
	THE “LOOSED SHOE,”	61
	UNITING THE REDEEMED,	62

The Book of Ruth.

Analysis.

- I. **The Emigration,** Chap. 1. 1-5.
 - I. THE DECLENSION.
 - II. THE FIRST AFFLICTION.
 - III. THE AFFILIATION.
 - IV. THE SECOND AFFLICTION.

- II. **The Restoration,** Chap. 1. 6-22.
 - I. THE DESOLATION.
 - II. THE AFFECTION.
 - III. THE RECEPTION.

- III. **The Relation,** Chaps. 2 and 3.
 - I. FINDING THE RELATION.
 - II. CLAIMING THE RELATION.

- IV. **The Redemption,** Chap. 4.
 - I. EFFECTING THE REDEMPTION.
 - II. UNITING THE REDEEMED ONE.
 - (a) Redemption through the Redeeming One.
 - (b) Rest through the Strong One.
 - (c) Riches through the Wealthy One.

THE
Romance of Redemption

As Revealed in the Book of Ruth.

CHAPTER I.

The Introduction.

SHINING out in all its beauty is this book of Ruth, a gem in the treasury of the Word of God. It stands out unique in the Divine Library, possessing a beauty and charm all its own, and is of far greater importance than most readers apprehend. The style of the book is artless, and the story told out in its exquisite pastoral simplicity leaves an impression of charm and sweetness, effecting a refreshing influence more easily felt than described. The stamp of inspiration is upon it, and the attention of the reader is gripped from first to last.

The events depicted in the book happened, we are told, "when the judges ruled." These are the words at the opening of the book, and cause us to inquire the character of the days

giving the setting to the book. And it is of importance that we grasp the character of the days of the Judges in order to apprehend

The Significance of the Book.

God in wondrous grace had chosen Israel to be His own peculiar treasure, delivered them from the cruel bondage of Egypt and brought them, according to His promise, into Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. God fulfilled His promise, and Joshua could say to Israel, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof" (Joshua 23. 14). Yet Israel turned from God and went down the darkened way of apostasy, and with the increasing moral corruption, it seemed as if God's purpose in Israel was to utterly fail. They worshipped false gods, in spite of God's command and warning (Joshua 24. 14, 20), and the book of Judges is a distressful and depressing description of the awful corruption of Israel. Again and again God raised up Judges to deliver

them, but they forgot His marvellous mercies and went deeper and deeper into sin.

Most significant is the repeated declaration in the book of Judges (chaps. 17. 6; 18. 1; 19. 1; 21. 25): "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This was the democratic period in the history of Israel, when every man was a law unto himself. According to man's ideas, the rule of democracy is a golden period, a time of distinct development, but history repeats itself, and again and again we see such periods issuing in the deepest moral corruption. The history of human life throws up vividly the fact that there must be rule and government. This applies to every sphere of life, and where it is dethroned lawlessness is the inevitable outcome. This, then, is the dark background against which the book of Ruth is set. Chaos and corruption marked this epoch of Israel's history, and it looked as if God's design for the nation had crashed to the ground. But God did not abandon them. Men may be allowed to hinder, but not to frustrate the will of God. And the book of Ruth gleams

against the dark background, showing its distinct place in the outworking of the plan and purpose of God's fresh development for Israel. "Ruth" is not merely a beautiful pastoral relating the fortunes and misfortunes of a family, but vitally connects the old order of things with the new, about to be unfolded in the gracious purpose of God.

The book of Judges closes with the tragic utterance: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes," but the last name in the last chapter of Ruth, is that of David, God's chosen king, who was the man after God's own heart, destined to be the deliverer of Israel, rule the nation in the fear of God, and make preparation for the building of God's house. How striking is the comparison between this new era and that of the dispensation of grace! In each God chose out two women for the unfolding of His purpose. Hannah, the barren wife, received in answer to prayer the child Samuel, who became God's prophet, and from Ruth, the stranger from Moab, sprang David the king. So in the new age of grace the barren wife Elisabeth became the

mother of the great prophet John the Baptist, and from the virgin Mary came the fulfilment of type and prophecy that great mystery, God manifest in the flesh, the Christ who is the King of Kings.

How great then is the place of the book of Ruth. Not only is this purpose revealed, but this beautiful book tells out the story of redemption in all its wondrous fullness, foreshadowing our Blessed Lord, our Great Kinsman-Redeemer.

The Household.

We now continue our study of the book, and look next at the family, the events in whose life we are to follow. The household, we read, was composed of four persons, Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Hebrew names are significant, and often prophetic, Elimelech means, "My God is King," and Naomi is, "My Pleasant One" or "Sweet," perhaps an abbreviation of "God is Sweet." Mahlon meant "Sick," and Chilion "Pining." Striking again is the comparison between the first and last of the book. Opening with "My God is

King," it closes with God's King, he who was a type of the King of Kings, God the Son.

The Home.

In Bethlehem-Judah was the home of this family. "Little among the thousands of Judah" is its description by the prophet Micah (Micah 5. 2); but what purposes of mercy and grace have issued from this hallowed spot. How significant is the meaning of its name! Bethlehem means "House of Bread," and here entered into the world the Saviour, Christ the Lord, "The Bread of Life" (John 6. 35), upon whom feasts the household of faith. What holy memories gather round this sacred place whence came the Fullness of God, to give to hungry, dying souls, the Bread of Life, that they might live for ever as members of the family of God.

CHAPTER II.

The Emigration.

BUT there was a "famine in the land," a famine in the "House of Bread," which had fallen upon them as a visitation from God. It was the consequence of the turning to idols and rejection of God by the people. God's purpose was fullness, but He had to afflict with famine that they might repent and recover from their fallen position. The affliction was not merely punishment for their having turned away from Him, but that they might realise their utter helplessness in themselves, and turn again to Him, from whose hand came all the blessings they enjoyed. God "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. 3. 33), for "He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7. 18), and His afflictions and discipline are with the view to leading into paths of blessing. God delights to open His hand in blessing, but He has sometimes to shut it and blight in order that

men might realise their utter dependence upon Him.

