

Sermons on Ruth by Spurgeon

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SERMONS & DEVOTIONALS ON RUTH

by C H Spurgeon

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DECIDING FOR GOD

Ruth 1:16

by C. H. Spurgeon

"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

THIS was a very brave, outspoken confession of faith. Please to notice that it was made by a woman, a young woman, a poor woman, a widow woman, and a foreigner. Remembering all that, I should think there is no condition of gentleness, or of obscurity, or of poverty, or of sorrow, which should prevent anybody from making an open confession of allegiance to God when faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has been exercised. If that is your experience, then whoever you may be, you will find an opportunity, somewhere or other, of declaring that you are on the Lord's side. I am glad that all candidates for membership in our church make their confession of faith at our church meetings. It does the man, the woman, the boy, or the girl, whoever it is, so much good for once, at least, to say right out straight, "I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am not ashamed of it," that I do not think we shall ever deviate from our custom. I have also noticed that, when people have once confessed Christ before men, they are very apt to do it again somewhere else; and they thus acquire a kind of boldness and outspokenness upon religious matters, and a holy courage as followers of Christ, which more than make up for any self-denial and trembling which the effort may have cost them.

I think Naomi was quite right to drive Ruth, as it were, to take this brave stand, in which it became an absolute necessity for her to speak right straight out, and say, in the words of our text, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." What is there for any of us to be ashamed of in acknowledging that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ? What can there be that should cause us to be ashamed of Jesus, or make us blush to own his name?

***Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.***

We ought to be ashamed of being ashamed of Jesus; we ought to be afraid of being afraid to own him; we ought to tremble at trembling to confess him, and to resolve that we will take all suitable opportunities that we can find of saying, first to relatives, and then to all others with whom we come into contact, "We serve the Lord Christ."

I should think that Naomi was—certainly she ought to have been—greatly cheered by hearing this declaration from Ruth, especially the last part of it: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Naomi had suffered great temporal loss; she had lost her husband and her two sons; but now she had found the soul of her daughter-in-law; and I believe that, according to the scales of true judgment, there ought to have been more joy in her heart at the conversion of Ruth's soul than grief over the death of her husband and her sons. Our Lord Jesus has told us that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"; and I always understand, by that expression, that there is joy in the heart of God himself over every sinner's repentance. Well, then, if Naomi's husband and sons were true believers—if they had been walking aright before the Lord—as, let us hope, they had done—she need not have felt such sorrow for them as could at all compare with the joy of her daughter-in-law being saved.

Perhaps, some of you have had bereavements in your homes; but if the death—the temporal death—of one should be the means of the spiritual life of another, there is a clear gain, I am sure there is; and though you may have gone weeping to the grave, yet, if you have evidence that, with those tears, there were also tears of repentance on the part of others of your family, and with that sad glance into the grave there was also a believing look at the dying, risen, and living Savior, you are decidedly a gainer, and you need not say, with Naomi, "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." Really Naomi, with her converted daughter-in-law at her side, if she had only been able to look into the future, might have been a happier woman than when she went away with her husband and her boys, for now she had with her one who was to be in the direct line of the progenitors of Christ, a right royal woman; for I count that the line of Christ is the true imperial line, and that they were the most highly honored among men and women who were in any way associated with the birth of the Savior into this world; and Ruth, though a Moabitess, was one of those who were elected to share in this high privilege.

Another thought strikes me here; that is, that it was when Naomi returned to the land which she ought never to have left, it was when she came out from the idolatrous Moabites among whom she had, as you see, relatives, and friends, and acquaintances—it was when she said, "I will go back to my own country, and people, and God,"—that then the Lord gave her the soul of this young woman who was so closely related to her. It may be that some of you professedly Christian people have been living at a distance from God. You have not led the separated life; you have tried to be friendly with the world as well as with Christ, and your children are not growing up as you wish they would. You say that your sons are not turning out well, and that your girls are dressy, and flighty, and worldly. Do you wonder that it is so? "Oh!" you say, "I have gone a good way to try to please them, thinking that, perhaps, by so doing, I might win them for Christ." Ah! you will never win any soul to the right by a compromise with the wrong. It is decision for Christ and his truth that has the greatest power in the family, and the greatest power in the world, too.

My first observation is, that AFFECTION FOR THE GODLY SHOULD INFLUENCE US TO GODLINESS.

