

GRACE AND GLORY

The Story Of Ruth

The Gleaner

Mary M Bodie

RUTH -- THE GLEANER

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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.

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 Chi/ion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem- Judah. And they came to the country of Moab and sojourned there, 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 word and work.

The book of Ruth lies between Judges and Samuel. This in itself is significant. Judges is a 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 continued 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 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. After the death of a judge, the decline was rapid and "the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord." Notice that the evil was "in God's sight. No doubt their neighbors and friends thought they were going on wonderfully; but God "looks on the heart."

The rule of the Judges figures some principle of truth for the Church, which grips the heart in living experimental power and causes an awakening among the people. In other words, a revival is started In Luther's day, it was a 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, and the power of that truth declined, and soon the people were in bondage again. This happened many times.

In the present day one of the Judges is 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 (figuring formalism), in his death than he did in his life. However, they had first put out his eyes. This is no doubt a figure of the revival today. The people have been so tied to forms and ceremonies, to creed and doctrines of men that they are going to the other extreme. They are pulling down the whole edifice, even though they are caught in the falling debris. When Samson gets through with the Philistine, bondage to him will be over.

The Book of Ruth is an appendage to Judges. It was during this period "when the judges ruled," 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 ended. The history of Christendom is not yet over. God has not yet spued her out of His mouth. This is important.

And observe it all comes in divine order just before the time of Samuel and the 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 ail 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.

My Bible

*This Holy Book I'd rather own
Than all the gold and gems,
That e'er in monarch's coffers shone
Than all their diadems!*

*Nay, were the seas one chrysolite,
The earth one golden ball,
And diamonds all the stars of night,
This Book is worth them all!*

Chapter One

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," His first recorded act belies his name. There is a famine in the land, a test, and he fails to trust His Mighty One. He leaves the land of the true bread; for he lives in Bethlehem-"the House of Bread," in the inheritance of Judah - "Praise." His profession is great, but his conduct is ignominious. Oh, how sad! We heard a preacher one evening who was a fine illustration of this inconsistent conduct. He wanted to raise a certain sum of money, 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." He said he had a rich Father, and yet in the next breath denied it, by the fact that he insisted 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 that is what Moab figures. Israel is 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 (figuring the back-slider), having a form of godliness to uphold without the power thereof. This is the final condition of everyone who leaves the place of praise in time of testing.

We are shown next, the self-delusion of such an one. It is written, "He went to sojourn in Moab;" then he and his family "continued there," and later, they "dwelled there about ten years." 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. 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." I Corinthians 11:30.

The two sons, Mahlon ("sick") and Chilion ("pining"), tell us the same story. They are the weak fruitage of unbelief. They grow up out of fellowship with God, marry out of the covenant and against the law (Deuteronomy. 23:3), and we are not surprised to hear of their early death. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away" - a backslider's experience - John 15:2.

Naomi, the one of this family with whom we are especially concerned, 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 beloveds and his desire is toward me." Naomi speaks of faith's apprehension of divine favor; but here in Moab, it is an empty name. It is in sharp contrast to her condition. She is not lovely, as she admits that her name is not fitting. "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara" ("bitter"). Naomi is a name of Canaan's land.

But there is hope; for we read, "She was left," and then "she arose." 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 wonderfully arranges in his dealings with His people. Now, observe the "backslider's" counsel to her daughters-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?" In other words, "what good can I do you?" In millennial days, the restored Naomi (Israel) will have the answer to this question. "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." Zechariah 8:23. This will be true when Israel has a comprehension 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 had become dim. Israel in their national character, out of their land, and in unbelief and utter despair, answer to 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 mere professor. Soon it will be shown among the Jews who has real love for Israel in their bereavement and forlorn condition, real love for their land and for 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," as was said to her. Another part, as Ruth, representing the godly remnant, 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 the 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 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 hope, 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. Rev. 13:15. When the antichrist comes, this class will be the "many" with whom he, "the prince" will make a covenant for seven years. Dan. 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 portrays the heart attitude of the one part of the nation. It is their spiritual condition that is so strikingly shown 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 though they may dwell in the land.

WHERE HOPE IS BORN

I'm grateful for the jagged rocks,
They teach my feet to climb with care
The fog that veils my path ahead;
But drives me to my knees in prayer.
Though tired and worn, I look to God,
And hope is born.

I dare not fail, for other feet
Will follow in the steps I've made;
A shepherd of the souls of men,
I will be unafraid.
And pressing on in peace with Him,
All fear is gone.