I. The Declension.

Elimelech, suffering under the visitation, did that which was right in his own eyes, and emigrated to Moab. This was a serious declension on his part. God covenanted with Israel in relation to Canaan. The famine was God's judgment for sin, and was His instrument in His purpose to turn them again to Himself. To depart from the land; to leave the lot of his inheritance was seeking to escape God's corrective and meant forfeiting God's covenant. Elimelech, with his family, went to sojourn in Moab, the place of idolatry, to a people abhorred, upon whom rested God's condemnation for ever. Did not Balak, king of Moab, hire Balaam to curse Israel? (Num. 22). Was not this the people that caused Israel to sin, and twenty-four thousand of Israel died because of it? (Num. 25. 9). Had not God declared concerning them, "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: because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee" (Deut. 23. 3, 4). Yet to Moab he went, to the place of idolatry and worldliness, and left the place of God's appointment.

II. The First Affliction.

Elimelech did not mean to leave Bethlehem altogether. He went to *sojourn* in Moab and *continued* there, intending, of course, to return. Alas! to turn aside from God's pathway is ever to court disaster. The folly of his action was soon manifested. He went down to Moab seeking deliverance, and he met death. Elimelech left the land of the covenant and died in the land of condemnation. What a picture this is of the backslider, who, seeking to get from under the disciplining hand of God, obtains worldly prosperity at the expense of spiritual death! Elimelech sought to escape the touch of the rod of discipline, and was smitten with the rod of death. How very far better it is to humble ourselves under the

disciplining hand of God, that His purpose in changing us into the image of His Son and bestowing upon us the fullness of His blessing might be accomplished. We must ever remember the Word which speaks to us, "My son, despise not thou the chastening (child-training) of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth (child-trains), and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12. 5, 6). And what is the end in view of the child-training? That "we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12. 10).

III. The Affiliation.

Naomi is now left a widow with her two sons. But God's dealings with them seem to have been strangely ignored and not taken to heart. In the face of this affliction, the two sons take each a wife of the daughters of Moab. God had expressly forbidden the sons of Israel from taking wives of the daughters of the surrounding nations (Exod. 34. 14, 16; Deut. 7. 3), and this act of the sons was direct disobedience and a flagrant sin against Him. It was right of them to seek, as sons of Israel,

to build up their father's house, but wrong to perform this duty outside the sphere appointed of God.

After taking to them Orpah and Ruth as their wives, they dwelled there about ten years. What play the Holy Spirit puts upon words! They went to *sojourn*, but they *continued*, and ultimately *dwelled* there. Is this not a vivid picture of the backslider's life? Lured to sojourn in Moab, he finally dwells there, and often dies there.

IV. The Second Affliction.

How tragic is the end of the pathway of disobedience! Again the judgment of God operated, and Mahlon and Chilion died in the land of Moab. They went down to Moab seeking deliverance, and they found death. The father and the two sons died, and three widows were left. Oh, the sadness that filled that home! Three widows and no child. Their hearts are filled with anguish; their minds with anxiety. Life and love lost. Sorrow, solitude, and without substance. Widowhood, want, and woe. Can you find a more vivid picture of desolation? The house

of Elimelech was wholly blotted out. Only a special intervention of the power of God could build it again. But it is just when the position is desperate and the outlook hopeless that God in wondrous grace intervenes. He, of whom it was said to Israel, "Thy Maker is thy Husband" (Isa. 54. 5); He "who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4. 17), looked upon them in their desolation, yea, and beyond them, for out of the desolation He purposed to bring salvation, even salvation for the whole world. He looked beyond those women, beyond Naomi of Bethlehem and her line of descent to that virgin woman of Bethlehem, even Mary from whom came begotten of the Holy Spirit, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

CHAPTER III.

The Restoration.

LONELY, desolate, and destitute, how keenly Naomi must have felt her position in this strange land, and how her aching heart must have longed for that which Moab could not supply. The attempt to improve their circumstances had ended in disaster. Yes, but that was not the end. We are only at the beginning of the story, and ere we reach the conclusion we shall see the fruition of the discipline.

I. The Desolation.

All was under the control of God, and before us shall be displayed "the end of the Lord," and "that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5. 11). His dealings were not merely with those primarily concerned, but in His wonderful purpose to gather from the Gentiles one who should become a mother in Israel and who should also be part of that Gentile harvest of the Messiah yet to be fully reaped, and which shall bring glory to His

Name through eternal ages. Such are the wonderful and mysterious workings of our God, which fill our hearts with comfort and delight, and call forth our adoration.

Whilst in this dire condition, Naomi's heart turned towards her native land and towards home. Dearth in the fields of Bethlehem took her to Moab, but the deeper dearth of her own heart constrained her to turn again to Bethlehem. And the turning point was reached because of the message which she heard in the land of Moab. The good news of God reached her, for she heard "that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread." Is not this a wonderful illustration of the Gospel? With the natural mind seeing is believing, but with the eye of faith believing is seeing. Naomi believed and turned towards God and home. Tremendous are the issues arising out of seemingly small happenings. Tremendous are the issues arising out of our decisions. This act on the part of Naomi not only reversed her fortunes, but affected the history of the world, and the further unfolding of the story is the revealing of how this was brought under God's controlling hand.

II. The Affection.

Naomi's faith developed into action, as all true faith must, and "she went forth out of the place where she was." But her two daughters-in-law would not let her go alone, but with her "went on the way to return into the land of Judah." It would appear that Naomi did not request them to accompany her, but they went of their own accord. What life and testimony was exhibited by Elimelech and his two sons we do not know, but it is evident that Naomi's acts towards her daughters-in-law were such that drew forth their warm affection, and they had become dear to each other. So Orpah and Ruth had insisted on going with her, and for part of the way she permitted them. But Naomi would be honest with them, and there came a point in the way when fully, yet delicately, she placed before them the position. Though it meant a great wrench to her sad heart for them to leave her, she was not willing that they should return with her ignorant of what lay before them. Only privation and an eastern widow's portion lay before her as far as she saw, so she entreats them each to return to their mothers' house,

calling upon God to bless them for their kindly dealings with those who had passed away and with her. She prayed that after they returned to their own homes they might be lifted out of widowhood, and each find rest in the house of her husband. She was not anxious that they should leave her. Should they go she would be bereft indeed. Then she kissed them in token of farewell, but still they refused to go, saying, "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." The hearts of the women overflow and the tears fall. Gently, but fully does Naomi again show them that she can give no hope of providing a settlement for them in her own land, and in anguish of heart she cries, "It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me." Thus delicately did she put before them her position and their own.

