

sisted all entreaties to follow the example of her sister, and only replied to the expostulations of Naomi in the words already quoted, "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." The attachment thus displayed is very warm and praiseworthy. It led her to forsake her own relatives and friends, to quit the country of her birth, and accompany the object of her regard into the land of strangers. She hoped that she might thus be enabled to minister to Naomi's wants, to sympathise and mourn with her in the afflictions which wrung her heart, and alleviate by her labours and kind attention the privations and infirmities which attend old age and want. The distress produced by reverse of worldly circumstances is one of the best criterions for enabling us to distinguish between real and false friends. We may learn from the conduct of Ruth to be faithful and affectionate towards our friends in adversity, remembering, for our encouragement, that we never more resemble our blessed Lord than when we pour the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit, and relieve the distresses of the destitute and forsaken. It was with great nobleness of spirit that Ruth resolved to share the fortunes of her aged mother-in-law. The worldly circumstances of Naomi were at this time by no means enviable. We find her sending Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz—a plain proof of their poverty, and of their being in want even of the necessaries of life. What could be the *ruling* motive which influenced Ruth in the step she thus took? It is pretty plain from the concluding clause of verse 16 that she had been instructed in the knowledge of the one living and true God, the God of her mother-in-law; and this accounts for her anxiety to accompany Naomi to the land of Israel, the moral garden in the wilderness of surrounding idolatry. She was anxious to enjoy the blessing of intercourse with the people of God, to visit those places which had witnessed miraculous displays of Divine power and goodness, and to unite with God's chosen people in the exercises of religious worship. Orpah, as already seen, returned unto her people and her gods. Though blessed to Ruth, Divine truth had produced no beneficial effect upon *her* mind, thus illustrating the sovereignty of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion, and whom he will he hardeneth. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill: the one shall be taken and the other left."

The conduct of Ruth in choosing the people of Naomi for her people, and the God of Israel for her God, was not left unrewarded. God regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, united her in marriage to a wealthy kinsman of her former husband, and made her a mother in Israel—yea, an ancestress of David the great king, and also of Jesus, David's King and David's Lord. In the reception of this Gentile woman into the church of God, and in the distinguished place assigned her as a progenitrix of our Lord, we have an earnest and pledge of the admission of the Gentiles to a participation of the privileges, greatly enlarged, that were so long confined to the Jews, as the peculiar people of the Lord. Like Ruth, let us learn to forego all worldly company, all the deceitful pleasures and honours of this present life, in order that we may enjoy the friendship of God and spiritual intercourse with his people; remembering our Lord's gracious promise to Peter, and to all who rest their faith on the same foundation as that of Peter's confession, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brother, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in the present life, and in the world to come life everlasting."