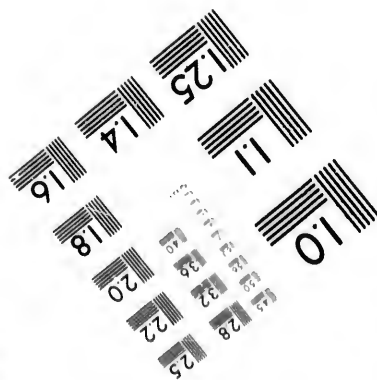
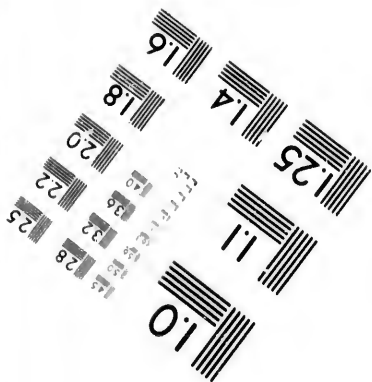
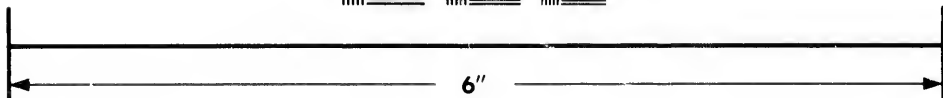
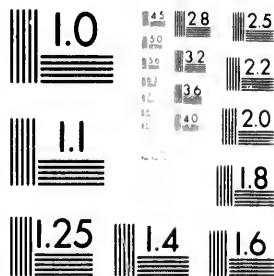


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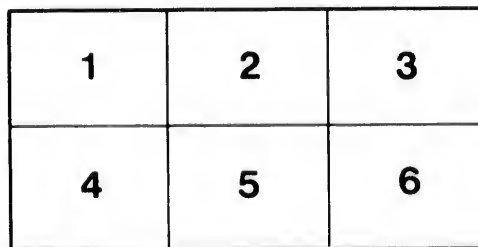
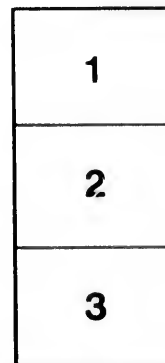
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THERE is but one key whereby we are able to unlock the hidden treasures contained in the Old Testament, and this one key—which is Christ—aided by the spiritual discernment which the Holy Spirit only can give of sacred things, will enable us to unfold and dig up many hidden truths, lying far beneath the surface of apparently simple narrative, but which will be found to be highly typical of our Savicur, the Redeemer of the world, His Person and work.

If we read God's Word with our own unaided intellect, we shall only remain in the darkness of ignorance, and not comprehending it, may be led to doubt the whole. Let us therefore first take God at His word—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (*Luke xi. 13*)—and thus asking in sincerity of heart, then open its pages in full assurance of receiving that comfort and knowledge from the Word of God that may be enjoyed by all true believers in Christ, and a blessing to those who are honest and earnest seekers after truth. "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any MAN teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and

even as it hath taught you, abide in Him (1 *John* ii. 27).

The history of Ruth is a singularly beautiful type of Christ and His saints. It will be remembered that the Moabites were the descendants of Lot by his own daughter (*Genesis* xix. 33-37). Evilly begotten by incest, in drunkenness, they became an idolatrous nation, and were ever the enemies to God's people Israel. These were the posterity of one who, through a righteous man himself, yet lived amongst the evil men of Sodom, and preferred worldly advantages, pleasures, and society, with all its dignities; for Lot sat in the gate of Sodom—a place where the chief men of the people were wont to sit—and he was gratified in such a position, much esteemed by the world, but far removed from a close walk with God. What a contrast to his uncle Abraham, whose posterity was so [blessed, who separated himself from the intercourse of evil men, preferring to dwell in the wilderness with God (*Genesis* xiii.).

The land of Israel being visited by famine, a chastisement from God upon His people for their waywardness and rebellion, Elimelech and his family endeavour to evade the judgment by leaving the land which God had graciously given them, for that of their enemies, and leaving also their kindred for the company of idolators: they trust to the Moabites, rather than trusting to the God of Israel. What unbelief is shown here! They seek food among the Moabites; bodily food they obtain, but what food for the soul do they receive? They left

Israel, with whom was God and life and eternal blessing, and sought the Moabites, with whom was Satan and death and eternal woe. They fled from the rod of famine, and so met with the rod of death! What a picture of our present times. How many seek to drown trouble in intoxication, or rush into worldly amusements, pleasures, vanities, and dissipations of all sorts, to endeavour to forget, and so vainly try to escape from that rod of trouble, which may be sent from God in mercy, to draw our souls from the world to Himself. How foolish and blind we are by nature. See the word of the Lord on this point in *Jeremiah* xlii. 13-16.

