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# THE BOOK OF RUTH

Its Message for Christians to-day

BY

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# THE BOOK OF RUTH

*May the spiritual lessons of this book bring to every heart peace by teaching them to trust Him more.*

## CHAPTER I

### *The Subject of the Book of Ruth*

THIS book is read by the Jews as their appointed lesson for the Day of Pentecost. This surely suggests that they see deep meaning in it, and a meaning that is connected with the Day of Pentecost. Truly there is Pentecostal truth here. As we read through these chapters, we may well be led on by the Word of God right into all the meaning of the Filling with the Holy Ghost.

For what is the subject of this book? This book speaks of Redemption, and what that means. You will see in Chap. ii. 20 :

“Naomi said unto her, the man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.”

In the margin it says :

“One that hath the right to redeem.”

This book tells us about the Redeemer and how Ruth was redeemed. The last chapter is all about

Redemption. You will see the word again and again in it. So the subject of this book is the meaning of Redemption. In the Word of God you will often find that there is one passage that will deal very specially with a subject, and elucidate it, and show you its meaning. The Book of Ruth shows us the meaning of Redemption, and when we come on the word "redemption," or "redeem" in other parts of God's Word we may well read it in the light that the Book of Ruth brings us.

Redemption as taught in the Book of Ruth does not merely mean deliverance, but also union with the Redeemer. It means being brought into oneness with Him. Redemption means real rest, because you are brought into oneness with the Redeemer, and He has taken charge. He has "spread His skirt over you" and covered "you with His wings." You are under His loving care. Therefore there is real rest in union with Christ. When anyone comes to the Lord Jesus, that one is espoused to Christ, and if that one realises all that his or her salvation means, he realises that he is one with Christ, and Christ with him, and he has real rest and peace.

Let us turn to three references about these things.

(1) 2 Cor. xi. 2. "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Here is the spirit of a real evangelist and pastor, filled with the Holy Ghost. He has espoused His converts to Christ and so is jealous over them with godly jealousy. These Christians were in many particulars unsatisfactory, but they were espoused to the Lord Jesus, and if they realised the meaning of their redemption, they were united to Him in bonds that never would be broken. They were Redeemed.

(2) Isaiah xliii. 1. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

Redemption leads to this, that you belong to Him, and He belongs to you. Redemption enables you to say "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," and so it goes on in the third verse: "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee and people for thy life. Fear not; for I am with thee."

Redemption means all that. Oh, that we may take it in!

(3) Titus ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Being redeemed makes us :

1. Pure from all iniquity.
2. His own "peculiar people" or "a people for His own possession." We belong to Him in the closest union.
3. "Zealous"—on fire for Him.

Redemption includes all that ; we are brought into oneness with Him, and abiding in Him, He abides with us ; He dwells and works within us and conforms us to His image.

And so the subject of the Book of Ruth is Redemption, in all its fullness and blessedness.

There are three little books in the Old Testament that speak to us of full salvation. The Book of Ruth, the Song of Solomon, and the Book of Esther. The Book of Ruth tells us how the out-cast is brought into union with the Redeemer, and finds rest under the shadow of His wings. The Song of Solomon tells how the redeemed one can live in the fellowship of love, and rejoice in her beloved, and He reveals His love to her. The book of Esther tells us how the redeemed one is seated on the Throne, and has power against all the power of the enemy, and so defeats Satan and all his devices.



CHAPTER II

*The Time of Ruth in the History of Israel*

THE Book of Ruth begins with :

‘Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled.’

So this book carries our thoughts back to the previous book, the Book of Judges. It happened when the Judges ruled. There is a wonderful spiritual truth and teaching in that.

In the last verse of Judges, speaking of those days when the Judges ruled, it says :

“In those days there was no King in Israel ; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

That was characteristic of those days. In Chapter xvii. 6 the Holy Spirit emphasises that. Also in Chapter xviii. i. and Chapter xix. 1. Thus, again and again, the Holy Spirit emphasises that, and there is meaning and deep instruction in it.

You know the sorrowful story that is told us in the Book of Judges. It is the story of apostasy, a story of getting away from God, and a story of all the awful results that come from that. Turn back to Judges ii. 10 :

“There arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.”

Such was the time when the Judges ruled, the people knew not the Lord. It says, verse 12 :

“And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

And from this time to the end of the chapter, you read of the characteristics of that time. It was a time of apostasy, of backsliding from God, of going their own way, of following their own devices in general; and therefore it was a time of deep moral corruption. Some of these stories in the Book of Judges we hardly dare read, they speak of such terrible depths of moral corruption amongst the people of God, in spite of all that God did for them. There was awful moral corruption, and terrible sin, going on, and as a result, there was strife and envy among themselves. Strife followed on strife, amongst those who should have loved each other. Strife and envy to such a degree, that at last at the end of the book, one tribe is almost exterminated by the other. Such is the fruit of apostasy and of backsliding from God.

Those days “when the Judges ruled” remind one of the sixth chapter of Genesis. Turn to the eleventh verse:

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and beheld it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

Those days that the Book of Judges speak of

seem to be just the same, so that after you have finished the Book of Judges, you expect that God's judgment will be poured out, just as we read in the sixth chapter of Genesis. You expect to find something like the Flood coming, because of all this apostasy and guilt and wickedness, and strife and envying. But instead of that you find the Book of Ruth, which tells us that even though all this is going on, God is working. It tells us that God is a covenant-keeping God. That God will stand by His promise, that God will bless wherever He finds hearts ready to be blessed. So we turn away from the awful sin and corruption, and bloodshed and iniquity at the end of Judges to the story of peace and blessedness and redemption in the Book of Ruth.

I think that this well may be a comfort to us in these times. We live in times of iniquity, and in times of suffering such as perhaps have never been on the earth before. Think of the awful suffering in Russia. Think of the awful apostasy there; a nation setting themselves against God, against Christ, and against all religion; so that awful sin and iniquity and corruption reign there, even among the children. Think of the awful state of suffering in the Balkan States. Think of the suffering among the Armenian people, that people that the Turks have set out to massacre and destroy. These days are indeed days of suffering,

because they are days of apostasy, and days of sin and corruption. Yet by these books of Judges and Ruth, we may know that God is at work at such a time, and is planning to fulfil His promises, and that we shall see the glory of the Lord filling the earth as the waters cover the sea. We shall see Satan turned out, we shall see a new heaven and a new earth. We shall see sin cleansed away. We shall see the Lord reigning, and honour and worship given to Him throughout the earth. We may well praise God for that. In fact, we shall see the story of the book of Judges changed into that of the book of Ruth.

