

lying along the highway and in the vineyards to rise up and seize each man a virgin to become his wife.

Verse 22. No mention is made of complaint from the virgins. If any of them objected it is not revealed. It was natural to expect an objection from the fathers or brothers of the girls and hence an explanation was promised. They would make a plea to the men to be favorable toward the transaction for their sakes. That in the war the Israelites had not made any reservation from among the Benjaminites for wives of the single men. Also that the fathers or brothers of these Israelite virgins were not guilty of having violated their oath on this subject and thus were not to be chided as being short of their duty to the nation. If they will all be quiet and let these remaining men of Benjamin find their own wives themselves the rest of the nation could be guiltless, at least as far as direct ceremony was concerned.

Verse 23. The counsel was accepted and the two hundred men secured each a virgin to be his wife and then returned home to repair the damage that had been done by the war.

Verse 24. The children of Israel of the other tribes also mustered out of military service and returned to their various homes.

Verse 25. This is explained in ch. 17: 6.

RUTH 1

Verse 1. *When the judges ruled.* This gives us the general period for the date of this book. But none of the works of reference that I have found can set the exact time. However, we know it was in the latter part of the reign of the judges because it concludes with the birth of the grandfather of David which brings us near the history found in the book of Samuel. The events of this very interesting and beautiful story occurred in the time of the period covered by the book previous to this and may be considered as an insert of that book. The immediate cause of the movements of the family concerned was a sore famine in the land of Canaan. This family belonged at Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah. In their distress they crossed the Jordan into the country of Moab which bordered along the river. The family now consisted of the man and wife, also their two sons.

Verse 2. The names of the members

of this family respectively were Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion.

Verse 3. The first misfortune to befall Naomi here was the loss of her husband by death.

Verse 4. The entire time of sojourn in Moab of this family was ten years. In that time the two sons married women of the Moabites. Their names were Orpah and Ruth. Whether in the same order as named above we do not know.

Verse 5. The next misfortune for Naomi was the death of her sons, which left her with her two daughters-in-law only, of her own family.

Verses 6, 7. News now came to Naomi that the famine was over in Judah and thus she decided to return to her home land. In the first movements of leaving the land of Moab the two daughters-in-law were with Naomi with indications they intended going with her to her land.

Verse 8. These girls evidently were not sisters, for Naomi suggested they go "each to her mother's house." This would have been inappropriate language had they been of the same house. Naomi had nothing but a kindly regard for these women because of their respectful treatment of her. But they were foreigners to her native country and would naturally feel more at home where they had been born. So she bade them return to their former homes and wished the blessing of God on them.

Verse 9. She even wished that they might each again find a husband and have another home of rest or satisfaction. She kissed them which was a gesture of good-bye, for that act was generally done only on meeting or parting. Since they had been with each other up to now, the kiss was one of parting. The immediate effect was one of sadness on the part of both for they wept.

Verse 10. The attitude of both women was favorable to going with Naomi and to joining with her among her people.

Verses 11-13. There are various thoughts suggested by this paragraph. One is that marriage was an important, if not the most important, objective of life. That is true in many senses. As such was the case, Naomi supposed the chief point of interest with these women was to find another husband with her. If that were the case, then it would indicate their love for and confidence in her

and her family. Also that a husband obtained from her would be satisfactory and hence would also indicate that their married life with her sons had been satisfactory. She shows them that if that were their desire and expectation it would be in vain. She could not possibly offer them such a blessing. This was for two reasons. One, that she did not have a husband herself. Second, that if she did she would be too old to bear children again. And we might see a third reason and that was that even if she had overcome the two other obstacles to their wishes the sons would not be grown up in time to become the husbands of the women. All this sad prospect filled her with grief for the women.

Verse 14. This sorrowful speech of Naomi caused them to weep again. Orpah accepted the advice of her mother-in-law and kissed her farewell. Ruth would not bid her mother-in-law good-bye. She clave unto her.