Elimelech went to *sojourn* in Moab—this was his first mistake. In *verse 2* we see that he came to the country of Moab, and *continued there*—this was his second mistake. The path downwards is easy to travel in self-confidence, but the return will be through trial and sorrow. We soon come to the result of *continuing* there. The first warning comes in the death of Elimelech; but the contact with the evil nation had done its work in his family, and the warning was unheeded; rather than being arrested by it they plunged further into the evil, and in *verse 4* we find that the two sons took wives of the women of Moab, thus uniting themselves to idolators. Another ten years pass, and two more warnings are sent—the judgment is *doubled* this time in its intensity (*verse 5*). The power and strength of the family is wasted. Naomi and her daughters-in-law are truly brought low; bereft and afflicted they are now powerless. Naomi was alone

in the midst of idolators. How true is it "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 *Corinthians* xi. 31). This last rending of earthly ties to the land of Moab brings repentance: she also had heard that God "had visited His people in giving them bread". This faithfulness of a God formerly deserted, may also have had its softening effects on her heart, so she arises to return, acknowledging that the hand of the Lord had gone out against her (*verse* 13). Naomi had become so tainted with evil, that she actually advised her daughters-in-law to return to their people *and their gods*, wishing them to *find rest* there!! Another reason for her wishing them to remain behind was most probably that of shame; Naomi was unwilling to take back to Israel those of her family who would not be allowed to enter the congregation, for the Moabite was forbidden to do so (see *Deuteronomy* xxiii. 3). Orpah yields to Naomi's advice, but Ruth is steadfast in her purpose to forsake her country and kindred for that of God's people Israel, and the last chapter shows us how she was blessed in so doing (see *Mark* x. 29, 30).

This steadfastness of purpose is well worthy of every Christian's solemn attention: for the want of entire yielding up of our *whole* heart, the path of God's children is rendered hard, darksome, fearful, unsteady, and inconsistent. If the child of God would truly rejoice and delight in communion with Him, ALL must be surrendered to Him. We must sit at the feet of Jesus waiting, watching, utterly emptied of self, willing to follow wherever He may

lead us, willing and anxious to tread in any path that the Holy Spirit may reveal to us; not making excuses to ourselves that we do not see the way clearly, when that way appears to be an isolated or a cross-bearing one.

Verse 20. What a confession is here of the truth of God's way of dealing with His backsliding children. On her return to her native place, the sympathy expressed towards her was painful to her soul. Her name, "Naomi", which means *pleasant*, she cannot now bear to be used towards her in her deep affliction, and so she asks her people to call her "Mara", which means *bitter*, stating her reason, "For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me". Here is the confession of God's dealing with her. She went out FULL, with her husband and sons, in a state of prosperity and comfort and inward satisfaction, so she did not heed leaving her God, her people, and country.

Daily experience proves the truth of this. As then, so is it now. Prosperity is a slippery place, a terrible snare for poor, weak, sinful mortals. Present ease and indulgence of the flesh, worldly position, and the enjoyment of things seen and handled, are generally too strong for us to give up for the good fight of faith,—for things unseen and eternal. Left to ourselves we should be in a hopeless state but as it is said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray but now have I kept Thy word" (*Psalms* cxix. 67) so God in mercy visits Naomi, and brings her back EMPTY. "The way of transgressors is hard" (*Proverbs* xiii. 15). "Thine own wickedness shal

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" (*Jeremiah* ii. 19).

When Naomi and her family set out for Moab, her condition was a very opposite one to that used by God in dealing with His people (see *Psalms* exxvi. 6). We must first be purified in the fire of affliction if we would rejoice in communion with Him, and bring in "sheaves"—our harvest of service for Him.