III. The Decisions.

Orpah, seeing what lies before her, kissed her mother-in-law and went back. When they started off it appeared that both were determined to go all the way with Naomi, but now a difference in heart is revealed. Both

were kindly, both loved Naomi, but the shadowy future was too much for Orpah, and she went away. Does not this portray the hearts of many who, seeing others on the pilgrim pathway, and hearing of the Bread of Life, would fain travel the way, but are deterred by what may lie ahead. As Matthew 13. 21 declares, "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." And we read in John 6. 66 concerning certain who once walked with the Lord, "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."

God plainly shows that the walk with Him must be by faith alone, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11. 6). By faith we enter the pilgrim pathway and by faith alone we continue to tread it until we reach the journey's end.

The same opportunity presented itself to Orpah and Ruth, but, alas, Orpah turned to her gods, and she passes out into oblivion. How tragic her choice! But is this not the fateful choice of many to-day?

CHAPTER IV.

The Renunciation.

THE picture of the future as delineated by Naomi only served to deepen the determination of Ruth. Faith strong and triumphant rose above the difficulties that shadowed the horizon, and she refused to turn back. Declaring her separation from her former life, and committal to the way before her, in noble words, hard to match even in the Word of God, which have become classic, and which have come down the ages with a music sealing them on many hearts, 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: 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." Here is faith and love's nobility of choice that lays down life in devotion even unto death. Her's was the self-

forgetful life that gives up all in the constraint of love. How remarkable, as we examine it, is the depth and reach of her utterance!

The Path of Renunciation.

"Whither thou goest, I will go." This is the pathway of *renunciation*. For Ruth this meant leaving her land, home, parents, and friends to follow another into a new country and into a new sphere of life. It meant turning her back upon the old ways and turning her face towards the new. It involved discarding the old life and embracing the new life. Her resolution issued in an exit from the old country and an entrance into the new. She left the land of the curse for the better land of the covenant.

And is not all this involved when in repentance we turn to God? The act of repentance and faith must ever issue in the discarding of the old life of sin and death, and the embracing of the new life of salvation and sanctity. To follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth certainly means to walk in the pathway of renunciation.

Does it mean yielding up country and home, parents and friends? Does it involve a cutting

off of the old life? Ah, yes! "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10. 37, 38). But is not all this loss? Ah, no! To renounce all and follow Him is to climb from the valley of sin's grief to the Alpine heights of salvation's glory.

"*Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.*" This is the chosen dwelling-place of *communion*. It is the heart's outburst of affection, the yearning desire for the fellowship of the one upon whom the love has been set. It is the lover seeking the loved one in the closest fellowship. And is not love the spring of choice and holy intimacies? Here is heart beating with heart; a life brought into union with another and choosing the abiding place of communion. Rippling through this noble choice is the music of the soul's affection. Surely this is love strong, deep, and true, finding its joyful resting place.

What an exquisite picture of the union and communion between the saint and the Saviour!

Is He not the One whom our soul loveth and of whom we cry, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His!"

Ah, the joy of abiding communion with Him! We are reminded of those who, seeking His fellowship, asked, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" and received the gracious response, "Come and see." And they abode with Him. Blessed, holy fellowship that fills and thrills our hearts. How we yearn to abide with Him for not only is it the place of sanctity, but also of safety. Ah, sweet resting place of the heart answering to our deepest need for he that dwells with Him abides in love.

O Master, keep us ever abiding, whether the days bring shadow or sunshine, for in Thy Presence is fullness of joy!

The Separation.

"Thy people shall be my people." Following on in natural sequence is the position of *separation*. Between the people of the curse and the people of the covenant there is drawn the line of demarcation. The connecting link holding the old fellowships is severed for ever. The children of the curse and the children of the

covenant should ever be marked out in glaring contrast. The one is darkness and the other is light, and there can be no affinity. Should the attempt be made it can only meet with judgment, for it is God who marks out the distinction. Ruth's clear-cut decision proclaimed her severance with Moab, under condemnation, and her entrance into Israel under God's covenant of salvation.

And such ought to be the position of every one claiming God's great redemption. The world is under condemnation, and we who by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have entered into salvation have been redeemed from the world unto God. Therefore we have not only been separated *from* the world, but also separated *unto* God. Whereas we were children of the Devil, now are we children of God. We were once in darkness, and children of darkness, but now we are the children of light. God definitely draws the line of demarcation. How then can there be affinity!

But is it not the tragedy of the Church of Christ that so few see this, and fail to adopt the only true position, and that which is owing to God, the position of separation. What a

spectacle is this, children of light allied with children of darkness! And what is the result? A blighted life and witness, a powerless Church the derision of the world, and a grieved Spirit and Lord.

But does not such a separated life cost? Yes, assuredly! But only that which costs, counts with God.

Oh, that the redeemed of God would give heed to the command, "Come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6. 17).

The Appropriation.

"*And thy God my God.*" Enlightened vision here issues in *appropriation*. Ruth turned from idols to serve the living and true God. The practice of a lifeless religion was changed to a personal relationship with the eternal God. No longer was He merely God to her, but "my God." It was faith's warm embrace, the embrace of God. How simple is the step of faith, but how stupendous the issue. From darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God. And how great the gladness of that deep personal note that

exclaims, "My God!" Who can declare the glories of a God-possessed soul!

And yet in this era of grace it is given us to utter an even more tender word. It is the name of "Father." Who can tell out the inexpressible joy thrilling the heart of the believer, able at all times to look up into the face of God and say, "My Father!" Sweet, sweet, is that name with all its depth of meaning. The name that declares Love's deepest personal interest, Love's tender protection, and Love's abounding provision. To be able to draw near and call the Omnipotent God by the ineffable name of "Father" overwhelms me! How much that Name betokens, only the redeemed and tested soul who has entered into its realisation can know.

The Consecration.

"*Where thou diest, will I die.*" Here is the *consecration* of life and love. Thus did Ruth vividly declare her determination to go all the way. It was the forging of a fellowship that went to the extreme limit. Rough or smooth, sunshine or shadow, joy or pain, gain or loss, trial or triumph, there would be no forsaking.