Verse 15. Naomi calls Orpah the sister-in-law of Ruth which confirms the conclusion made at verse 8 that the two women were not sisters in the flesh. Ruth is urged again to follow her sister-in-law back to her people and to her gods. Since the women were Moabites and not of the nation of Israel it was supposed that when left alone without personal relationship with any Israelite they would not care to worship the God of Israel. On the principle of the language in Josh. 24: 15, (see notes at that place) they might as well go back to their own objects of worship. Naomi seemed not to realize the real motive Ruth had for clinging to her. It was not merely, or even chiefly, to obtain another husband. Through the years of association with the family of Naomi and her son, Ruth had become convinced that such was the most desirable situation in life she could find. What a wonderful compliment this is to the influence of a godly woman. This mother-in-law had conducted herself after such a manner before Ruth that an inseparable attachment had been formed for her and the religion she represented. This is another proof of the effect of example.

Verses 16, 17. To the mind of the writer this paragraph records one of the sweetest declarations in all literature. The abiding confidence in her mother-in-law and her conversion to the religion of Israel's God stand out as the prime motive in all the intended actions of Ruth from now on till death.

She is completely weaned away from her native people and their gods. The influence of Naomi on her has been to satisfy, so that come what may, in conditions of favorable or unfavorable home accommodations, or whatsoever place to which she might choose to go, and whoever might be found to be her particular people; whoever was her god and then wherever might be her resting place after death, she was determined to remain inseparable with this holy woman whose life had proved to be the great benediction of hers. With this in her mind she makes an earnest plea to be permitted to remain with her mother-in-law until death.

Verse 18. What kind of a heart could resist a speech so full of sweet and tender affection? Certainly not the kind possessed by this righteous mother in Israel. Thus she ceased her objection and resumed the journey with this fine young woman.

Verse 19. Bethlehem was the native home of Naomi and thither these two women came. The word "moved" is from an original that means the people of the city were agitated at the appearance of Naomi and Ruth. It had been ten years since Naomi left the community and the years of trials had made changes in her appearance of person. So they exclaimed in surprised inquiry, "Is this Naomi?"

Verse 20. Proper nouns in Bible times often had a descriptive meaning. Thus the name of Naomi meant "pleasantness or agreeableness," coming from NOOMEE. Under her changed circumstances she considers that an inappropriate name. Not that she intends discarding it as a personal designation for she did not do so, but only offered the remark as a comment on the circumstances. On that principle she considered the name of Mara, a more suitable description, for her sorrowful reverses in life. Strong says the original word for Mara is the same in meaning as for Marah in Ex. 15: 23, where we recall the place was so named because of the literally bitter water there.

Verse 21. Her use of the words "full" and "empty" was figurative, of course, but was her way of describing the reduced condition she had come under.

Verse 22. The time of year in which these women reached the community of Bethlehem is not important apparently at present. Its significance will appear as we proceed.

RUTH 2

Verse 1. The word "kinsman" here merely means an acquaintance, without necessary reference to relationship otherwise. If such relation exists it must be gathered from another word later on. This particular acquaintance of Elimelech was a wealthy man and his name was Boaz. The word "family" brings in the idea of relationship since one meaning of the original word here is "circle of relatives," according to Strong.

Verse 2. A special provision was made in the law of Moses that poor people had the right to go into fields of grain after the main crop was taken and glean from what had been left. (Lev. 19: 9, 10.) Of course, this God-fearing woman, Naomi, had instructed her daughter-in-law in the word of the Lord and hence she understood it was her right to go out for this purpose since they were among the poor. Now we can begin to see the significance mentioned in last verse of preceding chapter. The provisos which Ruth stated were her way of saying she wished to glean in whatever field was favorable to her. She could not have referred to anything about Boaz, because at this time even Naomi did not know into what field Ruth might find opportunity for gleaning. She gave her daughter-in-law her approval.

Verse 3. The word "field" is from *SADAY* and defined by Strong "from an unused root meaning to spread out; a field (as flat)." The word has been rendered in the A. V. by "country, ground, land, soil." So the word refers to the farming districts in general and a gleaner would seek out the portions growing grain. This general portion of the country would be used by various citizens who had the personal title to any certain section of it. "Her hap," means that it so happened that Ruth stopped to glean in that place belonging to Boaz. Of course the writer means that as far as Ruth knew, it was just a happen so. But the reader will understand that the "happening" was caused by the Lord who is in all this wonderful story.