How beautiful is the truth in *verse* 22,—how very significant the name of the place to which they returned—'Beth-lehem', meaning, *house of bread*; and notice the time when they returned,—'the beginning of barley harvest'. So it is to every sinner who changes his mind and turns toward God, or (as it is commonly called) repents. What mercy, love, kindness, blessing, awaits such! No less than Jesus, the Bread of life—truly a Beth-lehem. What a harvest of blessing is there in that Name, 'high and exalted above every name'. So is it written—"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?" (*Ezekiel* xviii. 23). See also the graciousness and completeness of God's pardon in *Micah* vii. 18, 19. How fully do these scriptures bear out the teaching of that exquisitely touching history of the Prodigal Son, in *Luke* xv. 18, who, in first repenting, then returning to his father, found the ready kiss of reconciliation, the fatted calf, the best robe, and gold ring joyfully prepared to welcome

the sinner's return, *free from all reproach* for the past life, and, as it was with Naomi, another Beth-lehem and beginning of barley harvest.

These same precious truths, scattered throughout the Word of God from the earliest times, surely prove that the long-suffering God of *Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7*, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

In *chapter ii.*, the wealthy kinsman of Naomi is mentioned--Boaz, the type of Christ--truly a mighty man of wealth. There was a law in Israel concerning gleaning (see *Leviticus xix. 9*), so Ruth takes knowledge of this custom, and goes to seek food. She seeks the reapers of the harvest, and gleaning after them she finds corn; and having continued amongst them from the morning (*verse 7*), becomes personally acquainted with Boaz, her kinsman, the lord of the field.

How truly does the lesson gathered from these verses accord with *Luke xi. 9*,—if we seek we shall surely find. But this seeking must be in earnestness and sincerity of heart: "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with ALL your heart" (*Jeremiah xxix. 13*).

The reapers here mentioned represent God's servants who have been led by Him alone to labour in His vineyard; for note,—*they* are blessed in reaping fruit, and gathering sheaves, and herein lies the vast difference between those appointed by man, and those sent by God. See *Matthew ix. 37, 38*, where the prayer is commanded by our Saviour, that the Lord of the harvest should send forth labourers; and whom He sends forth will go in His strength.

conquering and to conquer. This is shown also in *verse 4*, in the salutation of Boaz to the reapers—“The Lord be with you”.

The true reapers of God will ever be lifting up Christ and Him crucified only, and by so doing will draw souls to the Saviour (*John xii.32*), sheaves that will be stored up in the eternal and blessed granary of heaven. The souls that hunger after truth will do well to follow after such reapers: they will glean ears of corn *among the sheaves* also; the very society of God's children will be an encouragement, and help to teach them truth, until by *continuing*, as Ruth did, steadfast in her purpose, they meet with the Lord Himself.

If God's children would keep closer to their Lord, and consider this responsibility which rests upon them, and this privilege which is given to them of helping forward those who may be of the seeking, timid, helpless, unprotected ones, as Ruth was, without friends or advisers upon spiritual matters, they would become then living sheaves, from whom the anxious gleaner would get food and help, counsel and comfort. When spiritual communion with Christ is enjoyed, then there is ever a continual flowing from a heart full of Christ, a well spring, a witness for the truth, a blessing to all around. Is this so in daily life? Is it not too constantly the case that those who profess to be, and often are, really true believers in Christ, are ashamed of their Master's Name before others, a Name that is seldom mentioned in everyday life: so they appear only as one of the world, one with the ordinary multitude. They

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do not show boldly and confidently the SEAL of God in their foreheads; for note, that this is God's chosen place to put His SEAL,—a place of *visible testimony*; for Christ's soldiers are not to hide or be ashamed of their colours. Such Christians rather imitate those who have the Beast's MARK, which any who are ashamed of it in their *foreheads*, are allowed to place *in their hand*, where it is easily concealed from view. As long as the *mark* is on the person, seen or unseen, the devil cares not. And remark the contrast: God's SEAL—the *distinctive sign of royalty and authority*, is placed on the forehead; but the BEAST'S MARK, a *disfigurement, a brand* of the Evil One, may be placed in the hand (see *Revelation* vii. 3, and xiv. 9).

The earnest continuance of Ruth among the reapers meets a reward (see *Romans* ii. 7). How unexpected is the gracious salutation of Boaz—'My daughter'. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (*Romans* viii. 17). Yet with this condescending kindness and acceptance of Ruth, comes the admonition "Go not to glean in another field; Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap; go thou after them. When thou art athirst, drink that which the young men have drawn".

