

GRACE.

Oh, wondrous grace, that makes more dark my sin,
 More bright and glorious, justice and its sword ;
 That doth the sinner's heart and conscience win,
 While God is justified and sin abhorred !
 Lowly I bow before its glorious throne,
 And, while absolved by grace, myself most guilty own.

I fly not now from that all-seeing eye
 Which once I shunned, to hide myself in night ;
 The blood, that purged my sin, has brought me nigh,
 To dwell in God's own love, and walk in light :
 The holy, holy, holy, Lord I love,
 Whose holy will I now delight to learn and prove.

Sin can't condemn, for grace has justified ;
 Sin shall not reign, for grace has set me free ;
 Sin I abhor, since Christ my Surety died ;
 His living grace now reigns, and succours me ;
 The grace, that has the wondrous work begun,
 Shall crown with glory when its mighty work is done.



GRACE.

How refreshing it is to our souls to think of the *grace* of God ; for what do we not owe to that grace ? May the God of all grace guide us, whilst for a little we dwell upon this blessed aspect of His character towards us poor sinners !

The very fact that we are *sinners* at once brings in the necessity, that if God act toward us at all, it should be *by* grace. The Scriptures recognizes but two ways of our dealing with God, and He with us, and those ways complete in themselves,

either *all* works, i. e. obedience, or *all* grace, i. e. the ground of works being *entirely* forfeited, so that entire *grace* can alone reach the case. Now, that there has been a flaw *somewhere* in his obedience, the most *hardy* would scarcely dare to deny, and, therefore, if we are to be saved it must be by *grace*. But without entering on that question now, let us trace a little the *stream* of grace. That it was *grace* that set God in motion towards us, for the purpose of our salvation and complete blessing, the Scriptures declares to us. For speaking of the calling with which He calls us, "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. i. 5), He says it is "to the praise of the glory of His *grace* wherein He hath *bestowed His favour upon us* in the Beloved." For so I believe it ought to be rendered. Not so much His bringing us to acceptance in Christ, as He subsequently does, as the original movement of His heart towards us in Christ at first. (The word is the same as, "Hail, Mary, highly favoured," i. e. the subject of favour.) And as it was grace that began, so grace has equally showed itself forth in all its ways. The dispensational wisdom, wherein God has brought forth His grace, shines marvellously forth. He waited till the law had run its full course, "as a school-master unto Christ," until it had shewn by its heavy yoke, which they could not bear, the helplessness of the sinner, man, and the inefficiency of the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. x.), to meet the manifest need. He waited, and then in the *fulness of time* He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under law. What forbearing grace and wisdom! How necessary for us! It came, therefore, at the right time; for "when we were yet without strength (proved to be so dispensationally), *in due time* Christ died for the un-

godly." And, indeed, as I said, God has taken occasion thus to *set forth* and shew forth His grace, and that it *is* grace. "God *commendeth* His love toward us, in that, while we were *yet* sinners, Christ died for us."

Nor is it this only ; but look at the whole calling of the Church, look at what God did for the Church at once, in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ—He took it from the horrible pit, out of which it was hewed (Eph. ii. 1-3), and at once, at one bound, taking us just as He found us, but putting away our sins by the blood of Christ, "even *when*, or *though*, we were dead in sins, He quickened us together with Christ (by *grace* ye are saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And, indeed, the next verse tells us this is to be the thing specially displayed and illustrated hereby hereafter, "That in the ages to come He might shew forth the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." And how it loves in that passage to dwell on this one thought of grace ; cutting away everything which for a moment could intercept the view. "For by *grace* *are* ye saved through faith," and that very faith (the hand by which we receive it) not of yourselves : *it* is the *gift* of God. Not surely of works, for we are His workmanship, and how can the workmanship boast itself against the *Workman*, as though it were anything in itself ?

Then, again, look at the place whereinto we are brought by it. It is not merely a number of *blessings*, as we have it in our translation (Eph. i. 3), but one unbroken, unclouded *charter* of blessing—"all spiritual *blessing*, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

To return. The more we study the salvation

and blessing of the Church in Eph. ii. and i., the more do we see that it is, *must* be of grace. The depth and height of it cuts every string of human claim or strength.