Not looking back, I follow Christ,
My perfect Pattern and my Guide;
May my example be approved,
And other souls be satisfied,
Who blindly grope, but find in Christ,
Their only Hope!

RUTH - THE GLEANER

Chapter Two

The lovely, winsome heroine of this beautiful love story, figures the Godly remnant of the Jews in the last days. We often read of them in the prophets. They will return, hand in hand with Naomi, aged and bitter in soul, but with hope reviving, when they hear the glad message that God has 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, full of faith, who 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 barley harvest," a most opportune time. The harvest is prophetic of the end of the age (Matt. 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. Notice it is the "barley harvest," which was the first grain to ripen. (Exodus. 9:31, 32). The full harvest comes later. This certainly pictures the earliest moment of the return of the remnant of Israel.

We now 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." This was a "hap" that never would have happened if Ruth had remained with her gods in Moab.

Boaz himself now appears upon the scene, and as we would expect, such a mighty one appears with blessing on his lips. "The Lord be with you," is his greetings to his workers. Then he beholds our winsome heroine, and his heart is drawn to this poor Moabitess, who has nothing in herself to command his attention, except her helplessness and need. Boaz makes her welcome in his field, and 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! She responds to his kind words by falling upon her face and worshipping this great man. Ah, what grace he displays! No marvel she loves him. It is truly love at first sight.

His gracious answer follows: "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." In other words, we hear the words of Jesus, "I know your works." All the nearest and dearest claims of nature have been overthrown by the strength of another love-the love for a land and a people and a God whom she knew not. "A full reward be given thee of the Lord of Israel under whose wing thou hast come to trust." What beautiful language of divine grace! Ruth is comforted and fed. "She did eat and sufficed and left;" that is, she could not appropriate all He gave her. There was much remaining after she was filled and satisfied.

This does not exhaust his grace. He is still concerned for her, and looks out for her interests. "Let her glean even among the sheaves and reproach her not." It literally means, "do not make her blush." Give her the respect due to the one for whom I care. Like his blessed Anti-type, Christ, 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 instructs his servants: "Let fall some handfuls of purpose for her." He wants her to have something that is intended only for herself. This is not so much what her diligence has secured, but that which his love has freely given. Also 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. 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." Remember, Ruth figures the remnant of Judah of the last days. Those who are first awakened to their sorrowful condition will appreciate every little crumb of grace they may be enabled to glean. It is through 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•



LEAVES FROM THE TREES

COLORING BOOKS - God doesn't give me a blank piece of paper and say, "Draw yourself" ... He gives me my own personal outline and says, "Now you color inside the lines I have drawn for you ... choose your colors carefully, for only you can color your picture ... the scenery around you has nothing to do with your portrait, but can influence your selection of colors if you let it ... God knows which colors will best bring out the highlights of your portrait, so it will be a work of art ... If you ask Him, He will guide you and make you a portrait of His love ...

-by day



RUTH - SEEKING REST

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?" 3:1. The solicitude of Naomi for Ruth is wonderful. She seems more interested in her welfare and future possibilities, than she does in her own. All of this 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, that the Kinsman- Redeemer, promised to the nation, is related to them. They will discover that they have a right to the redemption which was certified to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the covenant of grace; and they will 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 their Messiah, 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. Finally the day will come when they will believe and seek Him with all their heart, regardless of anyone or anything.

In this connection, we find that Ruth is no longer a gleaner. She is now claiming and 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 already about him and his relationship to them; but heretofore, the fact has not been of any practical significance to either of them. 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 person claim upon him. How touchingly suggestive of the individual seeking after Christ! We must all come to Him for rest, and we will find, even as Ruth did, He is ready to receive us.

Naomi and Ruth's attitude to the kinsman-redeemer IS based on two laws in Israel-the redemption of an inheritance (Lev. 25:25), and that of raising up a brother's name on his inheritance (Deut. 25:5-12). Both of them apply to Israel and are clearly joined here. 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, chapter 37. All this is taught with great tenderness and beauty in these typical things in this book of Ruth.

To sum up, we see that the Moabite, figuring the remnant of the Jews, learns from God's dealings with the nation, figured by Naomi, lessons of redemption. It is only personal experience which can interpret and bring results, however. Both heart and conscience must be searched out; the need must be truly seen, and then there is something doing; the need is met. At first, there may be somewhat of a repulsion 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 at 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 handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman." 3:8,9. Again, we remind you that Ruth is a representative figure in her poverty, deep humiliation, and 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. They will prayerfully and humbly search through 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, of which they are but a small part.