How little did this helpless Moabite widow, one of a nation of idolators, expect such a reception as this! Her heart broke down before it: "she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground". The heart that truly and wholly falls on Jesus will be broken by His love into willing submission to

His words and teaching; but on the rebellious heart that rejects this 'corner stone' the day will come of overwhelming judgment and wrath of the Lamb. But note the admonitions of Boaz: how necessary indeed in this our day of spurious counterfeits of the truth, a day of compromise between God and Mammon. There are many, even true believers, who go to glean in other fields rather than follow the clear commands of God's Word; who prefer to follow the multitude, as an easier path,—the traditions and teaching of men, which, though having the outward appearance, the *show* of wisdom and humility, does nothing more than simply satisfy the flesh. (see *Colossians* ii. 20-23). There are others whose eyes are looking into other fields, going into the world and its so-called pleasures, under the pretence—the whisper of Satan—that they should go to exert their influence for good!! What does the Word of God say? "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (*James* iv. 4). Many put their hand to the plough, but looking back get no blessing (*Luke* ix. 62). Remember how Peter began to sink immediately he took his eyes off from Christ (*Matthew* xiv. 30). How Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt (*Genesis* xix. 26). How Eve, looking from God, listened to the serpent, looked at the fruit, so lusted for it, then took it, ate it, and fell into disobedience, sinking the world in sin and curse.

So long as Moses remained in the king's court, and the grandeur of this world, he was of no use to his people Israel; but when brought out and ut-

terly separated, and comparatively unknown, at the back side of the desert, and able to confess his entire nothingness by his answer to God, 'Who am I', etc., then God calls him, and sends him as the deliverer of Israel from Egypt. Worldly Christians, mark this!

Ruth was also to drink of the water that *was drawn*, but many sinners, having an anxiety for their souls, are trying to draw water themselves. Christ has suffered once for all, for all those who will come to Him and simply *accept* that salvation already finished by Him. We have not to *work it out ourselves* as many vainly try to do, *drawing their own water* as it were, but to *take what is drawn* (see *Revelation* xxii. 17), and having thus obtained salvation by faith in Christ, let us carry it out in our daily lives, as enjoined by the Apostle in *Philippians* ii. 12, 13, because God then works in us, and we become the temples of the living God (see 2 *Corinthians* vi. 16).

The *verses* 11 to 14 teach the same truth as our Saviour's words in *Mark* x. 29, 30. Yet in the face of this injunction of God to 'take what is drawn', to accept what has been 'finished' for us, do souls continue to cry out, 'O Lord, make haste to help us!' 'O God, make speed to save us!'—entirely disbelieving the truth of God's statements, that all things necessary for their salvation was accomplished 1800 years ago, and that it is God Himself who is now beseeching souls to come and be saved (2 *Corinthians* v. 19-21). The responsibility rests on us, but man, in his ignorance or rebelliousness, would

throw it back upon God—a mere excuse to continue in sin.

Trusting in the Lord, seeking shelter under His wings, ever meets a FULL reward. Ruth, the stranger, had already been raised above those of the household of Boaz, and as the sequel shows, becomes eventually one with Boaz, as his wife. So the sinner, an alien, and a stranger, to God, is brought nigh by the blood of Christ (*Ephesians* ii. 13) and becoming a child of God by faith alone (see *Galatians* iii. 26), is made one with Christ, “members of His body” (*1 Corinthians* xii. 27).

Verse 14. The free invitation, at a time of hunger or thirst, to a meal ready prepared,—the best fruit of earth—bread and parched corn, the refreshing vinegar or sour wine in a hot country, the eating, the sufficing, and the leaving of the abundance: there was more than enough. How entirely is this the type of that Christian’s privilege who follows on to know the Lord; who, yielding the whole heart to God, feeds on Christ who dwells in Him, and realizes the exceeding greatness of His power (*Ephesians* i. 19; ii. 7; iii. 19; *Matthew* v. 6, and *Psalms* xxiii. 5); “Open thy mouth wide and I will FILL IT” (*Psalms* lxxxi. 10). God is far more ready to fill our mouths with all spiritual blessings than we are inclined to believe; the fault lies with ourselves if we feel cold and dead; there is some unconfessed sin or carelessness of walk hindering our communion with God.