Take another view. Look at the *Person* in whom this grace comes—God's Son, His only begotten Son, in whom He was ever well pleased, one with the Father ; what do we read in that ? It is the deepest of all. 'Tis an unspeakable gift. He spared not His own Son, but delivered *Him* up for us all. "Angels desire to look into it."

"That it is grace alone carries on the work which itself began, we know to our joy. It is, indeed, God only that works in us, to will and to do of His own good pleasure : "Thou also hast wrought our works in us" (Isa. xxvi. 12). Further, we know that—

"Who *grace* has brought, will *glory* bring,
And we shall reign with Him."

He will *thus* crown His own work.

I say, then, it is well, often amidst the trials and corruptions of the Church, our own failures and trials, to look away from all to that grace, which stands forth bright and independent of all for us. It refreshes our souls, it animates us afresh, it inspires the freshest and the brightest confidence in God, and again girds us for our work. "Hearken unto me," says the Lord to *Israel's* remnant (Isaiah li.), "ye that follow righteousness : look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bare you : for I called him *alone*, and blessed him, and *increased* him." The result is full confidence. "*For* the Lord will comfort Zion : He will comfort all her waste places ; He will make her wilderness like

Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

It is both refreshing and profitable to think of the simple *grace* of God ; for the same spirit that works in the unconverted to assert *salvation* by works, works also in us to bring us into bondage, to becloud our apprehensions of the simple grace of God, and thus cut us off, more or less, from the fountain of all *joy*, and of *all* strength. For our strength will always be in proportion to our simple apprehension of the grace of God. If that fountain is disturbed, the waters will surely become muddy in our souls. And how decisive is the Spirit of God, knowing the importance of clearness here. He admits of no compromise. Gal. v. 4— "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by law [wholly, or *in part*, for the Galatians did not give up Christ *altogether*, but would have Christ *and* something else] ; ye are fallen from *grace*." That is, ye have left the ground of *grace*, which admits of no compromise.

Yes ; the sum of the Gospel will ever be found in its fulness in those words of the Apostle, Titus ii. 11—"The *grace* of God that *bringeth* salvation hath appeared to all men, *teaching* us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, godly, and righteously, in this present world ; *looking for* that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar, or special people, zealous of good works." This is God's golden chain, grace running through all. That grace may, in every way, in heart, and life, have its full effect with us, may well be our prayer.

"GOD IS LOVE."

I JOHN IV. 8.

The expression, repeated over and over in verse 7 of I John iv., is "*love*;" and in verse 8 it is repeated again, winding up with, "*God is love.*"

It is very important to enter into the truth, not only that love is of God, and that He dwells in us who believe, but to understand that the love here spoken of is the character of God Himself: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him" (ver. 16). This is something exceedingly beautiful to those who know it, and, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for *God is love.*"

What the Spirit of God speaks of in chapter i. of this epistle, as to our relationship with the Father, is surpassingly marvellous, and we can only know it by knowing what Christ came for; knowing it, we are identified with that Son, who came into the world that we might have life in Him, and God sent His Son that we might have life. What sort of life is it? A life that brings a believer into direct connection with the Father and the Son. Not only am I a son, but, being born of God, I have a new nature; and He tells me I am *in His Son*, and He *in me*. Think what a place He sees me in; and, mark, all God's springs are in Himself. He saw nothing in man but hatred, and it was love, divine love, that led Him to give His Son, and love that led that Son to come into this world, that God's love might be manifested to His creatures; His own nature and heart led Him to do it. He drew His own motive from within Himself, and He puts this same love into the heart of him that tastes it. It is love that

brings us into the presence of God Himself, a love that communicates the life of His Son to those dead in trespasses and sins, and they have a life that is locked up in the Son, and never can be touched. Is it true that you can turn round, and say, That is the manner of life I have got—life hid with Christ in God? If Christ Himself, up there, is my life, it links me up with Him, in whom is the whole bundle of life. The Head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of thee." It cannot say to the feeblest member, passing through the difficulties and sorrows of the wilderness down here, "I have no need of thee." Why? Because of its being bound up in the bundle of life. Not only is that life brought out in all beauty in Him, who was with the Father, but that life has been communicated by the Father to us, and is so *in us*, that Christ cannot say He has no need of us.