Ruth faithfully followed Boaz's great fields all through 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 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 folks by the conventional standard of our day. It does not follow that our standard is absolutely right, or higher than theirs, or that theirs was wrong and lower. High and noble motives may underlie actions that may seem to us to be unseemly. Also, we must 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."

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 were no kinsman-redeemer. Just so it would be with Israel if there were no redemption; their tide to the land, their name and promises would be forfeited.

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," He was declaring Himself their Kinsman, 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. 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.

Israel, figuratively, is this floor, according to the testimony of John, the forerunner of Christ: "Whose fan is in His band and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner and He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire., 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. Blessed be God, "the fan is in His hand;" that is, judgment must come, but it will be tempered with mercy. It will work good for all them who love the Lord in that day. 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." (Song of Solomon 8:4).

Assuredly this was a bold act, to claim this great man as her kinsman, but she had riot been gleaning in his fields all summer for naught. Boaz's special attention to her made her confident. She learned something of the wondrous grace of Boaz, and now she is appropriating that sufficiency. 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."

Ruth sets before us an example in her yielded attitude; and it is the only place to find rest. 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. 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 activity, did not realize that blessed rest.

Ah, what depths of humiliation some of the people of God have entered of which other dear, righteous souls know nothing! What a bold, shame- less act, according to man's verdict! How the self-righteous critics would have sneered her and made her a public example, if they had known. But blessed Boaz, he understood her attitude and later, as we read, forbid anyone to let it be known, that a woman had entered there. He knew her heart that she was there, not only for herself, but also for her mother-in-law's interests. 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, she endured the shame, for the joy that was set before her.

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?" 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, humbled into the dust by sorrow, or 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 for all the adversity.

For the first time, we hear Ruth claiming her right to an inheritance. She claims Boaz as a kinsman-redeemer and insists upon her rights. This put him under obligation and he did not shift the responsibility. He appears to appreciate the confidence she shows in him, and though he admits that there is another with a prior claim, yet he asserts that he will make him do his part, or give reason. Ah, Ruth has found a powerful friend. Things are looking up for her. Boaz has more influence than anyone in Bethlehem. To have him on her side is to be safe indeed. He makes him- self 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 according to our faith in this respect.

Boaz speaks with the keenest appreciation of Ruth's course of action. He does not upbraid her in the least; rather, he encourages her. "Thy latter kindness," he says, "has been greater than thy former." Her confidence in Jehovah brought her from her country and her kindred. She showed greater faith in Jehovah. She took the only place that a Moabitess could take-that of need and helplessness and found grace in his sight. "Fear nor. I will do all that thou requirest," he said. 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." 3:12, 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 away empty." The secret of all our blessing is to realize our unworthiness in anything we are, or can do, to merit salvation. The Jew, as a nation, must yet learn this lesson, which we are learning today.

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The Day- The Way
Not for one single day.
Can I discern my way,
But this I surely know-
Who gives the day,
Will show the way,
So I securely go.

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." 4:1.

Boaz did not let 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. It proved also that he loved her. The poor Moabitess had won his heart by her surrender of all her pride and self sufficiently 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, 'Je intends to make her interest his business. She has a "strong" ally now Boaz is his name.

He is astir early. 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-Deut. 17:5. It was called Miphkad, "the place of review," in Nehemiah's reconstruction. Nehemiah 3:31. Satan may do his work in the dark, but not Boaz; for whether type, or the all glorious Antitype, Christ, he calls all to witness His power to redeem. Paul exclaims, "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 nearest kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken. He addresses him, "Ho, Such a one." His name is not given and this in itself is important in this book where we are carefully informed of every character, that we may discover the significance of every one. 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. This much we may gather at the outset, Boaz does not think much of this fellow that has a prior right to redeem his friend's inheritance. There is no honor attached to "Such a one" and the reason of this we shall see.