It may be that there are some who in their own hearts are passing through a time like the story of the Book of Judges, a time of backsliding from God, with all the bitter fruits of backsliding; May God meet you, and turn the story of your life from the story of the Book of Judges unto the story of the Book of Ruth, that you may be redeemed indeed from all the backsliding and its consequences. God shows that there was a way of redemption for any backslidden soul; and any such an one may find a real union with Christ, and may find a real rest at His feet. So let us realise the Gospel, the Good News through this Book, and realise our redemption.

CHAPTER III

*Four Periods in Ruth*

As you read the story of Ruth in these four chapters, you will see that there were four periods in Ruth's life.

In the first period she is an outcast from God. She is a Moabitess, and therefore under the curse of God. In Deut. xxiii, 3, there was an awful curse against every Moabite :—

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord ; even to the tenth generation they shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever.”

The Moabites were under the judgment of God. God's wrath was against them, and Ruth was under that awful judgment. You and I in the same way were under the wrath of God ; we were liable to judgment, we were outcasts,

“strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

Our position was just the same as Ruth's, an outcast from God, under God's awful curse.

Then there was a second period in Ruth's life. She married an Israelite, and therefore she became an Israelite herself ; and as an Israelite, legally in the covenant of God ; and God accepted her in that relationship. But even though she was legally an Israelite she went on living in Moab. How many there are who are living just like that.

They have called upon God for mercy and grace, and God has brought them into His covenant, but they are still living down in Moab, away from the privileges that they might have. They do not come up to the Temple of the Lord and draw near to Him. They do not see the sacrifice laid on the altar for them. They are still living in the country of Moab. That was Ruth's second period.

Her third period was when she came up out of Moab, into the land that flowed with milk and honey; and began to know her Redeemer. That is the third stage. It was far happier than the other stages. Now she is beginning to know peace, joy and prosperity.

The fourth stage is the best of all. Then she is united to her Redeemer. She belongs to her beloved, and her beloved belongs to her. He is her Redeemer, and she is united to Him in everlasting bonds; and that brings blessing and hope and home, and, as it were, heaven upon earth.

There were those four periods in her life. We are each living in one of those periods, and we may well judge ourselves, and see where we are. Have I been redeemed? Do I know the Redeemer? Let us know where we are spiritually, then we can in intelligent faith lay hold on the Word and Promise of God, and find a full redemption.

## CHAPTER IV

*The Far Off Country*

THERE was a famine in the land (Chap. i. 1). A famine in the land that flowed with milk and honey, when God's people were willing and obedient. A famine, because God had to deal with His people. When the Judges ruled, His people were going away from Him, and God had to deal with them, and to bring their enemies upon them. In Judges vi. we read :

“ And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.”

God was ready to set them on high and to give them the victory, but because of their sin they had to live in “ caves and dens and strongholds.” Israel was greatly impoverished because of her enemies. The people of God were feeling the bitterness of backsliding from God, and the fruits of their sin and apostasy. There was famine in the land and so Elimelech went to sojourn in the country of Moab. He did that which was wrong, he turned from the land that God had given to them, to a heathen land. He went to sojourn in the country of Moab, and, just like every backslider, thought he would only go there for a time, and soon come back to God. But

“They came to the country of Moab and continued there.”

A backslider generally continues to live away from God, with a heart unyielding to His Word. So they backslid, and they continued in that state.

Then came disaster upon disaster. Naomi's husband dies, and then her two sons. Backsliding brings bitter fruit. But at last the tide turns. The chastening does its work. Naomi arose that she might return from the country of Moab. The Prodigal said :

“I will arise and go to my Father.”

It is hard to start home again, but Naomi had tasted the bitter fruits of backsliding, and now arises to go.

In Jer. ii. 19 we read :

“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee ; know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.”

Because of backsliding, bitterness has come into the life of Naomi; and even though she returns now, she goes back feeling the bitterness. She says, verse 20 :

“Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.”

Translated, it means :

“Call me not Joy, call me Bitterness.”

What a pathetic cry that is ! She had been called Joy, and I do not doubt God meant her to have the



joy of the Lord, and rejoice indeed in Him, even as He wants us to have the name of Joy. Each child of God ought to inherit that name, but she had lost her name, for she had lost her joy. In place of that, her name is Bitterness, because as she says :

“The Lord has brought me home again empty.”

She has been emptied. A backslider loses joy and peace ; he loses insight into God’s Word ; he loses power over sin ; he loses joy and fellowship with other Christians. Naomi felt that she was empty, empty of those blessings that she had enjoyed before ; and more than that she still bitterly thinks that God is against her. In verse 13 she says :

“The hand of the Lord has gone out against me.”

In verse 20 :

“The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”

She comes back in this bitter spirit, feeling that God is against her, but all the time God is stretching out His hands to her ; and all those sorrows and losses she met with have been proofs of God’s love and guidance. He longs to bring her back into the land, into the privileges that she might have, and He is dealing with her in order to bring her back into blessing and peace and prosperity. If she had really yielded to the Lord, and really seen His hand in it all, she would have come back and found peace, and joy and rest and prosperity.

A backslider hardly ever gets back again to all the joy and peace he had before. And yet, he ought to. God invites him with most tender invitations, back to all the joy and peace he has had. Nay, more than that, God means the end to be better than the beginning. The prodigal had a better time when he returned home than he had before, and God is prepared to pour out the riches of His grace upon a backslider. Yet if the backslider comes back with Naomi's thoughts of God, thinking that God's hand is against him and God is dealing bitterly with him, he will not get the joy and peace that God plans for him.

If there is a backslider reading this, God wants to give you again your name of Joy. He wants to take away that name of Mara, that you may be Joy to yourself, and Joy to God, and Joy to many around you.

In Isaiah lxi. we have a revelation of the Lord Jesus. In the third verse we are told what He is prepared to do :

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

He wants to take away mourning and bitterness out of your souls and give you the oil of joy. He wants to give the Holy Spirit of heavenly joy, that your character and name may be Joy.

The thirty-third chapter of Jeremiah gives us

the same spiritual teaching as the Book of Ruth.  
It says, verse 9 :

“ And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them ; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.”

“ Thus saith the Lord ; again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man, and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast.”