Did you ever look up into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ with the consciousness of having *one life with Him*? If so, you cannot entertain a single question about the place you are in before God. In Eden all was very beautiful; and, looking round, man might have said, "What a *large* Giver God is." But what can we say, as those to whom this life has been given, and whose fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Surely, we can turn round with deeper feeling, and say, "What a *blessed* Giver *our* God is!" When I wandered in sins, He found me and gave me a life that has brought me into fellowship with *Himself* and His Son.

The eleven, at the day of Pentecost, saw the stream of life flowing to this and that one, and even to men that had dipped their hands in the blood of God's own Son. But did it cease then? No, it has flowed for eighteen hundred years into

the dead souls of sinners ; and, when we look, we find it has connected us with another scene altogether. Well may you say, I am very unlike *Him* whose life I have. If you have it, you have found out, and will be finding out till He comes to take you to Himself in a glorified body, what a contrast you are to Him ; but it is not a question of what *you are*, but of a portion that has flowed to you *from* the Father. You will find your dearest relations turning from you, as those whom the Father has given to Christ *out of the world*. The Lord said, "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 14). The world cannot understand that principle in you—a certain affection in the heart of God that found its expression in the Son, and we find those whom God has given to Him so connected with Him, that the love wherewith He is loved *is in them* (John xvii. 26), and they are able to walk in the power of His life, unto His praise and glory, as dear children. Neither you or I can say, "We love God with all our hearts and souls," but, "*He loved us*, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"—"Not that we loved Him, but He loved us" (1 John iv. 10). If I begin with self, there is nothing but ruin. Is there anything to be got out of the ruin? Any want felt there for God? Impossible that there could be. Well, then. "Herein is love," God says, "not *your* love to me, but mine to you ; turn your eye to Christ, to see how I loved you, and gave my Son for you" (cf. Rom. v. 8).

Under the law, in connection with propitiation, or atonement, a victim was brought, but the blood of bulls and goats never could put away sin, the blot remained, and though the blood was sprinkled, and put on the mercy-seat, its effect was so far

from being eternal, that before the end of the year, sin being there, it needed to be done again ; but Christ, by one offering, for ever has put our sins away (cf. Heb. ix. 7—x. 22). Not only love comes out on the cross, but all He did was the expression of the love of God, and the meeting of the Father's mind. He was as completely one with the Father as it was possible to be. I have to begin with God, not myself. What has God done ? He has put before the soul the ground on which it can rest in His presence—given His Son as the propitiation for our sins ; and we can sing, " Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood ; to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen " (Rev. i. 5, 6).

In Rom. i. 19—iii. 19, the Spirit of God traces out the awful condition of man by nature, but God has commended His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Not only God has given His Son as a propitiation for us, but He has introduced us to a higher order of existence than man in Adam ever was in ; He has given us the eternal life that is in His Son—an entirely new and divine order of being. What I have is just the life of that One Person in whom is all God's delight. By the work of Christ on the cross all question of sin was once and for ever settled for us who believe, and we have peace with God (cf. Rom. iv. 24—v. 2); and, now, out of His fulness we receive grace upon grace, and when He comes He will present us, without spot or wrinkle, to Himself. Is it difficult to say whether or not we have tasted what it is to be in such a place ? I get this light shining in me, because He has given me of His Spirit. Has not God a right to speak ? Does He not know how to use human language so as to carry it right home to our souls ? To be sure He does.

The Lord Jesus declares about His sheep (John x. 27-30), that they have eternal life, and none can pluck them out of His hand, or out of the Father's hand ; but human nature says, " How can *I know* it to be *true*? How can *you* know it? A pretty word for a *creature* to put forth ! Far better for the creature to say, " Let God be true, and every man a liar." It is by faith in Him who cannot lie that we know this (cf. 1 John v. 9-13).