The life was yielded never to be recalled. Love's altar flame burned never to be quenched. Self was crossed out in the abandonment of life's devotion. What a noble figure of entire surrender! And all was called forth by another's sorrow.

And yet do we stand and admire, and fail to realise that all this is called forth from us by another's sorrow, the sorrow of all sorrows; the sorrow of the Man of Sorrows. The sorrow of Calvary, God's matchless mercy for us, calls for the same consecration. For out of that sorrow has come our glorious salvation and our triumphant song. Has the pleading cry, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" fallen on unheeding ears and hearts? Do we hold back from going all the way because it will mean passing through Gethsemane and Calvary? Or have we gladly answered, "Yes, Lord, I will go all the way, even unto death." Can we, dare we, hold back in the face of Calvary from utter consecration?

Looking up into that loving face, marred more than any man's—and all for us—let us gladly, humbly, declare:

“My glorious Victor, Prince Divine,
Clasp these surrendered hands in Thine;
At length my will is all Thine own,
Glad vassal of a Saviour’s throne.”

“*And there will I be buried.*” Love has reached its farthest point in the abandonment of dedication. The life has been surrendered *in blank*. Before her lay the course, whatever it might hold, and she would pursue it to its final goal. The spirit that animated the pilgrims of old was the dynamic of this noble woman. Of those pilgrims we read that, “If they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11. 15, 16).

No, there was no turning back; the life’s destiny was irrevocably sealed.

And is this not the spirit which ought to animate every Christian? Of course it will be termed both by the world and the worldly-minded Christian as too extreme, as fanatical. You can, with propriety, be burning with zeal and blazing with enthusiasm for anything and

everything in the world, but to be on fire for Christ and His service is outrageous. Is that the attitude we face from the world and half-hearted Christians? Alas! that it should be so. But the allegiance demanded by the Lord is that which is inherent with absolute consecration and which proceeds to the extreme limit, even unto death.

“No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God” (Luke 9. 62).

Naomi saw that Ruth “was stedfastly minded to go with her,” and ceased placing objections in the way. This attitude of Ruth is the attitude of heart and mind so earnestly desired by our Lord from the believer—steadfastness. We have an example that we should follow His steps. “He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9. 51).

III. **The Reception.**

Naomi, with Ruth, arrived at Bethlehem, and there was a great stir in the city because of their arrival, and the people said, “Is this Naomi?” Although they recognised their old neighbour, they were struck with the change

in her. The years in Moab had left their mark, and sorrow's imprint was upon her countenance. But the people seemed wholly unconscious that time had made its mark upon them, and they too had changed, and it must have been as difficult to Naomi to accommodate herself to the change. To their exclamation of surprise, Naomi answers in the bitterness of sorrow, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." How terribly sad is this! But it is also sad to note that Naomi's sorrow apparently awakened no responsive chord in their hearts. She went out full, but she had returned empty, and such are not wanted. Had she returned in splendour, with abundant riches, they would have made much of her, fawned upon her, expressed their sympathy—which would have been superficial—and opened their homes to her. But she was poor and in sorrow, apparently hampered by a daughter-in-law of a cursed people, and no invitation was extended, no hospitality offered, and the crowd melted away. No one desired to acknowledge her. She would become an object of gossip, but no helping hand was held out. Such is the way of the world, and,

alas, too often of those who profess to bear the Name of Christ. How precious was the affection of Ruth to her at this time.

But they had returned to the right place, and looking around upon the waving fields, Naomi had evidence that the good news she had heard in the alien land was true. "They came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest." Harvest time is a time of joy. The barley harvest is specially significant as it was the first grain to be reaped (Exod. 9. 31, 32). This connects it with the Feast of Firstfruits. According to Leviticus 23. 10, 11, Israel was commanded: "Then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it."

The Feast of Firstfruits is definitely connected with Resurrection, for in 1 Corinthians 15. 20, we read, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept." How beautifully significant is all this. After firstfruits comes harvest, the figure of the ingathering of the redeemed into God's house.

Ruth came from the place of the curse to the "House of Bread," to enter into God's salvation, and, as it were, standing upon resurrection ground, to receive the riches of God.

CHAPTER V.

The Relation—Found.

INTO the story is now introduced a personality whose life is vitally bound up in the fulfilling of God's plan. This character is Boaz, of the family of Elimelech, a kinsman of Naomi's husband. Most significant are the facts set forth concerning him, that he was a "mighty man" and a "man of wealth." Significant also is his name, which means "In him is strength." What connection this had with Ruth—for we read he was Naomi's "kinsman"—is not shown us here, but the story is so written to stimulate our interest that we might go on to the conclusion. After setting Boaz before us, the story then takes up the thread, and shows us the first day of Ruth's new life.

The Gleaning of Ruth.

Love expresses itself in service. It is the attitude of the devoted heart to give itself for the object of its love, and the beautiful and strong attachment of Ruth revealed itself

again in her desire to serve Naomi. She realised Naomi's need and her own, and she willingly gave herself to the task of obtaining the necessary provision. It meant toil. It likely meant to Ruth putting herself to a task to which she was unaccustomed, and taking upon herself a position that was foreign to her former life. Such was not an easy thing for a woman like Ruth to humble herself and go amongst strangers and request to glean in the field. This is a position from which a sensitive soul shrinks, and shows the depth of her love.

Perhaps Naomi had told her the law of God concerning gleaning, and the ingathering around her had suggested the mode of service. In Leviticus 19. 9, 10, we read, "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God."

Such was Ruth's beautiful submission and delicacy to Naomi, that she asks her consent to her proposal to go gleaning, which Naomi

granted. Thus did Ruth exemplify by her conduct the reality of her self-abandonment to Naomi.

Forth to the field went Ruth. The word field is in the singular, because there were no fences marking off fields. To the eye it presented the scene of one great field, but the owner of each portion had his landmarks of stones placed at regular intervals, which were easily recognisable by the inhabitants. We are thus able to recognise the force of the precept in Deuteronomy 19. 14, and the curse of Deuteronomy 27. 17.