“ The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say ‘ Praise the Lord of Hosts ’ for the Lord is good, for His mercy endureth for ever ; and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land as at the first, saith the Lord.”

Thus He gives back that name of Joy.

## CHAPTER V

*Good News*

SHE had heard in the country of Moab that

“the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread.”

What good news! She heard the famine was over, and that there was plenty. Plenty and to spare in the Father's house. She is drawn by that to come back to God. She was not drawn back to the land because she loved God, or because she repented of her sin, but because she heard that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. That is the good news that brings the backslider home; and when the backslider comes home, others come into the joy and blessedness of a full redemption. Oh! that the Lord may so bless us, that others may hear of it, and want to come home. The backsliders will come home, the prodigals will come home and the Ruths will come home. This will bring joy to the Lord and joy to His people.

Now when they first heard the news, Naomi, Orpah and Ruth started for home. These three are types of those whose hearts are moved by God's grace.

First there was Naomi. She was a backslider, but there was no deep conviction of sin in her

heart. She did not realise that she had stayed away from God all these years, and had continued in the land that was under God's curse. But she was not convicted, nor had she real hope in God. There was no longing like :

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God.”

Oh, that she had come back in that spirit! She had no faith like the returning backslider in Psalm xlii. 8 :

“Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the day time, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.”

If she had come back in that spirit, of desire and of faith, how richly would God have rewarded her, and met her and blessed her. She is a type of some who do come back from backsliding indeed, but they do not come back with a broken and contrite spirit, and so do not get all that God wants them to get.

Secondly, there was Orpah. Orpah starts to go forth out of the country of Moab, but when Naomi tells Orpah and Ruth to go back :

“They lifted up their voices and wept, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law.”

Orpah did start, but is soon discouraged and goes back. Orpah had not got that true heart we read of in Heb. x. 22. The writer of the Hebrews is

urging Christians to come right into the Holiest, that there they may be sanctified Christians. He bids them come "with a true heart." Orpah had no true heart to come back. Her spirit was not steadfast with God, Psalm lxxvii. 8. She did not want to come back, cost what it may, to the country of the Lord of Hosts. She was not coming in that spirit, and so the temptation was yielded to, and she went back. Well may the Lord say to us, "Remember Lot's wife." She started well, but looked back, and she was turned into a pillar of salt. I do not doubt that round about us are those who have turned into pillars of salt. Let us be warned. Let us draw near with a true heart. Should you be seeking full salvation at this time, take care that you draw near with a true heart, with a real decision, with an honest heart, covering up nothing, opening your heart wholly to Him, seeking Him, and ready to go forward cost what it may.

The third one was Ruth. She was not like Orpah; her heart was steadfast with God. Three times over in this first chapter she is tempted, tested whether she will go back, but she is steadfastly minded to go on. Her clear decision is announced in beautiful language:

"Entreat 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."

Here is a real renunciation of her own kindred and people in order that she may be with the one she loves. She separates herself from what was hitherto gain to her, and counts it loss. She appropriates to herself Naomi's people and Naomi's God, and consecrates herself to go all the way even unto death.

This is an illustration of real surrender and faith.

*"Whither thou goest I will go."*

This is the pathway of renunciation. It meant turning her back on her old ways, and turning towards new ways which she did not know.

*"Where thou lodgest."*

This is the choice of communion, because the heart has been won, and there is the yearning of affection.

*"Thy people shall be my people."*

This is the choice of fellowship with those who love the Lord, and the determination to please Him only. They come out from among the worldly and are separate (2 Cor. vi. 17), seeking first the Kingdom of God and all that belongs to it.

She is determined to go to the country of God to press on with Naomi right through even unto God. She is steadfast with God. She obeyed the call.

“Forget also thine own people and thy Father’s house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord and worship thou Him.” Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

To Ruth was fulfilled that wonderful promise because she fulfilled the conditions.

The great choice presents itself to Orpah and to Ruth. It is a choice of faith, drawn by love. Ruth by faith enters the pilgrim pathway. Orpah, influenced by natural reasons, turns back. Even as many of the disciples did (John vi. 66) when the way got too hard for them. Orpah had no root in herself (Mark iv. 17) and so when difficulties appeared she turned back. This is the great choice that comes to all who hear the Gospel (Deut. xxx. 15). And Orpah and Ruth illustrate the two ways in which it is received.

So Ruth and Naomi come home.

“And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.”

What she had heard was true. She had come to Bethlehem the House of Bread. It was harvest time. When backsliders come back it is always harvest time. There is the joy of harvest, the plenty of harvest, the prosperity and the abundance of harvest for her, and she may well rejoice in the Lord.

It was the beginning of the barley harvest. So it was just the Passover time, just the time when the



people were keeping the Passover and were remembering God's great salvation. The joy of passover was in the land. They were thinking of God, their wonderful Deliverer and Provider, and worshipping Him. When a backslider comes back, there will be restored to him the joy of salvation and of peace with God: the Passover joy of deliverance out of Egypt into the Kingdom of God. He delivers out of the power of Satan into the care and protection of the God of Israel.

God is just the same to-day. He deals with souls just as He dealt with Naomi and Ruth. To those who come back to Him with an honest and a true heart He opens the riches of His grace. It is harvest time indeed, and more than that. To them the riches of the Kingdom of Heaven are given. God Himself in Love goes forth to them, they are met by His faithfulness and His grace, and they rejoice with God's people, in all the abundance of God's redemption and salvation.

They had come to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. We read in the twenty-sixth of Deuteronomy :

“ And it shall be, when thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it and dwellest therein ; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth. And thou shalt go unto the priest, and say unto him ‘ I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us.’ ”

Ruth had thus come into the land, and she was, as it were, setting down her basket before the Lord, and professing that she had been an outcast "ready to perish," but she was come into the land, and she was rejoicing there.

## CHAPTER VI

*A Wealthy Redeemer*

NAOMI had a kinsman. The word also means a Redeemer, and that is the meaning here. Naomi had a Redeemer, a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth and his name was Boaz. Ruth knew nothing about it. It was not revealed to her as yet. Here were unknown mercies that were going to be revealed to her. Ruth had come into the land and there were further mercies awaiting her. There are many who have come into the Kingdom of God and yielded to the Lord Jesus, and yet their eyes have not been opened to see the wonders of grace that there are for them in Christ Jesus, and what a wonderful Saviour they have. They are rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins, rejoicing in the gift of eternal life, and that they have been born again; and we may well rejoice in that. But we may know all that, and yet not know what a full salvation we have.