Then, in describing the experience of a soul led by the Spirit of Christ and what should be the mark of it, God says His love was so displayed in that work of His Son, that it dwells in the hearts of believers, and they in it. If God uses your sin to shew the virtue of His Son's blood, are you to say, " My leanness, my leanness "? Your leanness ! How came you to be calculating on anything of yourself? If you bring an empty vessel, even if there be a crack or flaw in it, you can keep it *full* to overflowing, if you put it into a cistern of water.

The proper expression of God's will has come out ; the deepest, highest, brightest, fullest, most blessed counsels of God getting their expression in Him who said, " Lo, I come to do Thy will." Who was that Babe, laid there in a manger? What could it mean, those angels saying, " Glory to God in the highest? " Ah ! God said, Your ways are not my ways, nor your thoughts my thoughts. I shall bring out of my own bosom One who was there before all worlds, and thus will come out to light, through that Son of my love, what I am—my character will be seen ; He will declare what I am ; I can let the brightest expression of heaven's delight shine ont upon something on earth now. God could look down upon that Babe, and see there the perfect expression of His

glory. All God's glories came out in connection with that Person, who said, "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;" and, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (Matt. xi. 27; John xiv. 9).

Looking to be manifested at Christ's judgment-seat, we have no cause to have any uncertainty as to results. And why? Because, "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17); and I can say this, "If Christ has taken the place of the smitten Rock, and has become my life, will He find fault with His own life in me?" He will find fault with our practical inconsistencies, but the life of a believer is what Christ is; and not only have we life in Him, but He is the propitiation for our sins. He did the whole will of God, and He was made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We can take our place in God's presence, and our confidence cannot be shaken, if the heart is simple and true, because there is the blood that cleanses from all sin, and we take our place there as those who are cleansed. If it is the question of your getting into His love, you cannot get in; but if it is the question of Christ's having brought you into it by washing you from your sins in His own blood, there can be no fear, "perfect love casteth out fear," and, "We love him because he first loved us." Would you have liked Christ to have left out of His word all desire for the expression of your love?

God cannot receive anything from a ruined creature, because it comes with a taint of sin and selfishness, but as accepted ones in the Beloved, is it not an expression of His love to put it into our heart to say, "We love him, because he first loved us?" All the ruin and sin of the first Adam became the very occasion for all the love of God to

flow out. If able to say, "I am a believer and a pilgrim," I ought to be able to say, "I know what manner of love God has bestowed upon me." The real claim of God's love over them is never answered by the children of God, if they are not standing in it as the expression of it. What have I to do with bringing water down from the rock? The water is there, and if it has come down to me, was there any virtue or power in self to bring it down? No! As a creature I am ruined, and if I should say to God, "What can I, a ruined creature, do?" His answer is, "It is not the question of your doing, but of mine. I gave my Son to be the propitiation for your sins, and you will find that he that honours that work has found the ground on which to stand in My presence with perfect acceptance."

I am in a world where all are scrambling after what they can get *for self*. "Well," I say, "I have nothing, but poor and little as I am the Father gave His Son for me, and I have the heart of that Son of His occupied with all that concerns me, and counting the beatings of this heart of mine down here, and after all Christ's self-denial for me, is there to be none from me to Him?" When Christ says, "I bought you with my own blood; I charged myself with all your guilt," are we to do or say anything that is not for the glory of that Christ? If God is working in us, having given us life in His Son, and says, "Now I am looking to see you walk like Christ," are we never to think of *His* side? Surely not in the thought of paying Christ. One once spoke to me of suffering for Christ, and said, "If I love I must expect to suffer a great deal more." "What!" I said, "you do not want to pay Christ, do you?" "No; but I do wish to have my love to Him going out

in some other way than in cold expressions of gratitude." How beautiful to be on those terms with God that we find in the word certain individuals were! Oh, believe me, you can only plead with God as you know *Christ*. He alone is the channel by which God can bless you and answer every desire of your heart. "God is love," but it is in and through Christ that He is this for us.



MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 20.)

CHAPTER II.

