

God, who only can give a sure connection with the true God, an immovable position before Him.

Precious touching journey is this of these two afflicted women going up again to Bethlehem! Naomi went away rich and full, and was coming back empty. Had there been any desolation comparable to hers? Deprived of her husband and her two sons, too old to have a husband, without human hope of an heir,—a true picture of Israel—all was over for her as far as nature and the law were concerned. Far more than that, the hand of Jehovah was stretched out against her, and the Almighty Himself, whom she might expect to be the sustainer of her faith, had filled her with bitterness under the weight of His chastisement. She had changed her name "My pleasantness" for that of "Mara" (Bitter), because the God of Israel (Jehovah) had testified against her and the God of Abraham (The Almighty) had afflicted her. Ruth, her companion—also a widow and without children (but who had never had any), being moreover a stranger and daughter of an accursed race—had never known the blessings that had passed away from Israel, and had no claim whatever to their promises. They go together, the one acknowledging fully her state and the hand that was heavy upon her, the other having no other links with God than her faith and Naomi. Their road is strewn with difficulties, but they see shining brightly a star which guides them. Thanks be to Him; Jehovah has visited His people in giving