Verse 4. The city residence of Boaz was Bethlehem, another coincidence. He went to look after the work going on in his field and greeted his workers with a friendly word and they returned in the same kind of friendship. How much better it would be in all cases, if worker and employer

manifested this sort of attitude toward each other. Too many times the feeling seems to be as if each were the enemy of the other, or, that it might be so and that a mutual need for watchfulness was present. The world could not move along as it ought without the labor of man. Neither could it accomplish what it should were it not for those who are financially able to support the "man with the hoe."

Verse 5. There was nothing surprising in the mere fact that some one was gleaning in the field since the law made provision for such practice, but something about this damsel attracted the attention of Boaz and thus the inquiry.

Verses 6, 7. While it was customary for people to glean in a field that had produced a crop of grain, it was not altogether the practice to follow up so near the workers who were still engaged in the main crop. This was probably part of the cause of the inquiry of Boaz. And the inquiry or request made by the damsel that she be permitted to glean not only near the reapers but even among the sheaves was also an unusual thing. Permission to do this would indicate much confidence in the honesty of the gleaner. The provision of the law as to a gleaner did not include any such special privilege. Again the reader will see the evidence that God is in all this.

Verse 8. Boaz confirmed the privilege the men had given Ruth. He gave her even further privilege, that of remaining near his maidens which means the young damsels of his employ who were obtaining part of their living by gleaning among the sheaves.

Verse 9. The antecedent of "they" in both instances is the same since the young men were the ones charged with the work of the direct harvesting. The charge he gave to his young men was appropriate in view of the fact that the damsel would be near them. The instruction that they were not to "touch" her, meant not to do her any harm either as to ordinary violence or as to her rights of moral security. Ruth had been married some years before this, yet Boaz considered her a damsel which is from a word that mean's "a young girl." This would indicate that she was married comparatively young. All of these special favors offered Ruth, manifested an interest on the part of Boaz that was more than mere courtesy. So we are

sure that God is in all this. However, that does not mean that the attitude of this man was forced against what would have been his personal one. God always chose the kind of character he needed for any particular kind of service desired. We are sure that Boaz was naturally a man of refinement.

Verse 10. All of this kindness impresses Ruth so that she does the customary act of those times in recognition of friendship and greatness. She makes a low bow and seems filled with surprise at the attention being shown her. Being a "stranger" means that she was from another place and people from the ones here belonging.

Verse 11. The answer Boaz gave Ruth proves to us that in the meantime he had made further inquiry and had learned the history of the case. The reasons he stated to her for his attitude toward her are gracious. While we are sure that he had an interest in her even now, that was more than mere courtesy, yet there is not the least indication of flattery or personal complications. This will be clear to us when we consider that regardless of his inclinations toward her, he considers himself as outside the rights of a lover and therefore is too much of a gentleman to make any advances toward her that could not honorably be carried out to the desired conclusion. Yet he does not need to reserve any courtesy that would be proper toward a virtuous girl.

Verse 12. What beautiful words these must have seemed to be to the mind of this trusting young woman. She had already come to believe in the God of her mother-in-law and that trust had brought her away from her own mother's people and family and attached her to her new relation in life with an inseparable tie. Now that same God is commended to her by this man who is showing such gallant friendship toward her.

Verse 13. Ruth acknowledged the comfort she had obtained from the treatment that Boaz had accorded her. She recognized that a difference existed in class between her and the other maidens gleaning and thus her words of appreciation are logical and true.

Verse 14. There was not a word in all the law of Moses that made provision for such attentions as Boaz was showing Ruth. It did provide that the poor of the country might glean after the main crop had been harvested, but nothing else was mentioned. In this special privilege Boaz here gave Ruth

we see that an attachment of genuine love is forming in the case. We would not ordinarily think of vinegar as a desirable article of drink as a beverage. It was used as a special cause of reducing the strain of the physical exertions being made by mixing it with the bread of the diet. Such an item of bodily service would not be so easily procured at large, hence it was another special privilege to be allowed to partake of these provisions in common with him. He even shared his food with her to her full desire.