Arriving on the field, her "hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz." Literally her "hap happened." This is the description given us as though it was merely a chance event, but we know that the One who had heard her choice was guiding this stranger into His own fold. Her "hap happened" to light upon the field of Boaz because the unseen hand of control guided the steps. What wonderful changes happen in lives through seemingly chance occurrences. The dead in sin are brought into the life of Christ by what seems a chance meeting, the unusual attending

of a Gospel service, or the receiving of a tract. What new turnings occur in the believer's life! But there is no chance where God is guiding. There is no chance in the God-planned life. God has a purpose in every redeemed life, and that purpose He is able to fulfil as the life is consecrated to Him and He is allowed to have His perfect way and will. God was guiding this life into His channel of blessing and every circumstance was directed to fulfil His gracious purpose.

This privilege of gleaning after the reapers, therefore, pertained to Ruth as a "stranger" and a "widow," but it was a privilege of grace. The law gave it her out of grace, and Ruth the stranger, walking according to the Word, came into this new sphere of grace, that the purpose in her might be fulfilled as the called and chosen of God.

The Greeting of Boaz.

Again brought before us is the man to whom we have already been introduced. Boaz comes out to the field, and greets his servants with a blessing, "The Lord be with you," and the servants return their blessing in the words,

“The Lord bless thee.” What a beautiful picture we have here! These are not empty words; the commonplace greeting that means nothing. This is the expression of the heart of the master to his servants, and of the servants to their master. What a gracious relationship! The “mighty man,” the “wealthy man” does not hold himself aloof, or treat the servants with indifference, nor is he above speaking kindly words to them. He does not speak to them as if they were an inferior order of beings. There is evident unity between them in positions recognised as rightful. This unity is not the product of organisation, but of heart co-operation. Blessing is met with blessing, the heartfelt expression of mutual consideration. How beautiful it is; a picture of the coming age, when the jangling, striving forces, shall not be allowed to hold sway, and when He of whom Boaz is a type is Lord of the field.

This picture is a reminder that even in those days of declension God had His own who feared His Name. Again and again Scripture brings this before us, and it is true of the Church age, however dark the days may have been.

There may be only a little company, separated and true to Him, nevertheless, God has His witnesses in every age and will not allow His Name or His Truth to be blotted out.

The Grace of Boaz.

Looking over the field, Boaz sees the stranger and asks, "Whose damsel is this?" The master of the field even takes notice of the stranger. The overseer to whom he addressed the inquiry explains who she is, and details to Boaz Ruth's humble request and diligent work.

How gracious is this man! After hearing this good testimony, he turns to give her welcome. How sweet to her ears and cheering to her heart must have been the first words he addressed to her: "Hearest thou not, *my daughter.*" The lord of the field, not only takes notice of her, but calls her by the tender name of daughter. Truly she had found grace in his eyes. That word conveyed to her the sweet truth that she was accepted into his household with all its privileges. The stranger from the place of the curse was welcomed into the household of faith. Having brought her

into this position, he then gives her a charge: "Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: 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."

First he designates her place of service, and then makes known his protection, provision, and fellowship. Did this seem an encroachment of her liberty, a limitation of her energies or narrowing of her fellowship? This was God's appointed way for her, and as this book is highly typical, it is richly suggestive of our place in the Church. As strangers we have been welcomed from the place of the curse; our sphere of service has been definitely appointed us, and whilst we enjoy God's protection and provision, it has been clearly shown us that our fellowship must be a separated one, separated unto the household of faith.

Ruth, recognising that this was all of grace, bowed down before Boaz, and said, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou

shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" She, realising the favour granted, takes the true place of adoration. This must ever be the attitude of the believer unto God "for His great love wherewith He loved us" (Eph. 2. 4).

The answer of Boaz shows that he recognised the great step of faith she had taken in leaving the land of her nativity and her father's house, to come amongst a people she did not know heretofore, and he blessed her in words full of wondrous significance: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou are come to trust." Exquisitely suggestive is this. Reward to be gained whilst abiding under the wings of Jehovah. From the hand of Grace not only do we receive gifts, but opportunity is given to gain rewards. From this beautiful passage alone we could traverse the whole of the Scriptures. Those fragrant words "under His wings" open to us the glorious truth of the abiding place of Jehovah and all that it means to us, whilst the suggestive words, "recompense of reward," lead us into a great field of study.

Ruth prays for his favour, thanking him for his comfort in speaking to her heart, and Boaz graciously answers in an invitation to dine with him. This is ever the loving invitation of our Boaz. He ever welcomes us at His banqueting table. Our Lord speaks to our heart words of comfort, and at His table, His banner over us is love.

“Handfuls of Purpose.”

Not only does Boaz speak the word of blessing, but commands it, in bidding his young men to let fall “handfuls of purpose for her.” Ruth was not merely to have the reward of bare toil, but blessed toil.

Oh, those blessed “handfuls of purpose” that God gives us, how they encourage the toiler! He gives grace upon grace. He increases the fruits, blessing our efforts and multiplying results. His blessing we need, for has not our Lord declared, “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

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

Gleaning means hard and diligent service,

and involves stooping. Too many shirk the one and shun the other. Again, some desire to do the service without the stooping, but this can never be in effectual work for God.

The "stooping" may involve humiliation, loss of reputation, the piercing of the refined senses, the going down to the haunts of squalor and sin, the touching of the moral leper corrupt with sin's awful corruption, but only thus can we truly follow in the steps of Him who "made Himself of no reputation," and who stooped so low, humbling Himself unto death, "even the death of the Cross."

While Ruth gleaned Naomi waited, and earnestly must she have longed for her return. With what joy Ruth laid before Naomi the result of her day's toil. The pent-up feelings of Naomi vent themselves in questions and ejaculations of pleasure and surprise. She runs on without waiting for an answer. After Ruth is allowed time to explain and name her benefactor, Naomi sees the hand of Jehovah, and bursts out into praise.

Before proceeding with the story, we would point out that Naomi's question, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" is eminently a personal

and practical one to every believer. Have you gleaned to-day in that great harvest field, the Word of God? Where did you glean? And have you beaten out your sheaves on the threshing floor of meditation? Only thus can you have provision for your spiritual need, only thus can you be preserved and sanctified by the Word; only thus can you be powerful for God.

“Goel.”