We have seen in the first chapter the beautiful expression of faith on the part of Ruth. Beautiful too in effect, for such characterizes everything that comes from God. Did not Jesus Himself marvel at the centurion of Capernaum, who, by faith, acknowledged his own unworthiness and the all-sufficiency of the word of the Lord to heal? Chapter ii. brings before us the various characteristics of this faith and the blessings which grace attaches thereto.

Up to this Ruth's faith was resting upon the work of grace that God had wrought in behalf of His people; but it is absolutely necessary that faith should have an object—a *personal* object—and it is impossible that such should not be met with. As yet Ruth did not know this mighty man spoken of in the first verse; but she hopes to meet him on the ground of grace. Hearken to

what she says to Naomi: "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn *after him in whose sight I shall find grace.*" This land of Israel where God has visited His people to give them bread, will be sure to have some ears of corn for her likewise. Although poor and without any rights, she knows that she can count on the resources of Jehovah. Her path is *clear*, for the path of faith is always so, but it was not the choice of her own will. We often call that the path of faith which is the outcome of our own thoughts, or the desires of our natural hearts, whilst faith never acts save in dependence on the word. Ruth consults Naomi, and Naomi says to her: "Go, my daughter!" God was certainly guiding her in this path. His grace caused her providentially to enter the field of Boaz.

Boaz, of the family of Elimelech, who was dead, replaces him, so to speak. Naomi has in Israel a protector, a rich and powerful head of the family. "In him is strength" to restore this poor house completely ruined. His name is that of one of the two pillars of the future temple of Solomon (1 Kings vii. 21), set up by that king as witnesses of the establishment of his kingdom, of that glorious period which followed the troublous reign of David. Boaz comes from Bethlehem, wishing his servants the blessing of the harvest day (Ps. cxxix. 8), and at once notices Ruth among the reapers. Thus it is that grace anticipates faith. The servant that was set over the reapers bears witness to

the Moabitess. She has come, says he, as a humble and poor supplicant, and immediately set to work, scarcely allowing herself any rest. Like this servant, the Spirit of God bears witness at the present time to the character and activity of our faith. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith," says the apostle to the Thessalonians. Faith is diligent and does not take rest, lest it should not gather up the blessings that God has strewn in its path.

What a touching interview is this first meeting between Boaz and Ruth! The words which fall from the lips of the mighty man sound like heavenly music in the ears of the poor stranger. Is he going to upbraid her for her intrusion? Who would do him the injustice to suppose it? Hearest thou not my daughter? It has been and is my desire that you should be in my field and not in any other; let nothing induce you to leave it. He puts her with his maidens. Let her not fear the men; has he not given them charge not to touch her? If the domain of Boaz yields her nourishment, she also finds wherewith to quench her thirst there. What tokens of grace are thus showered upon Ruth! But wait: this and the following chapters have fresh ones in store for her. They go on augmenting and expanding unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills (cf. Gen. xlix.26)! Ah! it is because she has to do with Boaz. If faith is a wonderful thing, how much more so is He who is the object of it. Such dig-

nity, and that combined with such condescension, as well as with tenderness almost maternal! It rises aloft like the pillar of brass in Solomon's temple, it comes down to the minute and delicate considerations of love—a love that has nothing in common with human passion—full of holy majesty and mercy, lifting up to itself the beloved one after having in grace come down to its level. Such is Boaz, such is our Jesus!

The apprehension of the resources of grace does not come to us in a moment. They are ours according to the measure of the activity of our faith. Christ opens to us gradually the *enjoyment* of the infinite treasures of His heart.

The first movement of Ruth is to fall on her face, and bow herself to the ground. How can she be other than grateful when Boaz expresses himself thus? You who say you knew Him, you have never believed, if the words from the mouth of Christ have not cast you down at His feet. O dry hearts, and arid souls! You rationalists of the present day, who dare to take the name of Christian, and judge the word of our Lord instead of receiving it! Fools, asserting yourselves in His presence, criticizing and dissecting Him (conduct more outrageous really than that of the coarse soldiers who spat upon Him) when you should cast yourself broken and abject at His feet! Away! dwell with your pride until judgment overtakes you; the fields of Boaz, his promises and his person will never belong to you!