In *verses 16 and 17* we see a parallel passage to *James* i. 5. Here were blessings and food scattered

in the way of Ruth, to be for her own use if she would pick them up. They were *left* purposely for her to *glean*, and when gleaned to be beaten out before eaten, and so able to become nourishing to the body, or to be given to feed Naomi. If we would grow in grace, strength and communion with God, we must seek, gather, and stoop with humble hearts to pick up ears of corn out of God's Word; to beat them out as it were by seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit, and thus getting blessed truth and teaching, nourish not our own souls only, but also those of others who have not so gleaned (*Heb. xi. 6*).

In *verse 23* we see the steadfastness of Ruth, proving her trueness of heart towards Boaz; and she gleaned not only to the end of the *Barley* harvest, —a type of temporal blessings— but also to the end of *Wheat* harvest, the type of spiritual blessings that endure for ever.

It is very important to distinguish this special distinction. Some persons, who humble themselves before God, and ask for *temporal* blessings, will frequently obtain them; and because they do so they consider that they are in favour with God, and in the sure road of salvation. But this is a great error; let them remember the case of Ahab, the most evil of the kings of Israel, obtaining a temporal mercy because he humbled himself before God (*1 Kings xxi. 25–29*). But what was his end?

Chapter iii. Ruth had already gleaned handfuls of temporal blessings, by her constancy to glean only in the fields of Boaz, and among his reapers, keeping fast by them; but she wanted something

further still. She had not yet found rest, the seeking soul will not have true rest and enjoy that peace of God that passeth understanding, until there is close union with Christ; and this will only be obtained and enjoyed as we follow the truth to be gathered from the opening verses of the third chapter. The washing, anointing, putting on of raiment, waiting until the barley was winnowed, lying down meekly at the feet of Boaz, here seems to show, in a type, how ready Ruth was to prepare herself for her kinsman's blessing, or an entire willingness to surrender herself to him; what may be also expressed in the words 'true repentance' of soul. To a believer this communion with Christ is a fellowship that is the beginning of heaven upon earth, even now, while we are in the flesh; but this will only be obtained, and retained, as we are willing to wash ourselves with water by the Word of God (see *Ephesians* v. 26); a constant washing and judging of ourselves, a constant confession of sin to our Lord. Many are content to ask daily for *forgiveness* of *sin*, but forget the confession of it,—a very different, and far more difficult and heart-searching effort. The true child of God needs not to ask for forgiveness of sins, he has God's Word for his authority for knowing them to be already blotted out. If he has once passed under the blood of Christ, then he is purged for ever—there is no more *conscience* of sin, there is no *condemnation* (see *Psalms* ciii. 12; *Romans* viii. 1; *Hebrews* x. 2, 14; *1 John* ii. 12; etc.). But if we do not confess our daily sins, then that blessed communion with our God will be broken, as it is

written, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you" (*Isaiah* lix. 2). And this interruption of communion will lead to darkness and deadness of soul, even, at last, to loss of all peace and assurance, if it is not again restored by confession to God, and being diligent in our walk with God" (see *2 Peter* i. 5-11).

And there is anointing. See how the order for the anointing of God's priests was carried out in *Leviticus* viii. 24. The blood of consecration was put on the ear, the thumb, and the toe. How suggestive is this that the soul should be entirely set apart for God, having once been brought to the blood of Jesus (*1 Corinthians* vi. 20). The hearing of God's truth only, giving wisdom and knowledge, as typified by the *ear*; the work of the hands, our labour for the Lord, as typified by the *thumb of the hand*; our walk before men, our path in life, our daily conduct, as typified by the *toe*.

And then the raiment also. We must be clothed with humility (see *1 Peter* v. 5). If we would enjoy the free favour of God, and be made meet for our Master's use, we must mark the special injunctions to separation from all things of an evil nature, all the fellowship with the ungodly, and the iniquity, of evil doctrine and false teachings, so prevalent now, and in these last times increasing so rapidly, and becoming worse and worse amongst the various sects or churches of christendom. These evils commenced in the days of the apostles (see *2 Timothy* ii. 17-21; *2 Corinthians* vi. 14-18; *Psalms* i. 1; *2 Peter*

ii. 1-3; *Acts* xx. 30). If we thus wish to be consecrated and clothed, we shall be ready to give diligence to the things of God, and so bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, and so shall our calling and election be made sure to our eyes, and we shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God (2 *Peter* i. 11). Then we shall patiently wait for the winnowed barley, the blessing and the portion that the Lord sees fit to give us for our good in this world; for unlimited temporal blessings would be a snare to us, they must be winnowed. There is a distinction to be noticed in wheat and barley. In *Matthew* iii. 12, wheat is a type of the saint, to be purged from the chaff—the type of the wicked; these are two different parts of the ear of corn, though *mixed together*: but in barley there is a long beard or spike *attached* to the grain itself; this is unfit for food, and must be winnowed out.