There was a Redeemer for Ruth. He would bring her into a real rest, real blessing, real prosperity. He was a kinsman of her husband, even as the Lord Jesus is our kinsman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself likewise took part of

the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

He came down into our flesh and blood that He might be our Kinsman. He otherwise could not have been our Redeemer. He came and partook of our flesh and blood.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ." Gal. iv. 4-6.

How glorious is our position! Oh, that we may really understand all that it means, that He is our Redeemer.

"Naomi had a kinsman."

Everything is included in that sentence, the coming blessing is all wrapt up in it. And you and I have a Redeemer. All blessing is included in that.

Again and again through the latter part of Isaiah you will find that wonderful title the Redeemer spoken of. Look at xlv. 22 :

"I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee."

We have this revelation of God as our Redeemer, our kinsman; the one who is responsible for us, the one who redeems the inheritance for us and redeems us from all the effects of the fall, who

brings us back to the glorious inheritance that we lost when sin came in. May we realise what it means to be able to say "I have a Redeemer."

Boaz was a mighty man of wealth. God says in Psalm lxxxix, 19 of our Redeemer :

"I have laid help upon one that is mighty."

The Lord Jesus is that one ; One that is mighty ; and God chose Him as our Redeemer. There was no angel that was mighty enough and wealthy enough to redeem us. The very Son of God is our Redeemer. He is a mighty Man of wealth, for He could say :

"All power is given unto Me in Heaven and Earth."

Such is the wealth and power at His disposal.

In Ephesians i. 7, we read of His riches :

"Redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."

He has purchased redemption according to the riches of His grace, because He is indeed a mighty Man of wealth, and He loves to deal with us, not according to our own ideas, but according to His wealth and generosity.

## CHAPTER VII

*Gleaning*

RUTH said unto Naomi :

“ Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn.”

Ruth is like an anxious soul in search of truth. Every such an one desires to glean in the Word of God and pick up this or that ear of corn which is nourishment to heart and soul. They search the Scriptures because they want to be nourished and strengthened. As time goes on her gleaning is more and more blessed and prospered. And so will ours be. We shall gain more and more. See this progress in her story.

(a) Chapter ii. 17, we read :

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

That is to say, enough for one man for ten days. Exodus xvi. 36. She had gleaned all that, because of the handfuls that had been dropped for her on purpose by the servants of Boaz.

(b) Then she gleanes still more, and as she leaves the feet of Boaz, we read in iii. 15 :

“ Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her, and she went into the city.”

She goes burdened with blessing into the city. She begins in the second chapter by just gleaning

ears of corn, and then she gleans handfuls of purpose at the end of the second chapter. At the end of the third chapter she is taking six measures of barley from the hand of Boaz, and

(c) In the last chapter, she has no need of gleaning any more, for all that Boaz has is hers ; she is one with him. Thus would God ever increase our gleaning, making us ever more prosperous and ever the richer, until we know that all that God has is ours.

Let us day by day glean from His Word, and day by day pick up handfuls that He has dropped on purpose for us, and at times receive from His hand a spiritual gift of His grace, like six measures of barley. Let us spend time over God's Word, and God will make the gleaning ever more and more prosperous and helpful and enriching.

## CHAPTER VIII

*The First Sight of Him*

So she is gleaning, and as she gleans she has her first sight of Boaz. Mark those two words in your Bible "Behold Boaz" verse 4. Her first sight of Him. She has been gleaning in His field as it were by chance, and as she was gleaning there "Behold Boaz." Did Andrew ever forget that first sight of the Lord Jesus, when John pointed Him out as the Lamb of God (John i. 36)? Did not Peter ever remember his first sight of Him (John i. 42)? And Nathaniel could not have forgotten the impression it made on him (John i. 49).

You remember that day when you had your first sight of Him. It may be when you were alone in your room over God's Word, and God's Word was lit up by the Holy Spirit to you, and you knew the Lord was there. Or it may be in some Convention when the Word of the Lord came to you. You were gleaning as it were in the Harvest field; and suddenly the Lord was there, and the Lord revealed Himself to you. It was your "hap" to light upon the field that belonged to Him, and He revealed Himself to you, and "Behold Boaz."



And she sees something of the spirit of Boaz as he greets his people. Boaz came and said unto the reapers "The Lord be with you," and they answered him, "The Lord bless thee." She is come into the land where God is known, and she feels something of the spirit there. She has never seen or heard anything like that in Moab. She had never felt that spirit, but here she feels the wonderful spirit of love, and hears the words of grace that fall from the lips of Boaz, and the willing and glad response from those who belong to him. She feels the wonderful atmosphere, and rejoices in Boaz. She is partaking of his grace, but as yet she knows practically nothing of his relationship to her. She sees him in the field with his workers. But she has no realisation that she has a claim upon him, and that he is ready to answer that claim. She looks upon him as master, lord of the harvest. She rejoices that she is in his field. But there is far more for her than that. She will find a real redemption and moreover a union of love with him, because he has a legal responsibility towards her, and she has a legal claim upon him. How many Christians there are who do come into the Kingdom of God, and glean in that field; but after all they have not realised their claim upon Him, and His love to them, and all that they may have in redemption.

## CHAPTER IX

*An Interview with Him*

Now there is deeper grace. She has her first interview with him. Ruth has seen him as the master, the lord among his servants. Then she probably cowered in the background. But now Boaz comes to her and speaks to her. She sees his face and hears his voice. This chapter is mainly taken up with two interviews of Ruth with Boaz. The first interview (verse 8-13) leads up to the second (verse 14).

Let us stop for a moment and ask ourselves: "When last did I have an interview with the Lord Jesus?" The Lord is ready to grant to us real interviews. When last did you see His face and hear His voice? It is so easy to let the time slip by and to live like a Christian, and to be earnest in work for Him, and yet not have interviews with Him and see His face and hear His voice.

Let us see what these interviews brought her, In the first interview he lays these injunctions upon her (verse 8):

"Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens."

Don't go to another field. Do not glean in the fields of the world, and do not set your heart upon

the ordinary concerns of the world. Then he says :

“Go thou after them.”

Let us be with other Christians and follow them as they follow Christ. Especially for a seeking soul, fellowship with other Christians is always helpful. Let us take care that we abide close by the Lord, and close by His people.

Then he gives her three great promises.

“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.”