Suddenly it flashes upon Naomi the relationship of Boaz, and she exclaims, “The man is near kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen!”

The word “Goel” translated “kinsman” is full of rich meaning. It conveys the right of one to “redeem” or “buy back.” The same word is used in reference to our Lord as Redeemer. “I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 41. 14).

Naomi grasped the fact that Boaz was their kinsman-redeemer.

The duty of the kinsman was to buy back or redeem the inheritance of the poor relation, who, through poverty had been compelled to

part with it. This duty is revealed in 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."

Not only might property be redeemed, but persons also. "And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: after that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself" (Lev. 25. 47-49).

As the fact burst upon Naomi, it would appear that there was born within her a great expectation. A vision, based upon the grace of Boaz already exhibited, of what he could do, and would do, appeared before her, for when Ruth related the charge given her by Boaz, she immediately responded, "It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field."

Naomi recognised the guiding hand of God was in it all, a hand not against her, as she thought when in tribulation, and probably she discerned that this would bring about the end of her troubles, although unaware as to how it would be outworked. And Ruth, urged by Naomi, kept by the maidens of Boaz, coming under his eye and receiving his gracious provision day by day, until the end of the barley harvest.

CHAPTER VI.

The Relation—Claimed.

GREAT is the consideration of these two women for each other. When the need for labour arose for the daily provision, Ruth took the initiative on behalf of Naomi, but now Naomi acts that she might obtain happiness for Ruth. What is in her heart is expressed in these words: "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" That which she declared in chapter one, she could not give, she now seeks to obtain. Then she was in black despair, but now the radiant light of hope gleams on the horizon, and her heart is moved at the prospect and promise of the dawning day. The "rest" which Naomi desired for Ruth was that of which she had spoken to her daughters-in-law when she prayed they might each find "rest in the house of her husband." The expectancy of a bride is that in the house of her husband she will find rest from the care concerning her future, and that

her husband will undertake the duty of protecting her and providing for her support. It is the settlement of her life. This loving union and committal is a beautiful picture of the union with our Lord Jesus Christ. Union with and committal to Him is the eternal settlement of our life and our hearts find rest in Him, awaiting the day when we shall rest in the glorious home which He is now preparing for us. As the wife leans upon, trusts, and depends upon her husband, so does the Bride of Christ upon her beloved Bridegroom.

Knowing the law of God with regard to the kinsman, Naomi now proceeds to instruct Ruth in order to make that claim upon Boaz which was her privilege. This now brings before us another duty devolving on the kinsman stated in Deuteronomy 25. 5. The statute therein enjoined that when a man of the covenanted people died, leaving no child, his brother should marry his widow and the first-born child of the marriage was accounted as belonging to the deceased in order that his name should not be blotted out of Israel. If, however, there was no brother-in-law, the near kinsman or Goel was looked to, to perform the

duty. In the case of the brother-in-law refusing, he could be subjected to indignity by the widow (Deut. 25. 9, 10).

The Kinsman.

The Goel therefore in redeeming the inheritance was under obligation to marry the widow of the deceased owner. To redeem the inheritance of Elimelech by Boaz would therefore involve his marriage with Naomi, but this right Naomi sought to pass on to Ruth, and the question was, how was this to be brought to the notice of Boaz? How was she to induce him to undertake the part of Goel.

Having this object in view, she unfolds a plan to Ruth, and asks her to carry it out.

Some may think the plan unconventional, immodest, and indiscreet, and it may be that the claim upon Boaz could have been made another way. But against that we may point out that the instructions were given by a mother in Israel, who knew the law, who also was a virtuous woman, and who knew the integrity of Boaz.

The instructions of verse three (chap. 3) have a beautiful spiritual counterpart in

our union with our Lord. "Wash thyself," points to the washing of regeneration required. "Anoint thee," that is the figure of the unction of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. "Put thy raiment upon thee" speaks of the white robe of the righteousness of the saints, and "get thee down" depicts the presentation of the body a living sacrifice in response to the claims of Christ (Rom. 12. 1).

Ruth is then instructed to go to the threshing floor where she will find Boaz. So great was the committal of Ruth that she, in submission to Naomi's instructions, ventured her whole reputation and character upon the faithfulness of Boaz. Her answer to Naomi was, "All that thou sayest unto me I will do." What an example of consecration this is to the believer! Our God beseeches us (Rom. 12. 1)—yea, condescends to beseech us—to give our bodies unto Him a living sacrifice which He tells us is only our reasonable service. The Cross of Calvary, that matchless manifestation of the love of God for us, claims us altogether, the pierced hands of the Christ are outstretched beseeching us to yield ourselves to Him, but how very few answer His pleading with, "All

that thou sayest unto me I will do." God's purpose is that we should find rest: that rest of heart and life which only is to be obtained by those who abandon self utterly and yield life and reputation, and all to Him.

"And she went down to the threshing floor." In the East the threshing floor is in the neighbourhood of the harvest field, where the grain was threshed. The winnowing process was performed by throwing up the grain, after being trodden down, against the wind with a fork; and the operation was usually accomplished at night, to get the benefit of the evening breeze. When this work had to be done, it was usual either for the owner of the field or his men to sleep on the floor, in order that the alarm should be given if any robbers sought to steal the produce.

When Ruth saw that Boaz had fallen asleep, she uncovered his feet and lay down. But at midnight Boaz awoke, and, startled to find a woman there, said, "Who art thou?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt (or thy wing) over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." Ruth claimed her kinsman-redeemer. Beautiful

is the significance of the words, "Spread thy skirt over thine handmaid," when compared with Ezekiel 16. 8. In that passage God speaks of His relation with Israel under the figure of marriage to Himself and exclaims, "I spread My skirt (or wing) over thee," which was the token of His protection and Israel's abiding place. This was Ruth's claim upon Boaz, a union with him giving her the protection and the abiding place which she needed.

Is this not our claim upon our God through faith in Christ Jesus? And this is what God has graciously provided for the simple acceptance of every believer; shelter under His wings in union with Himself.

Upon Boaz flashes the purpose and claims of Ruth, and deeply touched by her plea, he immediately responds with blessing: "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. 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."

The Character of Ruth.