After they are seated and ready for business, Boaz requests ten elders also to sit down and witness what is about to follow, There is to be a trial here, as it were. The court is set in order and then Boaz proceeds. He opens the case to the near 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. However, he does not display any of the loving interest that is manifested by Boaz. He would even pass by, as did the priest and Levite who passed by the wounded man on Jericho's road if he had not been halted by Ruth's defender. Boaz is determined to see that her right is redeemed, whether it will be his, or the other fellow's. She shall have the inheritance and the family name restored in Israel

Such an one says that he will redeem the land. 4:4. So far so good says Boaz, but there is more in question than the land. "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." 4:5. Then Such a one must acknowledge his inability to do this: "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance; redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it." 4:6. 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 peer in the wisdom displayed in just such hidden, perplexing questions. We are shut 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. He is the "law of God," the covenant of Mt. Sinai, who is thus apparently disrespectfully addressed by Boaz. As we hear him say, "I cannot redeem," the Spirit at once turns our thoughts to Romans eight. There we are introduced to the nearer kinsman-"What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" 8:3. It is used there in a different connection; but the force of the truth is the same. Whether for the obtainment of practical righteousness from the old life, or for redemption, its weakness is apparent. Every one of its ten commandments bears witness of its inability to redeem.

But what about the land? 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." Leviticus 25:23. But, we hear the Apostle Paul exclaim, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom. 7: 14. The law has no difficulty as to redemption of the land, but the redemption of the poor Moabitess is out of the question. It was the principle of the law by which she was condemned. Observe that the title "Moabitess" is continually emphasized, despite all her attractiveness. Therefore, in the face of this conceded truth, how is it possible for the law, the nearest kinsman, to redeem her, when it is written, "a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation forever"? Deuteronomy 23:3. Certainly the law cannot redeem those whom it condemns. Its own inheritance would be jeopardized. The law is absolutely against her. It accuses, convicts, but cannot justify. If it admitted those whom it was pledged to keep out, where would be the power of the law?

How is Such a one a nearer kinsman than Boaz, or the law than Christ? We must remember that the law was before Christ. We do not learn of the "nearer kinsman" until Naomi directed Ruth to claim relationship. As soon as anyone claimed anything, he was referred to the law. Especially is this true of Israel. The question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" is the same principle. When Naomi claims kinship with Boaz for Ruth, immediately, she is referred to "Such a one." Jesus said, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" 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, "But it for thee." 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 was to be known as "He that hath his shoe loosed." Deuteronomy 25:9, 10.

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, spit in his face. And he has a very similar standing in our day, the law 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 Moabitess and the inheritance." He seems very little affected, one way or the other. And this too, is a principle of law. It has no heart. "Such a one" cares nothing for Ruth. 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 of the law, which 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 the Scripture teaches, "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." Hebrews 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." Romans 8:2, 3.

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 nor justify the sinner whom it curses and condemns. The law cannot pay the penalty, nor give bail for the fellow it sentences to prison. Another must come and do that for the transgressor. "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 superceded by the covenant of grace. The able Kinsman-Redeemer, Christ, has come and no longer 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, who still have respect for the fellow that has his shoe loosed.

The Galatian saints of Paul's day rather liked his gloomy face and his dwelling. They lived in his house, under his restrictions for awhile; but they had to keep all the shades drawn, 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." Hebrews 8:8. If the first covenant, the law, had been able to redeem, then there would have been no need of another. Christ could 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, "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?" Galatians 4:9. He speaks contemptuously of "Such a one." He dares to name the nearer kinsman, the principle of law, as weak, incapable and impotent to give 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, speaks so of him.

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. (Romans 7:22). In this case, as God's standard of righteousness, it is anything but weak. "Such a one" still has a shoe on the other 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. (Galatians 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, it is utterly weak, unprofitable, and beggarly; for then, it is put up as the rival of Christ. It is set up in His place. Do not marvel then, that the Spirit of God "spits" in its face, and puts it on a level with the heathen idolatry, in which the Galatian Christians had been living before they were saved. (Gal. 4: 19). "How rum ye again....?" He asks them.

BOAZ REDEEMS

"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. 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." 4:9, 10.

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 ten commandments. He insists that they stand forth and testify that he has 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 through her, to restore the inheritance to the family of Naomi. Each command of the decalogue witnesses of the incompetency of the law to redeem. If these ten witnesses were always called in question, and no others, how soon and simply the case could be settled. But folks make this great mistake of 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. He never lowers His standard. His ten fiery laws must be obeyed. He can never accept less than that which is lawful and right.

Christ never came to help us acquire a human righteousness, or to make an over-plus of our deficiencies. It is either the nearer kinsman, the law, or Christ, as our Redeemer. "If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Galatians 2:21. The law itself is a witness to Christ, declaring every self-judged believer in Jesus to be justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:21, 24. And now it is Satan's mouth which is shut up, while the saint has his mouth opened to show forth the praises of Him who has called us unto the perfect acceptance of the Beloved.

There are other proclamations in the Scriptures of the same perfect justification of the believer, even from the lips of His enemies. 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!" 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. It is his business 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).