Verses 15, 16. Boaz now added another special privilege to that already given her. The young men are directed to drop some of the handfuls purposely for her and then to say nothing to her when she gathered them up. It would not be difficult to recognize the hand of Cupid in all this. Such fact, notwithstanding the evidence of God's hand underneath all the rest, makes the story one of the most beautiful in all literature.

Verse 17. An ephah was between a half and a whole gallon and this was the amount of barley that Ruth gathered by gleaning this day after it was threshed.

Verse 18. After consuming what her personal appetite required, Ruth turned over the remains of her gleaning to her mother-in-law who placed it with the family store.

Verse 19. Up to now Naomi only knows that Ruth has been fortunate in finding a good field in which to glean and one under circumstances that were unusual since the damsel has come in with such a bountiful supply of grain. She calls for the blessing on the person who had extended such favor to her daughter-in-law. Ruth told her mother-in-law the name of the man who had been so kind to her.

Verse 20. In mentioning the kindness which the Lord had shown she included the dead with the living. This indicated that Naomi saw the hand of God as acting in a more serious manner than merely that of food for the present. All she said for the present was that the man was a near kinsman. That meant a great deal under the provisions of the law. (Lev. 25: 25.) When the famine struck the land mentioned in ch. 1: 1, it forced this family to encumber their land with debt. Even after that was consumed it became necessary to leave the country to find a living. Now the land is still under the debt and will

be until, and unless, it is redeemed. It was the duty of the nearest kinsman of the dead man to take over the family and financial obligation of the same. This fact is what Naomi had in mind with her statement to Ruth. But she does not try to explain as yet because much remains to be done before the case will be settled.

Verse 21. Ruth gave her mother-in-law further information about the privileges offered her by the man where she had gleaned. The mention of her being a Moabitess is to explain to the reader why this whole procedure was somewhat of a mystery to her, which will be made clear as the case advances.

Verse 22. Naomi does not know just how far Boaz will care to go in this circumstance of the property and family but she plans to cooperate with him and the Lord in it all; hence the instructions here given to Ruth. Should the other maidens observe her in company with the people in other fields it might discourage Boaz against pressing his own interests.

Verse 23. The same sweet trust in her mother-in-law that had bound her to her and caused her to desert her native land now continued to show itself. She carefully observed the instructions her mother-in-law gave her all through the harvest of that crop.

RUTH 3

Verse 1. Let it not be forgotten that Naomi was a Jewess and acquainted with the law of Moses and in the situation now at hand would be especially interested in that part of the law applicable to their conditions. In her view of the case Boaz is the man who would lawfully be the one to take the place of Ruth's dead husband. Acting on that impression she gave Ruth the announcement worded here, but it was her plan to let her learn as much of the procedure as possible from the experience she was to have. All this was because the young woman was of another country and did not know the law of the Jews that would apply in this case. The word "rest" here is from *MANOWACH* and defined "quiet, i. e. (concretely) a settled spot, or (figuratively) a home."—Strong. Hence we see that Naomi plans to obtain for Ruth a home of her own so that she can be settled again in the normal surroundings of a wife and housekeeper. Under the provisions of the law she considers that Ruth has legal claim to Boaz. It is in view of

the law and what she thought to be the relationship between her dead son who had been the husband of Ruth, and the family, that she was giving all these instructions. While she considered that Ruth had the right under the law to lay claim to Boaz, she desired the whole problem to be completed at the voluntary performance of the one involved. Yet it would be proper to follow up her rights by keeping near Boaz, since he might not be fully acquainted with all the facts. Her confidence in the principles of Boaz was such that she fully believed he would carry out the law as fast as he was brought to realize the situation. All this explains her directions.