He first gives a promise of help in gleaning. Then he gives her the promise of protection, that she should not be molested. Then in the third place, he gives her the promise of water, that she was ever to be satisfied. Her thirst was to be quenched. She might come whenever she will, and drink of the water of life freely. This is like the promise of Psalm xxxvi. 7 :

“How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied.”

That is just what Boaz promised to Ruth, who had come to trust under the wings of the God of Israel (Ruth ii. 12).

What a difference these promises make to her standing ! Now she has a right to be in the field.

She had hardly any right before. She had just the right of one who is in need, to come and glean. But now she has the word from the master of the harvest. What confidence that must have given her. It completely changed her standing. If anyone says anything against her, she can now say "Boaz said that I might." She is no more a stranger now, she feels that she has a friend in Boaz.

"I've found a Friend, O such a Friend,  
He loved me ere I knew Him."

We might begin to sing that directly we have had an interview with our Boaz. We know that He has given us definite promises, and by His Word we have assurance. We have a claim, the Lord of the Harvest has given us His Word, and His Grace. She realises what a difference it has made to her, and it leads to humility and worship. She fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto Him :

"Why have I found grace in thy sight?"

It is strange that she should speak to him with a question-mark, and yet it is very natural. Faith begins with wonder. We read again and again in the Gospels that they wondered and marvelled. There ought to be a great deal of wonder in our spiritual life. As you read God's Word, again and again it ought to send you to your knees with

wonder in your souls. Wonder ; that is one of the most beautiful characteristics of us men and women. The beasts of the field do not wonder. A cow may be in the most beautiful scenery in Switzerland, but it does not wonder at it. The dog does not think of the beauty of the country it wanders over. But in the human soul there is wonder, and that is part of the nature of God that we have. Wonder leads to faith. Wonder leads to worship. Wonder leads to love. Let us take time to wonder at God's grace. The Japanese go to a beautiful scene, where there is a wonderful expanse of country, and will sit there for hours, and make it part of himself. It is good to be like that. As you are reading God's Word, do not merely glance over this and that, but take time to let the wonder of it lay hold of your soul.

That is what Ruth did here, and it brought her on her face before Boaz (verse 10). That is a picture of faith. Faith is when we receive the Word of our Lord, and fall at His feet, wondering at His grace. Faith takes it for granted that the Word is true. Faith does not struggle to believe. Faith hears the Word, and takes it for granted, and gets down on her knees before the Lord and worships. We wonder at His grace, and so we cannot but worship at His feet.

Now Boaz tells her :

“It hath been fully shewed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law, since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father and mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore.”

The Lord, the risen ascended Lord, says to His people, again and again, in the second and third chapters of Revelation: “I know thy works.” He says it, not to judge us, but in order to show His sympathy and His tenderness.

“I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil” (Rev. ii. 2).

It is just what Boaz says to Ruth here. It had fully been shown him what she had done, and what she had left behind in order to come into the land and unto the people. He appreciates it all and knows it all. He knows above all that she has come under the wings of the God of Israel. She was beginning to trust Him. She had said to Naomi: “Thy God shall be my God.” Boaz knows about the beginning of faith in her heart, and wants her to have full reward.

“The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee.”

The Lord desires that each one of us should have full blessing; full salvation; fulness of grace; fulness of His Spirit; fulness of His peace; fulness of His riches; fulness of His love, and fulness of His joy. He wants each one of us to

know the full reward given to us by the Lord God of Heaven. So he speaks friendly to his handmaiden, his voice reaches her heart.

Such is the first interview that she has with Boaz.

## CHAPTER X

*The Second Interview*

Now he gives her the second interview (ii. 14). I suppose there was two or three hours' work between the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, and then Boaz says to her at meal time (notice how the sentence should be read) :

“Come thou hither and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.”

He now brings her to his table. She was just a poverty-stricken gleaner in the fields, but he has brought her to his table, to eat and drink with him there.

We read in 2 Samuel ix. of another who is brought to the table of his King. It is the story of Mephibosheth. In the eighth verse :

“And he bowed himself and said, ‘What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?’”

That is what he was in his own estimation ; but the King promised him :

“Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.”

And

“So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he did eat continually at the King's table.”

In the same way Ruth is brought to the very table of Boaz, and shares with him as his guest and his friend. And even more than that, for



“He reached her parched corn.”

She is fed from his hand, in token of love and sympathy and grace. It reminds us of that time when the Lord Himself, seeking as a last resource to win Judas, reaches him the sop; and Judas received it, but hardened his heart, and hastened out. Boaz reaches to her the parched corn, and she is fed from his very hand. The Lord again and again would do that for us; bringing us to His very table that we may eat of His flesh and drink of His Blood; not only giving us privilege but giving us love, that we may be satisfied and go forth.

She rises up to glean. She never had such gleanings before. The Lord of the harvest commanded for her “handfuls of purpose.” God commands blessing for us as we glean in His field, and so we get

Deliverance.	Psalm xlv. 4.
Lovingkindness	Psalm xlii. 8.
Strength.	Psalm lxviii. 28.

She gathers together what she has gleaned,

“And she took it up and went into the City”

loaded with blessing.

“And she brought forth and gave to Naomi that she had reserved, after that she was sufficed.”

That is to say, what Boaz had reached to her she shares with Naomi. Naomi says:

“Where hast thou gleaned to-day?”

She is amazed at the gleaning Ruth has got, and she knows there is a reason. Ruth knows practically nothing about it. All she knows is

“The man’s name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.”

She knows his name and she knows his kindness, but she doesn’t as yet know more than that.

But Naomi tells her :

“The man is near of kin unto us, one of our near kinsmen.” “He is our Redeemer.”

Ruth had never known that until now. She had seen and talked with Boaz, she had been fed from his hand, she had heard his voice ; she knew something of the spirit of his harvest field ; but she did not know that he was their kinsman, and that therefore he had a special responsibility to her, and she had a special claim upon him, that he was only too ready to fulfil. She did not know that. And just so there are many Christians who have not yet realised that they have a special claim on the Lord. You know Him as your Saviour, your Friend. You have heard His voice. You have fed from His hand. You have received mercies from Him, and blessings and loving kindnesses. You love Him, and you revere Him. But do you know Him not only as a Saviour, but as a Redeemer? That makes all the difference. If He is my Redeemer I have got a legal claim upon Him, a claim that He will gladly honour, and will

gladly fulfil. As Ruth had a claim upon Boaz for the restoration of the land, and for the restoration of the name of her husband, and for all that she had lost, so I have a claim on my Redeemer to bring all back that I have lost by sin, and to bring me unto oneness with Himself. He is my Redeemer. Oh! that we may know the height and depth and length and breadth of what that means, and indeed experience His Redemption. He is waiting for that.