The devil insists that He cannot be a just God and a Savior also, and he gets men to reason the same way. God has made a way out of this 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.

Dispensational Outline

"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. 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." 4:13, 14.

We have in the remainder of the book, types of marvelous dispensational truths. A baby 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 baby occupies the center 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. While there are many types in many different viewpoints, yet we view the One blessed Antitype, in every age, the One matchless Figure. God shall shortly bear witness to the worthiness of His power to redeem the universe of God. (Revelation 4)

Naomi represents Israel, not the apostate, infidel nation, but the real chastened Israel, identified with the covenant of law. She was "old and ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 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 an enduring covenant—that of grace. Marvel of marvels! Naomi becomes nurse to the child that is thus born. It is only through him that the family name is restored. It is only through Christ, joined to the feeble remnant of the Jews in the end, who accept His grace, that the nation of Israel will be restored to her prominent place in the earth.

The prophets witness of the glorious supernatural result of such a union. "The children that thou shalt have after thou hast 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 they?" Isaiah 49:21.

Isaiah speaks of many children, while the baby 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 (typical of the nations that rejoice with Israel in her renewal of life), means "servant." The Messiah is constantly brought before us in this role in the book of Isaiah, from chapter 41 to 53. After chapter 53, with its clear fore view of Christ's sufferings, we no longer read "My Servant," but "My servants," to the very end of the book. These servants, the pious remnant, are from now on owned by Jehovah according to the value of the atoning work of Christ. Therefore, that little child 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 this book, lessons referring to the Church, typical of Christ and His bride. While the principle on which Israel as well as the Church come into blessing is the same, by pure grace, yet in the book of Ruth, Israel is in view primarily. "Jerusalem that now is, is in bondage with her children," 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, though we may see in Ruth, beautiful lessons of God's ways with us, and our ways with Him, the earthly people are primarily in view.

Nameology In Ruth

This book closes with a string of names which would have but little interest or profit for us, if it were not for their marvelous meanings. There appears to be one consistent idea running through all of them - the expression and expansion of the Divine Life in Jehovah's beloved Israel, after He, the King, comes to the throne.

Phares - "a breaking forth," is not difficult of interpretation as relating to any one in whom resurrection life is implanted. They must break forth on the right hand and on the left. (Isaiah. 54:3).

Hezron - "to be green." The second name in the series is surely 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," harmoniously informs us of growth, just as the blade increases into the stalk with its "ear," finally in evidence. Such is the unfolding of Divine Life in the soul, whether in the individual, or in the nation of Israel.

Amminadab - "my willing people," is the result of 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." (Matthew 11:26). And, everything, apparently, was going wrong at the time. It is into this joyous obedience that every child of God is sanctified. (2 Peter 1:2). It is that submission of will that brings rest. It is a sign of perfect redemption in its result, whatever the dispensation, when the rebel man, can thus be brought into such harmony with God. It is fruit in fullness.

Nahshon - "to shine," teaches that the one who grows will also 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 for 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. And then they will serve as none has ever served, as the next name indicates:

Obed - "servant," becomes their happy occupation. They will say with the Psalmist, "O, Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, the son of Thy handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds." Psalm 116:16. Redemption is thus the power of service. It gives character to the ministry of the saints in every age.

Jesse - "Jehovah is," tells the reason of the exaltation of service. Jehovah becomes a servant. He is linked with those who serve. We see Him serving 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 - "beloved," most wonderfully prophetic, not only of Christ, God's beloved Son, both servant and King, but also of Israel, the nation that

will reign upon the earth. The nation 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 their nation development. Oh, what a time awaits this world! It will be a jubilee indeed, when one entire nation, at least, will be regenerated, willing and obedient .to God, reigning 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 of Jehovah. This will happen in one day, and it may well astonish the universe.

The story of Ruth ends beautifully. We can almost hear the refrain, "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 loved each other to the end of their lives, because they figure Jehovah and His. people in a union which will 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. This covenant allows no divorce. Jehovah takes upon Himself, not only to be faithful to them, but He 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.

THE END



TRUE LOVE

Love is the filling from one's own,
Another's cup.
Love is a daily laying down,
And taking up-
A choosing of the stony path
Thru each new day,
That other feet may tread with ease,
A smoother way.

Love is not blind, but looks abroad
Thru other eyes,
And asks not, "Must I give?" but
"May I sacrifice?"
Love hides its grief that other hearts,
May joyful sing,
And burdened walks that other lives
May upward wing.