Verse 2. Little by little, Naomi acquainted Ruth with the nature of the situation as she thought it to be. Until she learns the full truth of the relationship we must interpret all her instructions to Ruth on the basis of what she thought it to be. So the next item of information given to Ruth was that Boaz was of their kindred and hence came under the provision of their law as to redemption of land and of marriage. Had she known the full particulars of the relationship she might not have felt it so necessary to press their claim upon Boaz as persistently as she was doing. And, had the true state of relationship been as Naomi thought it was it would not have been thought necessary thus to press it for he would have proceeded promptly, as we know he finally did. The gathering of the crop has been completed and now the next thing is to winnow or thresh it. Naomi is acquainted with the work connected with caring for the crops and understands that on that night the threshing would take place since there was generally a breeze in the evening, according to Smith. After the work of threshing which would require some physical exertion there would be occasion for refreshment in the form of food and then for rest in sleep. All this was in her mind.

Verse 3. The instructions in this verse mean that Ruth was to make herself attractive to the man who was intended to be her husband, also to be so clothed as to be ready for his advances, if and when they were made. More will be said on this particular phase of this case at 4th verse. "Raiment" here must be understood in a special sense for we know that Ruth was already clothed as her mother-in-law was talking to her. The word here is from *SIMLAH* and Strong gives the following definition and explana-

tion: "Perhaps by complete alteration of thought for the feminine of CEMEL (through the idea of a cover assuming the shape of the object beneath); a dress, especially a mantle." The thought is that Ruth was to be attired in a manner suitable for the passing of the night with a man. In this condition she was to go to the threshing floor, but remain unseen through the activities of the evening just following the threshing, and before reposing for the night's rest.

Verse 4. When Ruth sees Boaz lie down for the night she is to approach the spot and lie down at his feet and take the covering over his feet and cover her as far as that would reach. After this, whatever the man directed, Ruth was to comply. Of course Naomi expected that Boaz would carry out the provisions of the law as set forth in Deut. 25: 5. Had he been the near kinsman that Naomi thought him to be, no doubt he would have done so and would have been in perfect legal and moral order in doing so. The critics of the Bible tried to make much out of this circumstance as being an instance of irregular conduct. When the stipulations of the law are understood the attempts of the criticisms will be seen to be based on ignorance and evil surmise. Let us suppose that a wife has been separated from her husband by circumstances beyond them both. Then she is informed that he is in a certain place but that her whereabouts are not known to him. Under such circumstances she would be wholly within her legal and moral rights in seeking his private company and in reminding him of their close relationship. That is what Ruth is doing in all these actions in which she is carrying out the instructions of her mother-in-law. In asking for his intimate recognition of their relationship, she is doing exactly what any wife would be doing if seeking the intimacy of her husband. The fact that her mother-in-law was uninformed on the exact state of the case does not change the principle here stated. The moral error that might have been committed was prevented by the more complete information of Boaz and his high principle of conduct.

Verse 5. All of this is new to Ruth but she is still the trusting and obedient daughter-in-law and is sweetly obeying and promising still to obey all that is told her.

Verses 6, 7. The hour arrived. The

word "merry" is from YATAB and means that he felt well and good from a satisfactory meal. Not that he was under influence of the wine as sometimes such expression might mean. Having concluded the work of the evening and also the repast called for by such activity, he is retiring for the night and Ruth follows instructions and quietly comes to his presence.

Verse 8. Any person being awakened at an unusual hour might be in a kind of daze for a few seconds. If at the same time he realized that someone was near him who was not there when he lay down to sleep he would be startled, which was what was meant by being afraid. Then he "turned himself" which means that he grasped himself when he realized that a woman was lying at his feet.

Verse 9. He recovered himself sufficiently to speak and asked who it was lying at his feet. A frank and unabashed answer was given him by this pure minded woman. Then, acting on the information given her by her mother-in-law she bids him carry out the provisions of his law, and recognize her as his kinsman with the legal and moral right as well as obligation of the marriage relation. See comments at verse 4 on this.

Verse 10. One meaning of "kindness" given by Strong is "piety." So Boaz looks upon the actions of Ruth as those of devotion to the principles of the Lord rather than as merely the outward signs of fleshly desire. It was especially commendable for her, in that she, being a young woman, might have had the society of young men had she been interested along that line only. In the beginning of her life she had married a young man in accordance with the usual practice. But now at the latter part of her experience along that line she considers piety ahead of fleshly desire. For all of this Boaz calls the blessing of the Lord upon her.