Ruth then opens her mouth. "Why," says she, "have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" I love this "*why*" which denotes profound humility in this young woman: "I have no right," says she, "to such a favour." She is only occupied with herself to confess her unworthiness—but how she does appreciate him! "Thou hast taken knowledge of me, when I was nothing for thee!"

The servant had borne testimony to the poor Moabitess; it is now the master himself who is going to declare what he finds in her. She had not come before him in her own righteousness as Job had aforetime come before God—Her experiences had begun where Job's had finished, and it is he before whom she is prostrate who charges himself with the vindication of her character, for he was aware of everything. "It hath been fully shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore." Boaz attributes to Ruth the labour of love, which is the fruit of her faith; and her care for Naomi (type of the afflicted people) had not escaped the notice of the master. Yes, this poor daughter of Moab was a true Israelite, in whom there was no guile. But also, a true daughter of Abraham, she had left her country and her relatives, and had set out on a

journey to a people unknown to her. Boaz places the seal of his approbation upon so much love and faith, then he promised her a recompense; "Jehovah recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of Jehovah the God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust." Recompense is not the end, but the encouragement of faith.

Ruth responds as did Moses in Ex. xxxiii. 13; the praise of Boaz does not exalt her; she realizes that all is of grace, and desires to find more grace. She recognizes his authority over her and declares herself his unworthy servant. Then he honours her in inviting her to his feast. Ruth at the table of Boaz! What favour for the poor stranger! "She did eat, and was sufficed, and left" (of the food). Is it not as though we were present at the multiplying of the loaves by Jesus?

The *communion* which Ruth has just been enjoying at the table of Boaz does not make her forget her task. On the contrary she draws from it fresh strength and renewed activity, with more abundant and blessed results than before. Our work, to be effective, should flow from what we have received for ourselves, and the results will be so much the more rich, in proportion as we have personally found our own joy in the presence of the Lord.

The heart which has been nourished and had its thirst satisfied by Christ is never selfish. Is it not said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living

water?" Ruth thinks of Naomi and returns to bring her the remains of the repast, and what she had gleaned, desiring that her mother should be satisfied as she had been. Thus he who is faithful gives an account of his labour to the people of God and seeks their prosperity. How little do Christians realize these things! What importance has the prosperity of the church of Christ, for those who prefer their own church, and their own people and their gods, to Him? The Lord's poor afflicted people do not seem worthy of care to these indifferent hearts. They will insist, perhaps, on the work of the gospel to the world; but a heart in communion with Christ does not sacrifice one to the other. The apostle Paul was as much a servant of the assembly as he was of the gospel. He loved that church which Christ, in His love, had purchased by His own blood. Far would it have been from him to have loved a sect or a church of his own invention; he only knew the assembly of Christ, and was jealous for His sake with a godly jealousy to present it to Him as a chaste virgin.

The heart of Naomi is full of gratitude towards the man who has recognized Ruth when he might have rejected her as a stranger. What sweet intercourse between these two women of God! Ruth pronounces the beautiful name of Boaz, Naomi responds with thanksgiving "to him who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead."

What a touching character is that of Naomi! Ruth has more of the first transport of a youthful faith, Naomi the experience of a faith matured in the school of trial. You who are young Christians do not reject the experience of those who have known the Lord a long time before you have. Naomi helped her daughter-in-law to know Boaz better. "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen." Experience is always joined to intelligence. Naomi has the perception of what is suitable in Israel, of the order which becomes the house of God. The counsels of Christian experience always *attach* souls to the family of God and to Christ, as those of Naomi attached Ruth to the belongings of Boaz. But they also *separate* her from every other field (v. 22). It may be that these latter would offer as many ears of corn to the gleaners, but they would lack the presence of him to whom henceforth the heart of Ruth was indissolubly bound, as well as the peace, the joy and the communion which he imparts. Precious experience of those who have grown old in the path of faith, for it is a help to the young to walk in the path of *holiness!* It is furthermore from the lips of experience that the fullest praise flows, for it knows the grace and goodness of the Lord in the past as in the present. Ruth *attaches herself* to Boaz and *dwells* with her mother-in-law.

(To be continued, D.V.)