Thus it must not be inferred that the *sinner* who is yet without God, is to wash, anoint, and clothe himself before seeking the Lord,—this is simply an impossibility; he must first come as Ruth did in the first and second chapters, bowed down, empty, helpless, longing to glean, and wishing in her heart to find her ‘kinsman’ or, (as better translated) *the one who had the right to redeem*; he must go to Christ just as *Joshua* the high priest, “clothed in filthy garments”, he must stand there speechless before the accuser, for the angel (Christ) to answer for him (see *Zechariah* iii.). Then if he is sincerely willing that his filthy garments of sin and evil should be taken from him, and wishing to walk in new and

holy paths, he will get clothed with a change of raiment, and a mitre put on his head, and *after that* is the promise, that "if thou wilt walk in my ways", he would enjoy the privilege of walking in the presence of the Lord, as is written in *Hebrews* xii. 14.

Ruth was to mark the place where Boaz laid down or rested; she went softly and uncovered his feet, and, note, it was "at the end of a heap of corn".

The Christian dispensation is far more precious and blessed than that of old. The sacrifices of Israel were never finished, never perfect, the priest never sat down or rested, the soul was never safe (see *Ezekiel* xviii. 24); but we have the precious truth that once cleansed we are for ever cleansed; the blood of Christ never *half washed* a sinner, but makes him "clean every whit" (*John* xiii. 10). So we can mark the place where Christ now rests (*Hebrews* x. 11-14), He having once for all offered the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for sins for ever, sits at the right hand of God, and to which place those who enjoy communion with Him are raised up to sit also in spirit with Him (*Ephesians* ii. 6), so entering into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.

As Boaz rested at the end of the heap of corn, his earthly blessings being as it were behind him,—so all "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (*Ephesians* iii. 8), all spiritual blessings are, as it were, behind the atoning work of Christ. He is now waiting to give to all who will *mark this place* of a finished redemption where *He rests*, and where all sinners may be reconciled to God, eternal life, if they come as Ruth did softly, in meekness and humility, lying at

the feet of Jesus in token of submission, pleading the promise in *John* vi. 37, then they also shall receive six measures of barley from his hand (verse 15).

When a man is aroused from the sleep of death, and sees sin in some degree as God sees it, it will indeed make him afraid and tremble; it will be a time of midnight to his soul, of terror and anguish, more or less, according as God allows. It is *conviction* of sin. So when the antitype of Boaz, Christ, appears to such a soul in the midnight of his distress, asking, "Who art thou?" and receives the prayer of "spread thy skirt over me, for thou art a near kinsman" (or redeemer), from the poor terrorstricken soul, then comes the answer of blessing, as in *verse* 11—or *conversion*.

The request of Ruth to Boaz to spread his skirt over her, was tantamount to saying—make me thy wife. It was a custom at the time of marriage, among Jews, for the man to throw the skirt of his robe over his intended wife, and cover her head with it: it was a time of love, as so beautifully expressed in *Ezekiel* xvi. 8.

There was no impropriety in Ruth saying this (see the duty of next kinsman in *Deuteronomy* xxv. 5-7), but she is commended for it by Boaz. Her "kindness" was shown in the beginning by her leaving her people, country, and relatives, to follow Naomi in her affliction; and in the latter end, by seeking her kinsman, who, by the law of Israel, was her proper 'redeemer', rather than the young men, who were naturally more suitable to her own youthfulness and inclinations. This obedience to the law

given by God to the people of her late husband, got her the great blessing of union with Boaz. A lesson this for seeking souls, not to be turned away from the Lord of the harvest by any of the gaities or vanities of youth, but humbly seeking the Redeemer's feet, and asking boldly in faith for the skirt to be spread over them, then rest assured in a ready, willing answer—"I will do to thee all that thou requirest". But there is a nearer kinsman whose claim must be satisfied first, so to avoid all 'appearance of evil' she rises up early, before it could be known that she had been with Boaz, and departs. But now she departs with a blessing of six measures of the winnowed barley. Note, however, that *six* is not the perfect number,—the *seventh* was as yet future; now she gets *six* given to her as the reward of earnest following after privileges so graciously offered.