Verse 11. For the moment Boaz promises to comply with her request and acknowledges her to be a virtuous woman whose character is recognized by people in general.

Verse 12. This verse tells of the information that Naomi did not have, but which Boaz did have. The law required that the nearest kinsman was the one to redeem the land and family of the dead husband. Boaz knew that another Jew was closer in kin to Elimelech's family than he, and therefore should have priority in the case.

This knowledge was what kept him from advancing toward Ruth when he came to recognize her lying at his feet. Here is one of the finest instances of pure manhood on record. Boaz saw that Ruth was unaware of the true state of affairs. She was at his feet in a pose to invite intimacy. He could have proceeded according to the natural inclinations of the flesh and Ruth would not have been the wiser. Yet Boaz was too much of a gentleman and had such regard for the moral as well as legal law, that he would not take advantage of her simple reliance on his integrity. Not only did he not take immediate advantage of the opportunity for fleshly gratification, but he will not proceed to make her his bosom companion legally, while another has privilege before him. Were all men in the world as righteous as this man, what a vast amount of sorrow and sin could be avoided in the social world!

Verse 13. It is still night and no time yet to change lodging places. He bade her tarry until time to go home. He then promised that if the man who had first right to her were agreeable to the transaction, he would agree with it all. In case the other man refused to do his part then he, Boaz, would do so.

Verse 14. She lay at his feet until morning. That is, the night was practically gone, yet was still dark enough to disguise one's identity. After she was gone Boaz gave instructions that it was not to be made known that a woman had been there. It may be complained that Boaz did not act as if he had been doing the right thing or he would not have given these instructions. The reason is clear. While he knew all the facts in the case yet others did not. Not all of the people would know the error of Naomi's information and hence might misconstrue the conduct of Ruth under the instructions of her mother-in-law. Therefore, an injustice would be done to her reputation were the mere fact of Ruth's presence known. So Boaz acts in a precautionary way according to the principle taught in Rom. 14: 16; 1 Cor. 10: 32.

Verse 15. Before letting Ruth depart for her home he gave her a supply of barley. This would be the grain after being threshed or winnowed. The exact amount is uncertain since the word is in italics. But whatever vessel Boaz used to handle the grain he filled it six times. And it was an

amount sufficient to be carried on the shoulder.

Verse 16. Of course Naomi recognized her daughter-in-law. And she had not been away except over night. Neither was her absence any surprise to Naomi since she had done according to her request. But the R. V. makes the question of the elder woman clear by the words "how hast thou fared?" She was eager to learn the success of the daughter-in-law with her marital adventure. In answer to the question Ruth told her the full story of the experiences of the night.

Verse 17. The gift of barley was not only a substantial expression of the respect Boaz had for Ruth but also the mention of her mother-in-law indicated he had received information of her worth. It showed further that Ruth and Naomi were understood to be mutually interested in the whole proceeding.

Verse 18. There is no doubt that Naomi was acquainted with the practices of the Jews and their expressions of mind. She knew that the persistence with which Boaz has been pressing his suit meant more than a mere compliance of the legal requirements of the law. When a man of the character exhibited by this godly individual manifests his interest by the way reported by Ruth it may be concluded that he wishes the whole matter to be decided as soon as possible. *Sit still.* This expression was one of assurance and had the force of saying "be at ease" or "be assured of success."

RUTH 4

Verse 1. The important cities of those times were walled as a means of fortification and often referred to as "fenced" cities. Hence the gate of the city would be the place where one would go when desirous of meeting a certain person. Boaz wished to contact the kinsman mentioned before, and for that purpose took a position at the gates of the city. The fact that these men were both near relatives of the same man indicates they were residents of the same city and that Boaz had selected the proper place at which to meet the other man. He was not disappointed in this, for the expected person came by. On seeing him Boaz called his attention. The man stopped and sat down near him.

Verse 2. The selection of these ten leading citizens of the city was a cautionary measure as we will see presently. Sitting down by these two

men they would be witnesses to what was being said.