He is longing that our understanding should be enlightened to understand that. He is leading each one on, just as He was leading Ruth on, by tenderness, by mercy, and by grace, to a closer acquaintance with Him. But at last the revelation is given, He is your Redeemer; and she yields to Him in a bond that never should be broken. "My beloved is mine, and I am His." As we ponder these wonderful facts let us indeed wonder, and fall at His feet, completely yielding ourselves to Him, believing and asking Him to fulfil to us all that His great redemption means.

## CHAPTER XI

*The Winnowing Floor*

WE read at the end of the second chapter that it was revealed to Ruth that she had a Redeemer, and that the Redeemer was the one who had shown kindness to her, and had had mercy upon her. Boaz, whom she knew, has the right to redeem. That fact must have profoundly influenced the spirit and the thought of Ruth. Now hope springs up, now she realises that there is a future for her. Yet it did not merely depend upon the fact that there was a Redeemer, it also depended upon her putting in her claim; and that is what this chapter emphasises.

And it is just the same for us to-day. It is not enough that Christ is a Redeemer. We must put in our claim if we would share in the Redemption. That is a fact that a great many Christians do not realise. We love to read about the Redeemer, and sing hymns about His glory and His power; but it all comes to nothing unless faith claims, and takes Him as a personal Redeemer.

So Ruth puts in her claim at this time. Naomi says to her:

“Shall I not seek rest for thee?” (Chap. iii, ver. 1).

We may well seek rest for ourselves and others. We may well be concerned, as Naomi was, that

our friends and our loved ones shall know the Rest of God. And so, let us exhort one another like this: "Shall I not seek rest for thee"? Holiness is rest. Holiness means deep peace. Holiness means that the spirit of heaven has come into our hearts. This involves a real deliverance from sin. Holiness means a graciousness and a humility of spirit, which gives a real rest. As long as self is working there will not be rest. "There is no rest" saith my God, "for the wicked." There is no rest as long as there is selfishness and pride and unbelief. Rest comes when we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. Oh! the restless spirits and the restless hearts in the Church of God! God desires to breathe peace upon us, and to give us a Rest that shall not be broken.

Naomi's meaning was that she would seek a husband for Ruth. And for us also, rest comes by union with Christ the Rest-Giver. It involves living in a vital union with Him as the Branch is with the Vine (John xv.). We heard that call: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." And the call after that is "Take My yoke upon you." That is to say, "Be united to Me as one ox is yoked to another." "And ye shall find rest." A second rest, a deeper rest ye shall find unto your souls. Union with Christ is the secret of abiding rest. In

the words of this story union with the mighty man of wealth is the secret of rest.

That was the remedy for Ruth in her poverty and need. Ruth was a stranger, Ruth had got various necessities. Ruth was poverty-stricken, but there was a remedy for all her need in union with the mighty man of wealth. The remedy for you and all your failures and all your infirmities and all your poverty is just union with Christ, in whom all fulness dwells.

He shall supply all needs. He shall make thee wealthy. When thou art poverty-stricken, and shallow and poor and cowardly, He shall be to thee all in all. That is what redemption means. Redemption is not merely getting the forgiveness of sins, or being cleansed from sin, redemption means union with our Boaz, sharing His wealth and seated in the throne with Him.

But how can we be united with Him? Naomi very wisely gives her instructions as to how she may find rest, and these instructions are very helpful to a seeking soul now. She says:

“Behold he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor.”

Boaz is winnowing, that is, separating the chaff from the wheat. This is not the reaper's work. They have gone to their rest. Now He comes, whose fan is in His hand. Every day's work is winnowed by the Master. This is a comfort to

the servants of Christ ; for with the barley there is also much chaff. So they are glad to have the work purged ere it reaches the garner.

“Go down, therefore, where Boaz is.”

where he is winnowing. That is where we need to go. Many have found, alone with God at some Convention, that the Lord is winnowing, with His fan in His hand, and He is cleansing and delivering. That is the thought in Psalm cxxxix.

“O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me,  
Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising,  
Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou  
compassedst (winnowest) my path and my lying down,  
and art acquainted with all my ways.”

When He takes His fan in His hand we realise that He knows us altogether, and has searched us through and through. He knows our character, He knows our nature. He knows the lives we lead, He knows the hopes we have formed. He knows us in our daily life, He knows us as we are gathering in the House of God, He knows us and He is winnowing our path. He will divide the useless from the useful. He would divide the wheat that has life in it from the chaff that has no life. He is winnowing the character and the heart.

Again in 1 Cor. iii. 12,

“Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it,

because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

That is speaking of the future, but nevertheless the Lord is beginning that work now. Just as you are ready, just as you are willing, just as you are obedient, the Lord is able to carry on this work ; and to winnow from your heart and life that which is of no value and will not last. Wood, hay, stubble, is like that, and will eventually just be destroyed. He is bringing forth the gold, the silver, and the precious stones, and He, by the Holy Spirit, can make us each one pure gold, pure silver, and real precious stones for Him.



CHAPTER XII

*Committed to Him*

NAOMI gives Ruth four instructions :

(i.) "Wash thyself."

That is the first. Or as it comes to us in 2 Cor. vii. 1,

"Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Let us get rid of all that will hinder, of all that might prevent us from getting the fulness of His redemption.

Wash thyself, Ruth. Thou art to put in thy claim, and then

(ii.) "Anoint thee."

Let the oil of the Holy Spirit be upon thee. Let the Holy Spirit help thee and be with thee. Let Him inspire thee to pray. Let the Holy Spirit draw thee nearer to God.

Then

(iii.) "Get thee down to the floor, and lay thee down at his feet."

committing yourself to Him. She had offered a request before, "Let me glean" (ii. 7). Now

she offers herself. It is the first stage of Christian life to pray. But as one grows in the knowledge of Christ one wants to offer oneself. Yield yourself to Him, surrender to Him. Make your will His. No longer thy will but His. Commit thy ways unto Him. Rest also in the Lord. Those exhortations in Psalm xxxvii. 3-7, are most appropriate at this stage. Come in lowly surrender to Him, as one who is poverty-stricken, and then wait, wait patiently for Him.