Before proceeding further we would note the testimony of Boaz concerning Ruth. "Thou art a virtuous woman!" The character of Ruth was revealed in her conduct, and the latter is the index of the former. Not only was this known to Boaz, but to the whole city. You may be certain that the eyes of all watched this stranger, but such was her virtue that it drew forth this verdict. Our character evinces itself in our conduct, and stamps its impression on others. How tremendous then is our responsibility in our walk for God!

A difficulty, however, stood in the way of Boaz responding to the claim of Ruth. He was *a* Goel, but not *the* Goel. There was a nearer kinsman than Boaz, who had the first right to redeem, and until he repudiated, Boaz could do nothing. But he did not leave the matter there. He promised Ruth that in the morning he would bring the matter before that other and if he performed his part it would be well, but if not, he would be the Goel. This he confirmed by the oath, "As the Lord liveth."

Before others had stirred, Boaz sent Ruth

away, but not without a token of his regard for her, for he gave her six measures of barley.

Returning home, Naomi asked her the significant question, "Who art thou, my daughter?" The interrogation inferred, "Art thou still the widow of Mahlon or the betrothed of Boaz?" In answer to her question Ruth told her all that happened.

Naomi then said, "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." This is the rest of faith's consecration and confidence. Just as Ruth left her whole future in the hands of her Goel, so are we asked to do likewise with our Goel. Promise upon promise has been given us that He will consummate His work in us and for us, and we have received the pledge, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

To "sit still" is to abide in Him, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh, when the radiant prospect will issue in the glory of perfect blessedness.

Our blessed Goel will not rest until He has finished His work and gathered us unto Himself, when our redemption will be complete.

CHAPTER VII.

The Redemption.

"I MUST be about My Father's business," was ever the attitude of our Lord. That was first in His life, and nothing could deviate Him from this path. That business was the redemption of those under the curse, and He set His face to go to Jerusalem that it might be accomplished.

I. Effecting the Redemption.

Boaz, the type of the great Kinsman-Redeemer, had a work to perform, and he would not rest until it had been consummated. From the threshing floor he went to the gate of the city to bring about the redemption of the one he loved. She was an alien, of the land of the curse, but he set his heart that she should be made nigh for ever, and brought into indissoluble union. The work rested upon him, and how much depended on him. Let him but turn aside, and she must remain a stranger and

foreigner for ever. Union through redemption alone was the way of deliverance.

Is this not typical of our Lord? All depended upon Him. Had He turned aside, alas! the world would have been doomed. But He came from the realm of glory into this world of sin, and for the joy set before Him He endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Union with Him through redemption is the only way of deliverance for the world.

Let it be noted also that only a kinsman could redeem, and Boaz, who stood in this relationship, was willing, yea, eager to perform this work.

Viewing this figuratively in the spiritual sphere, do we not discern the matchless grace of God? Poor and needy, like Ruth, we were in dire need of a kinsman who could redeem us from our alien position, and God so loved us that He sent His Son, who humbling Himself, became in the "likeness of sinful flesh," yet without sin, took the place as our Kinsman-Redeemer, purchasing the field and those in the field, and paying the redemption price that

through redemption and union with Himself, we should no longer be aliens, strangers, and foreigners, but members of the household of God. What it cost Him to stoop to take that place of Kinsman-Redeemer only God can estimate. Precious is it to God, and precious, so very precious, it ought to be to us.

The gateway of the city was a large vaulted area, having a chamber over it. There was a "void place" (1 Kings 22. 10), where a considerable number of people could assemble, and here cases were judged, and business transacted.

Arriving at the gateway, Boaz sat down and waited for the "near kinsman," hailing him as he came near: "Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here." The near kinsman, responding to his desire, sat down beside him. Then Boaz called ten elders to be witnesses of the transaction about to be enacted, in accordance with the requirements of the law.

It was an important moment for him, and he would have the redemption performed in public view. Likewise was it at the most crucial moment of the world's history. The Redeemer in the full public view accomplished our

redemption, and Paul could declare, "This thing was not done in a corner."

The "Near Kinsman."

As Boaz placed before the "near kinsman" the field to be redeemed, he immediately professed his readiness, declaring, "I will redeem it." Boaz then showed that to redeem the field involved the redemption of Ruth and this he refused to do.

It is to be noted that the name of the near kinsman is persistently withheld, and he passes out into obscurity.

Again, viewing it from its spiritual significance, who is the near kinsman? If Boaz is the type of the Lord Jesus, then whom does the "near kinsman" signify? The interpretation which appears to be the most satisfactory is that the "near kinsman" represents our "old man."* This will be seen more clearly as we enter into details.

The field to be redeemed is the world, but the persons in the world need to be redeemed also. Turning to Leviticus 25. 49, we read the words, "if he be able he may redeem himself."

* For this interpretation I am indebted to Mr. Philip Mauro.

Is this not what the "old man" has professed to do? But when faced with the full requirements of the law he has utterly failed. To the near kinsman it was pointed out by Boaz that he must also redeem Ruth "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." And he replied, "I cannot," and in his refusal he laid himself open to the condemnation and disgrace of the law. Is this not what the "natural man" is unable to do, to bring life from the dead, and to satisfy the claims of the law? The "old man," therefore, stands condemned and disgraced, and like the "near kinsman," passes out into oblivion.

Holding to his inability, the "near kinsman" plucked off his shoe and gave it to Boaz.

The full force of the law, as revealed in Deuteronomy 25. 9, 10, was not enacted here. According to that statute, should the near kinsman refuse to redeem, the widow had the right to loose his shoe and spit in his face. It appears that Naomi and Ruth were not present on this occasion, and the near kinsman of himself drew off his shoe and handed it to Boaz, saying, "Buy it for thee."

The "Loosed Shoe."

Before the public was manifested his failure and disgrace, and to his house for ever would the epithet be applied, "The house of him that hath his shoe loosed." Boaz then stood in his place, and publicly redeemed the land and Ruth.

This transaction is typical of the work of our Lord. The "natural man" cannot redeem himself, and is for ever condemned and disgraced. The Lord stooped to take the place, and has by that awful death on Calvary paid the redemption price and redeemed both the field and those in it. Redemption has been obtained for the whole world. God "will have (desireth) all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," and therefore the Lamb of God was set forth to take away the sin of the world. Are all, then, saved? Ah, no!