Verse 3. It has already been shown that Naomi was poor and that the land that bore title to Elimelech will have to be offered for sale in order to satisfy the financial demands of the creditor. Under such circumstances the land may be purchased or "redeemed" by near relative. In fact, the law made provision to that effect and the one designated to perform such an act was the brother or nearest relative. See Lev. 25: 25 on this point. The word "brother" is from *ACH* and defined by Strong "a primitive word; a brother (used in the widest sense of literal relationship and metaphorical affinity or resemblance)."

Verse 4. *Advertise*. This is from a word that means "to reveal." The R. V. gives us "disclose" which is a correct rendering. The statement as used here means that Boaz thought he should inform this near kinsman of the transaction about to take place. The peculiar circumstances of Ruth's gleaning in the field of Boaz caused him to have the information on this subject ahead of the other relative. Again we see the fine and unselfish disposition of this man. He will not take advantage of the ignorance of the other man who really has first choice. It was taken for granted that he knew the law on the subject and that the nearest kinsman was the one to buy or procure or redeem the land. *None to redeem it beside thee*. This meant that there was none any nearer to Elimelech in relationship than this man and that Boaz came after him. So the proposition was made that if he was willing to redeem the land, well and good. We note the reference to the elders who had been selected in 2nd verse and before whom the transaction was to be made. This relative said he would redeem the land.

Verse 5. There was another section of the law of which Boaz made no mention as yet, and that was concerning the wife of a dead brother or near relative which required that the surviving one should marry the widow and raise up children that would be enrolled in favor of the dead brother. (Deut 25: 5.) We cannot say that Boaz was taking any advantage of the other kinsman by not mentioning this at first. There would have been no chance of his being injured at last anyway because he would have been bound to learn of all the facts in course of the transaction. Hence we

must conclude that no injustice was done. But by mentioning the property phase of the case only at first it would give opportunity for exhibiting the main point of interest by having this relative commit himself. Then if he goes on and accepts all the obligations of the case cheerfully, it would indicate the proper feeling of loyalty to the law and to a dead brother. We have seen that sometimes this test was denied (Gen. 38: 9), and a selfish attitude manifested. This will be found in the present case. After this near kinsman had committed himself as to the property settlement, Boaz informed him of the other angle in the matter and made reference to the law on that subject. We are to understand that where both the childless widow and an encumbered property were involved, the relative assuming the duties toward one phase would be obligated to take the other. The claim of right to the land would be the same as admitting the obligation on the part of the dead man's widow.

Verse 6. The fact of procuring more land would have no objectionable effect on any previous holding, hence that was not the basis of his objection. But by taking an additional wife into his intimate life, the new heirs might interfere with his own previous arrangement in some way. At least he feared it might be so. With this in mind, the near kinsman declined to accept the entire obligation and gave his consent to the next man. It is interesting to note the differences in the attitude of these two men. The one was not willing to accept the woman in order to acquire the land because he did not have any love for the woman. But the love of Boaz for Ruth was such that he was willing to assume the financial obligation connected with the case in order to secure to himself the woman he loved. This whole matter is a beautiful story.

Verses 7, 8. All systems of law have more or less formalities connected with the transactions of their citizens. There may be little or no logical significance in the forms, further than to make a record of the deed and to make it binding. In the case of assuming the obligations imposed regarding a dead relative a provision was made to take care of the exchange. That is, when one person was first in line but declined to perform his duty he was to be treated according to Deut. 25: 7, 9. If he wished to lessen the shame of his refusal he could

voluntarily go through the formality. In the case before us the near kinsman was perfectly willing to let Boaz take his place. Also, Boaz was perfectly willing to take the other man's place for the reason that is now clear to the mind of the reader. So this formality was done as a "testimony."

Verse 9. Again we see the service of the elders chosen in the first of the chapter to be witnesses. Since the exchange of the shoe was the recognized sign of the legal transaction, this formality gave notice to the public that the exchange had been made by the agreement of both interested parties.