This will also be fulfilled historically. There is coming a night of affliction for Israel (Jer. xxx. 3-7). There will be judgment that winnows. The remnant of the Jews will experience as dark a night as the earth has ever seen. But because of the hopeless darkness they will creep to Christ's feet, and claim Him as their own Redeemer and Lord.

(iv.) Naomi bids Ruth not to speak to Boaz, but wait, for

“He will tell thee what thou shalt do.”

Wait. He shall speak. Wait on Him, and the Lord shall reveal Himself to thee. The disciples came together in the upper room. They committed themselves to the Lord, and put themselves at His feet. He told them that as His Father had sent them, even so He would send them. They yielded themselves to Him to go

wherever He bade them. They fell at His feet in real surrender, and then waited and waited, until He revealed Himself. They waited for ten days, and at last the Lord spoke. There was a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. The Lord spoke. The Holy Ghost came. Thus commit yourself unto Him, at His feet, in real consecration ; and wait, and He will speak.

And so it came to pass and He said :

“ Who art thou ? ”

“ I am Ruth, thou art a near kinsman, that is ‘ my redeemer.’ ”

She tells him two things. She tells him first who she is. “ I am the poor stranger, the poverty-stricken Ruth.” “ I am the one who belongs to an accursed nation.” “ I am Ruth.” Secondly, she tells him what he is to her. “ Thou art my Redeemer.” “ Thou art the one who has the right to redeem me, even out of all my poverty.” And so, because of these two facts, she prays this prayer :

“ Spread therefore thy skirt over thy handmaiden.”

She uses the same Hebrew as is used in Chapter ii. 12 : “ Under whose wings thou are come to trust.” “ Spread thy wings over me,” she says, “ do thou take charge of me, just as a mother hen spreads its wings over its little ones,” especially if there is danger near. So Ruth prays, “ Spread thy wings over me, take charge of me, be thou responsible for me ; do thou be my all in all.”

We are taught to pray like that in the Book of Psalms. Turn to the fifty-seventh Psalm :

“ Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee, yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.”

This might indeed have been the cry of Ruth. That is a prayer that any seeking soul may well pray. Praying in confidence, claiming the power of your Redeemer, and putting yourself under the shadow of His wings.

Turn to the ninety-first Psalm. This is just the same truth :

“ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

That is just where Ruth wanted to come.

“ He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust.”

That is the place of deepest comfort to the young birds where they feel the mother-heart and the warm mother-love. God's care and protection feels like that. Well may we pray “ O spread thy wings over me.”

The answer of Boaz must have disconcerted her and made her wonder if she had made a mistake in applying to Boaz, and whether she ought to have sought elsewhere. He says that there is another kinsman who might redeem her, and perhaps ought to redeem her. For the Law might have redeemed us, and ought to have redeemed us. The “ old man ” ought to have so obeyed the Law

of God and followed the Law of God, that we would have been heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. This other kinsman is a type of the old man under the law of God. But that kinsman is no good at all. He cannot bring redemption. It is a help to us to find that out, that the Law cannot redeem. If you look at the seventh chapter of Romans, you will see that the old man cannot obey the Law of God. In the eighteenth verse :

“For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

The law has no power. The first kinsman is of no avail.

“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.”

But Boaz promised (verse 13) that if the first kinsman will not do his part as a redeemer, he himself would come forward and would accomplish that which Ruth desires.

“I will do the part of a kinsman to thee.”

I will be a redeemer to thee. Ruth takes that promise of Boaz and rests upon it. She lay at his feet until the morning and then rose up. He gives her six measures of barley. The promise has not yet been fulfilled. But she goes away laden with blessing. It is clean winnowed barley Boaz gives her. What she had gleaned was

barley and straw. But Boaz never gives any straw. It is the purest and the finest and the best (Psalm lxxxix. 16).

If any one seeks the Lord earnestly, coming to His feet in prayer, you may not as yet get all you want, but you will come away from His feet laden with blessing, as Ruth was. She knows that Boaz will work out her desire. So Naomi says: "Sit still, my daughter." It shall be accomplished. Thy redemption that thou hast longed for, and hoped for, shall come to thee. Boaz has promised. You have put in your claim. Now rest, rest in Him.

So we see by Chapter iii. that Faith means these three things.

Faith at the beginning of this Chapter meant that Ruth understood her rights. Faith means, in the first place, that through the Word of God we understand what we have right to.

Faith, in the second place, means surrender at Christ's feet, putting in our claim.

And Faith, in the third place, means confidence that He will work. Ruth goes away resting on that Promise. It is not yet fulfilled, but she knows it will be. It is all in the hand of her Boaz, and he will bring it to pass; and therefore she can leave it, knowing

"The man shall not be in rest until he hath finished the thing this day."

## CHAPTER XIII

*Legally Settled*

RUTH is trusting Boaz, and Boaz undertakes it at once. It may be that Ruth did not know that at first. But Boaz was faithful to Ruth, and faithful to his promise, and undertakes it at once. If you have put in your claim and committed yourself to the Lord, you may be sure of this that He undertakes it at once.

“Then Boaz went up to the gate.”

What has he gone up there for? He has gone there to be Ruth's advocate and to intercede for her. Just so, we have an Advocate with the Father, who is there just in order that He may intercede for us, and that He may see that we get our rights at the Cross, a full Redemption and a full Salvation. Ruth has rights according to the Law of Israel. Ruth in herself had nothing to do with Israel, she was an accursed Moabitess, but by grace she had been brought into Israel, and she had definite rights in Israel. And Boaz will see that her rights are honoured according to the Law of Israel, that is, that she gets a full redemption. All that is true for you and me also. Our Boaz will go forward to undertake for us, and will see that we come into our rights of a full Redemption that has been purchased for us on the Cross.

There are three questions to be settled :  
Was there a kinsman who had the right to redeem ?  
Was there a kinsman who was able to redeem ?  
Was there a kinsman who was willing to redeem ?  
Boaz was the one who could pass these tests.

And so Boaz goes up to the gate, that is to the public Court of Justice, because these questions have to be settled publicly before all.

The question is not settled quietly or privately, but publicly and legally according to God's righteousness and God's law. We are redeemed, one might say, not because of the love of God or the mercies of God, but because of the righteousness of God ; and that is a stronger plea for a sinner to use than the plea of God's love. We are redeemed according to the law of God. The foundation of His Throne is righteousness, and unless we have a righteous claim and according to the law of God, our claim will not be allowed in the court of Heaven. But the Son of God is arranging it all publicly and legally, even as Boaz comes to the gate and all was settled publicly in a court of law.