Boaz paid the redemption price to take unto himself the field and Ruth, but unless Ruth claimed her kinsman-redeemer and was willing to be united to him, she could not enter into the benefit and joy of her redemption.

So is it in relation to the redemption accom-

plished for us. That redemption must be claimed; that union with Christ must be formed ere we enjoy its benefits, its reality and glory. Thus only can life be brought to the dead and a name raised upon the God-given inheritance, which shall never be blotted out.

The redemption by Boaz having been accomplished, a blessing is poured out upon Ruth by the elders and the people.

II. **Uniting the Redeemed One.**

Then Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. The Gentile bride was united to her bridegroom, the kinsman-redeemer. Taken from the place of the curse, she entered into the fullness of the blessing of redemption. And in the house of her husband she was enriched, for God gave her a son.

Thus did Ruth obtain redemption through the redeeming one; rest in the arms of the strong one, and riches in the house of the wealthy one.

Bitter was the beginning to Naomi, but sweet was the end. How sweet must those fragrant words have sounded in her ears, as she hugged Obed (which means Serving) to her bosom, "Blessed be the Lord which hath not

left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life and a nourisher of thine old age."

Looking upon Naomi as a type of Israel, and the going down to Moab, a picture of their present condition, we see here a foreshadowing of that national restoration, the further fruit of the Redemption in Christ, as depicted in Romans 9.-11. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11. 25, 26). "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11. 15).

Here then in this beautiful story we have set before us God's wonderful grace and great redemption. The poor, desolate, Gentile widow was redeemed and brought into the royal line from whence came the greater Boaz.

Joyfully do we echo the words, "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day

without a kinsman." Who is this kinsman? Our Blessed Lord and Saviour.

Through Him, the Redeeming One, have we entered—yet more fully to enter—into the glory of our redemption. Through Him, the Strong One, have we entered into eternal rest. Through Him, the Wealthy One, have we obtained an eternal inheritance and been made partakers of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

EVERY CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY OF STANDARD BIBLICAL WORKS

Uniform Binding in Maroon Art Cloth, Gold Title

BIBLE AND MODERN CRITICISM, THE. A Devout and Open-minded Study. By Sir ROBT. ANDERSON, K.C.B., LL.D.

CHARACTERISTICS DIFFERENCES OF THE FOUR GOSPELS, THE. Considered as revealing the Lord Jesus Christ in certain distinct relationships. By ANDREW JUKES.

COMING PRINCE, THE. The Standard Work on Daniel and the 70 Weeks. By Sir ROBT. ANDERSON, K.C.B., LL.D.

DID JESUS RISE? A fearless facing of the Vital Fact of Christianity. A book to remove doubts. By JAMES H. BROOKES.

GOD'S LIVING ORACLES. The famous series of Exeter Hall Lectures on the Bible. By Dr. A. T. PIERSON.

GOSPEL AND ITS MINISTRY, THE. A Handbook of Evangelical Truth. By Sir R. ANDERSON, K.C.B., LL.D.

GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL, THE, and the Principles therein revealed. By WILLIAM KELLY.

HUMAN DESTINY. A recognised Handbook of the Eschatological Controversy. By Sir ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B.

"I AM COMING." A Handbook on the Personal and Pre-Millennial Coming of the Lord. By Dr. J. H. BROOKES. 2/ net.

KINGDOM IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY, THE. The Historic and Prophetic Aspects of the Kingdom in their relation to the present age-purpose. By LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, THE. A short treatise on the true secret of happiness. By A. T. SCHOFIELD, M.D., M.R.C.S.

MAN OF SORROWS, THE. A Simple and Soul-refreshing Exposition of the Gospel of Luke. By J. N. DARBY.

PROPHETIC HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, THE. As seen in the Seven Churches of Asia. By F. W. GRANT.

PROPHECY MADE PLAIN. A simple Bird's-eye View of Prophecy. By Dr. C. I. SCOFIELD, of the "Scofield Bible."

RADIANT MORN, THE; or, The Secret of Perpetual Youth. By A. T. SCHOFIELD, M.D.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD'S LETTERS. Revised for modern readers, rearranged in groups, and completed.

SILENCE OF GOD, THE. The Greatest Mystery of our Existence. By Sir ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B., LL.D.

STUDY OF THE TYPES, THE. Comparisons, Groupings, Suggestions, Samples, and Outlines. By ADA R. HABERSON.

TWENTY-ONE PROPHEPIC PAPERS. A sane and readable setting forth of the Divine Plan. By F. C. BLAND.

TYPICAL FORESHADOWINGS IN GENESIS. The Divine Preparation for the World to Come. By WM. LINCOLN.

Each 2/ net (2/4 post free)

Complete List of over 100 Titles post free on application

PICKERING & INGLIS, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS
229 Bothwell St., Glasgow; 14 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4

THE WITNESS

THE STANDARD BIBLICAL MONTHLY

An Unfettered Journal of Biblical Literature, Practical Papers, Expositions, Answers, Poetry, Reviews, Intelligence, etc. Issued regularly month by month since 1870 without a break, and read by over 26,000 Readers in all parts of the English-speaking world.

Editor: H. Y. PICKERING, 14 Paternoster Row, London

Truth in Love: or, All the Word of God for all the People of God has been the motto of the paper since its commencement.

It Contains Edifying Expositions of various portions of the Word of God. Practical Papers on many phases of Christian Work; Devotional Thoughts from the writings of well-known men of God; Voices from the Vineyard—home and abroad; Suggestive Topics for Preachers and Teachers; Correspondence on themes of doctrinal and practical interest, and helpful all-round ministry.

Current Events dealing with some of the great problems facing the believer and the Church. Burning Questions for Students, and "Questions and Answers" on subjects of general interest to all saints are dealt with in each issue.

Witnessing in Many Lands; Stirring Events in Heathen Lands. Records of Revival in English-speaking Lands; Notices of the Home-call of well-known Christians; Contributions to and Intelligence of Work on Faith lines in many parts of the World; and a useful "Serve-One-Another" Column.

2d. Monthly; 2/6 (or 60 cts.) post free for one year

SPECIMEN COPY FREE ON APPLICATION

PICKERING & INGLIS, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS
229 BOTHWELL STREET, GLASGOW, C.2
14 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4