Verse 10. We do not like to think of purchasing a wife, especially in the case of such pleasant circumstances as the one at hand. The whole procedure of this very interesting experience shows a state of the purest love between the contracting parties, and one free from all taint of worldliness. So on examination of the word "purchased" it is found that one part of the lexicon definition is "to procure" which is the more agreeable word. Boaz did not have to expend money to obtain Ruth as a wife. Had there been no property involved at all, still it would have been the provision of the law for him to take her on behalf of the dead relative. Indeed it could be said that Boaz procured the young woman in that he did not have the lawful right to her in the beginning. That was the reason for his gallant attitude toward her at the threshing floor. He did his full duty. Having the information the other kinsman did not have and offering him the first chance, he laid the way open for the full and legal performance of the matter. Then the near relative declined to assume the obligation so that put Boaz next. This was all the more evident by his voluntary exchange of the shoe without requiring Ruth to do so according to Deut. 25: 7, 9. By doing everything he could to let the kinsman into the deal, Boaz made himself entitled to all that the other man should have made use of. So that it was a proper word to say he had "procured" Ruth to be his wife. We know that Boaz was in love with Ruth and that it was his chief personal motive for the performance of the law. It makes a fitting case of application for the statement "Happy is that man in whom the love of a woman and the sense of duty impel in the same direction." He did not need to

say anything about the sentimental feature of the case for the public was not concerned about that. The people did understand the requirements of the law, hence he cites the ideas set forth therein on this subject. Boaz closed his statement on the matter by calling on the witnesses to agree to his declarations.

Verse 11. The witnesses, including the elders and the people, testified to the transaction. They moreover added their good wishes to the case by comparing Ruth to Rachel and Leah. The mention of both wives of Jacob indicates that no reference was being had to the personal characteristics of those two women since the differences in them would exclude a comparison to one woman. The wives of Jacob produced the members of the family of Jacob and that was the outstanding desire of the people of God in those times. The people also wished him financial success as well as a good name in the city. The two names given here refer to the same place, the former being more ancient.

Verse 12. This verse is just an additional citation of a case where a wife honored her master by giving him seed for future generations.

Verse 13. Nothing previously has been said in the text as to the fertility of Ruth, and whether her being without children was due to any defect. If she were barren the Lord overcame that defect by miracle. Of course, we have seen that Boaz was a righteous man and his high principles of life make us know that he would have done his duty toward her under the law regardless of any sentiment. But it is a beautiful thought that Boaz and Ruth loved each other and on that ground would come together in the consummation of their newly acquired privilege. What a complete and satisfactory instance of the law of marriage instituted by the Lord in the beginning. (Gen. 2: 23, 24.) A son was the fruit of this match.

Verse 14. In congratulating Naomi, the women referred to Boaz as the redeemer of the lost fortunes in both property and family. Their explanation of the good fortune was in attributing the matter to the Lord, which was a true consideration.

Verse 15. In the preceding verse the women gave credit to Boaz for the favors coming to Naomi. In this they also pay fitting tribute to Ruth. It is interesting to note their connecting the special joys to come to Naomi

in the son with the fact that he had been born by the daughter-in-law. Now of course a grandson through the name of a son would necessarily be born by a daughter-in-law, hence we know that mere idea is not all there was in their language. But the proviso "which loveth thee" is what makes the story all the more significant. It also confirms the statement made above that Ruth loved her mother-in-law.

Verse 16. *Become nurse unto it.* This means that she cared for it as if it were her own child in the matter of attending to its bodily wants, also by bringing it up in the proper manner.

Verse 17. From various sources it seems that friends in old times often suggested a name for a new baby. (Luke 1: 59.) Such was done in the

present case and the name given was Obed. The writer completes three generations in this verse by naming David.

Verses 18-22 The entire story of Ruth is beautiful, and exhibits all of the best and dearest sentiments of family ties and conjugal love, but the special use of the story is to show the reader a connecting link in the chain of Christ's ancestors. So in the conclusion of the book the writer goes back to the generations starting with Judah and brings them down to David who became the famous ancestor of Christ through two of his sons, Nathan and Solomon. One of these sons produced the line that came down to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as recorded in Luke 3. The other, Solomon, produced the line that came down to Joseph, the husband of Mary.