Verse 18 teaches patience: waiting for the witness of the Spirit in our hearts—the witness of our union with Christ. Having placed ourselves at the feet of Jesus the promise is sure: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (*Philippians* i. 6; *Proverbs* viii. 34).

Chapter iv. The name of the near kinsman is not mentioned: there is a reason for this. We have here symbolized, in the nearer kinsman and the ten elders, the law and the ten commandments. This kinsman at once accepts to redeem the *land*; the law was holy, just, and good; excellent for the moral government of the earth, but immediately this

kinsman is asked to redeem Ruth, a living soul, he owns his inability to do so, for it would *mar his inheritance*. How true is this! The law came to condemn, not to save, as said in *Romans* vii. 10, and in *2 Corinthians* iii. 7. It is called the ministration of death, therefore for the law to have justified a soul, and so have given life, would have been to mar its inheritance, and render void its own true work (*Romans* iii. 20), so also the apostle writes—"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (*Galatians* ii. 16), so we are justified only by faith in Christ, just as it is spoken of in *verses* 6, 9, 10. The near kinsman (the law) not being able to redeem Ruth herself, Boaz (the type of Christ) enters into a covenant before the elders that he will redeem Ruth, as well as all the land (the world), expressed in *Matthew* xiii. 44, and *1 Timothy* ii. 6, etc.

There is no hindrance now to any soul on earth obtaining everlasting salvation, if they choose to accept the free offer of the God of redemption through the blood of Christ; and when He comes, and His kingdom is set up on earth, then will be manifested the redemption of the land from the power of evil, for the devil is to be chained for a thousand years (*Revelation* xx. 2).

It should be remembered that in *Exodus* xix. 6, God offered to the Israelites the same privileges of grace (that was, that they should be a kingdom of priests), the blessed, high, and holy calling that we Gentiles enjoy now: but they immediately took upon themselves to obey all the commands of God,

putting themselves in fact under the law, wherefore the Lord Jehovah sent to them the decalogue, to show them how utterly unable they were to keep any of the laws of God, and to prove that they would transgress either in thought, word, or deed; and thus the law only brought in the "knowledge of sin" (*Romans* iii. 20), therefore a ministration of death. And yet how many are there of us Gentiles (to whom the law was never given) resting their hopes of everlasting life upon a life of outward morality and well-doing, thus justifying themselves by the works of the law, and so acting directly contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. But it must also be understood that though the law was given *only* to the Jewish nation, the Christian dispensation has a new commandment given (see *John* xiii. 34; *Matthew* xxii. 37, 39), comprehending all the obligations contained in the old law and far beyond.

This higher commandment would be yet more impossible for us to keep, but for the Spirit of God who 'dwells in' the believer in this dispensation, wherein we become 'temples of the living God,' and so having a power of God in us 'to will and to do His good pleasure.'

The Jew worked *for* salvation by keeping the law of ordinances. The believing Gentile, or Jew, now works *from* salvation, because he has got it, and a power of God within him in the new nature to carry it out.

Thus there is beautifully shadowed forth in this history the work of Christ, the Redeemer of the world. He brought in salvation and everlasting life,

when the law only brought condemnation and everlasting death.

Now Ruth finds union with Boaz, and rest. She is raised up from a position of helplessness and desolation, and is made partaker of all his power, position, riches, honour, etc.: "they two shall be one flesh". Here we may see the *seventh* measure of blessing—completeness—all that she could possibly desire. So is the poor sinner who "having no hope in the world" is first redeemed by Christ (*Ephesians* i. 7); secondly, raised up with Christ (*Colossians* ii. 12, 13, and *Ephesians* v. 30, 32), and see that wonderful prayer of the Saviour (*John* xvii. 20-26). How marvellous is the privilege of being in union with Christ. But there is yet one grand demonstration of glory to come: this is the manifestation to the world of the union of Christ and His saints at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (*Revelation* xix. 7, 9). This will make the believer's *seventh* measure,—the Perfection and Fulness of everlasting Blessings, though enjoyed by faith in anticipation even now.

The result of the union of BOAZ and RUTH was OBED, the ancestor of DAVID, from whom came CHRIST our KING and HIGH PRIEST. So the blessed result of our union with Christ is to become with Him a kingdom—Priests unto God and the Father (*Revelation* i. 6).

F. B.