Turn to the fifth chapter of Revelation. The Son of God is claiming His right to redeem the inheritance. John weeps much, "because no man was found worthy to open the Book," but his tears are wiped away,



“For I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the Throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain.”

There is the Redeemer, the Redeemer who had paid the price. He is called the Lamb who has been slain, for though indeed He is the Lion of Judah, here He is the Lamb. He claims the privileges and the power of a Redeemer, and He claims them before all the host of Heaven. There are many angels round about His Throne, and the number of them was ten million times ten thousand, millions upon millions of angels. So that Redemption has been done before all the universe, all in heaven and all in earth. Before all, He has taken the privilege and the right to redeem.

Boaz goes up to the gate and sits down there, and then they talk it over. There were two laws in Israel that are referred to here, and because of which Ruth was redeemed. One was the Law of the redemption of an inheritance, Lev. xxv. 25. And the other was the Law of raising up a brother's name on his inheritance, Deut. xxv. 5. Boaz says :

“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.”

The other kinsman had been willing to redeem the land, but Boaz says it is a question not only of the land but of the Bride. Redemption involves those

two great issues, the Land and the Bride. Sometimes we think that it only involves the salvation of souls, and the bringing in of the Bride of Christ. But it involves also the deliverance of the whole of creation, that is to say, the question of the land. As we see the world to-day we see everywhere the power of Satan, and ruin and corruption in the sight of God. Redemption involves the cleansing of the earth. The world is going to be redeemed, and we shall see the Lord Jesus here as King upon the earth. We see this in Romans viii. 21 :

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, of the redemption of our body.”

But there is a time coming when the whole creation shall share in that great redemption. In the words of Ruth, the Land shall be redeemed. But the question involves another, the question of the Bride. We may not understand how it is that redemption involves that, but it does. It involves that the Son of God should be united to the Bride. It involves that Ruth who was an outcast, and poverty-stricken, should be brought to Boaz, and be united to him, and share his wealth and his property, and his kingdom. Redemption

means union, as Boaz spread his skirt over Ruth, and they became one.

In Ezekiel xvi. 8, we have the same thing.

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee ; yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.”

That promise will be accomplished, for the Lord has not only undertaken to redeem us from the sin and corruption, but to take us as his Bride, and to make His Bride one with Him.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Union with the Redeemer.*

BUT the other kinsman cannot redeem. As we see in Rom. viii. 3, the law cannot do it, and again in Rom. vii. 18, the old man cannot do it, so he draws off his shoe, and from that time, he and his house are despised and dishonoured. He has always to bear the name of shame, "him who hath his shoe loosed" (Deut. xxv. 10). But the Redeemer takes his place and claims the right of Redemption.

No one but Christ can accomplish redemption. We have tried the Law, but that fails (Rom. viii. 3). We have tried "the old man," and made good resolutions. But that fails (Rom. vii. 18). But the Redeemer comes forward and carries out Redemption.

"And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto 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 at the hand of Naomi."

In that one word "bought" how much is expressed.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty might be rich."

Boaz did not have to become poor, but was able

to unite Ruth to himself and to redeem her. Christ our Redeemer became poverty-stricken in order that He might redeem us. He had to empty out all His wealth, and to give His life. He yielded Himself a sacrifice, in order that we through His poverty might be rich. For

“we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.”

That is what our Redeemer paid in order that He might say “I have bought all.”

And what was it for ?

“Ruth have I purchased to be my wife.”

He might have purchased her to be his slave, his servant ; and it would have been wonderful mercy if God had purchased us out of the hand of sin and evil, and used us as His servants and slaves for all eternity. That would have been a wonderful grace and salvation. Or he might have done it that she should become one of his dependants, giving her a beautiful cottage on his estate and plenty to live on. His thoughts were far higher than that. “Ruth have I purchased to be my wife.” The richest man in the land says “I have purchased her to make her my wife.”

What is our hope ? Is it to have the Lord's help, and at last a mansion in glory ? It is something far higher and more glorious than that. It

is to be the Bride of the Lamb. He gives not merely gifts and grace, but Himself.

How wonderful to be united to Him, to know His love, to share His high position and His property! Ruth had had the promise of Boaz, and must have been just waiting at home, hoping that all would be settled. Then the news is brought to her that all has been legally arranged. How wonderful this must have been for her! She learnt that Boaz had really gone through with it, and was faithful to her. It was an accomplished fact, everything was clear now, and she was indeed on the way to be redeemed. We find the same spiritual truth in Isaiah liv., where we read of Israel as a barren widow and how she was blessed. In the fifty-third chapter we read of our Redeemer paying the price of our Redemption. In the fifty-fourth chapter we read of the redemption purchased for us. It was just what Ruth got, and what we also may get.

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

“For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame;

for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

“For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is His Name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

That is the reason of it all. That is why she is exhorted to sing. It is because “Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

Then he speaks to her in the tenth verse :

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

“O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours; and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

This is the song of redemption, the promise of redemption. This is what it means to have a Redeemer. Have we put in our claim for His redemption? He has given us opportunity for drawing near to Him, that we may put in our claim, and come to his feet, with a broken, contrite and humble spirit. He will honour our claim. He has purchased us to be His own.

What good news it was to Ruth to hear that it was all done, and legally done! I suppose after she heard it there was little time before the

wedding took place. There were various preparations that had to be made before the wedding. Boaz had to prepare his home for her. She had to prepare her wedding garments, that she might be ready for him. Of course it all came out of the wealth of Boaz. She had nothing with which to prepare wedding garments befitting his position. How gladly and abundantly he would supply all that was needed for that great day that was coming. How Ruth would look forward to that day when Boaz would take her, and she go to be with him for ever, to share his home, and to share his love for ever. That is just where you and I are now. We know that redemption is accomplished. We know that that has been legally done before all earth and heaven. We know that Christ is our Redeemer, and we are looking forward to the day when He will take us, to be united to Him for ever. He is giving us abundant grace just now, in order that we may be made ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. He is giving us the fulness of His Spirit, and the abundant riches of His grace. There is no stint on that side. We may have all that we desire, in order that we may be ready for that day. May the day speedily come when the Bride is ready, and the Bridegroom appears, and takes us to be with Him, to be His for ever !



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