It did so in this case. Affection for their godly mother-in-law influenced both Orpah and Ruth for a time, "and they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." They were both drawn part of the way towards Canaan; but, alas! natural affection has not sufficient power in itself to draw anybody to decision for God. It may be helpful to that end; it may be one of the "cords of a man" and "bands of love" which God, in his infinite mercy, often uses in drawing sinners to himself; but there has to be something more than that mere human affection. Still, it ought to be of some service in leading to decision; and it is a very dreadful thing when those who have godly parents seem to be the worse rather than the better for that fact, or when men, who have Christian wives, rebel against the light, and become all the more wicked because God has blessed their homes with godly women who speak to them lovingly and tenderly, concerning the claims of the religion of Jesus. That is a terrible state of affairs, for it ought always to be the case that our affection for godly people should help to draw us towards godliness. In Ruth's case, by the grace of God, it was the means of leading her to the decision expressed in our text, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Many forces may be combined to bring others to this decision. First, *there is the influence of companionship*. Nobody doubts that evil company tends to make a man bad, and it is equally sure that good companionship has a tendency to influence men towards that which is good. It is a happy thing to have side by side with you one whose heart is full of love to God. It is a great blessing to have as a mother a true saint, or to have as a brother or a sister one who fears the Lord; and it is a special privilege to be linked for life, in the closest bonds, with one whose prayers may rise with ours, and whose praises may also mingle with ours. There is something about Christian companionship which must tell in the right direction unless the heart be resolutely bent on

mischief.

There is something more than this, however, and that is, *the influence of admiration*. There can be no doubt whatever that Ruth looked with loving reverence and admiration upon Naomi, for she saw in her a character which won her heart's esteem and affection. The few glimpses which we have of that godly woman, in this Book of Ruth, show us that she was a most disinterested and unselfish person, not one who, because of her own great sorrow, would burden others with it, and pull them down to her own level in order that they might in some way assist her. She was one who considered the interests of others rather than her own; and all such persons are sure to win admiration and esteem. When a Christian man so lives that others see something about him which they do not perceive in themselves, that is one way in which they are often attracted towards the Christian life. When the sick Christian is patient, when the poor Christian is cheerful, when the believer in Christ is forgiving, generous, tenderhearted, sympathetic, honest, upright, then it is that observers say, "Here is something worth looking at; whence came all this excellence?"

Nor is it only by companionship and admiration that people are won to the Savior; there is also *the influence of instruction*. I have no doubt that Naomi gave her daughter-in-law much helpful teaching. Ruth would want to know about Naomi's God, and Naomi would be only too glad to tell her all she knew. We should make people want to know what our religion really is, and then be ready to tell them. I have no doubt that, many a time, in the land of Moab, when her daughters-in-law ran in to see her, Naomi would begin telling them about the deliverance at the Red Sea, and how the Lord brought his people through the wilderness, and how the goodly land, which flowed with milk and honey, had been given to them by the hand of Joshua. Then she would tell them about the tabernacle and its worship, and talk to them about the lamb, and the red heifer, and the bullock, and the sin offering, and son on; and it was thus, probably, that Ruth's heart had been won to Jehovah the God of Israel. And, perhaps, for that reason—because of Naomi's instruction—Ruth said to her, " 'Thy people shall be my people;' I know so much about them, that I want to be numbered with them; 'and thy God shall be my God.' Thou hast told me about him, what wonders he has wrought, and I have resolved to trust myself under the shadow of his wings."

I think, too, that there was another thing which had great influence over Ruth, as it has had over a great many other people. That is, *the fear of separation*. "Ah!" said one to me, only last week, "it used to trouble me greatly when my wife went downstairs to the communion, and I had to go home, or to remain with the spectators in the gallery. I did not like to be separated from her even here; and then, sir, the thought stole over me, 'What if I have to be divided from her forever and ever?' " I think that a similar reflection ought, with the blessing of God, to impress a good many. Young man, if you live and die impenitent, you will see your mother no more, except it be from an awful distance, with a great gulf fixed between her and you, so that she cannot cross over to you, or you go over to her. There will come a day when one shall be taken and another left; and before the great separation takes place, at the judgment seat of Christ, when there shall be a sundering made between the goats and the sheep, and between the tares and the wheat, I do implore you to let the influence of the godly whom you love help to draw you towards decision for God and His Christ.

My time would fail me if I dwelt longer on this point, though it is a very interesting one, so I must pass on to my second observation, which is, that *RESOLVES TO GODLINESS WILL BE TESTED*. RUTH SPEAKS VERY POSITIVELY: "THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE, AND THY GOD MY GOD." THIS WAS HER RESOLVE, BUT IT WAS A RESOLVE WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN PUT TO THE TEST, AND HAD IN GREAT MEASURE SATISFACTORILY PASSED THROUGH IT.

First, *it had been tested by the poverty and the sorrow of her mother-in-law*. Naomi said, "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me"; yet Ruth says, "Thy God shall be my God." I like that brave resolution of the young Moabitess. Some people say, "We should like to be converted, for we want to be happy." Yes, but suppose you knew that you would not be happy after conversion, you ought still to wish to have this God to be your God. Naomi has lost her husband, she has lost her sons, she has lost everything; she is going back penniless to Bethlehem, and yet her daughter-in-law says to her, "Thy God shall be my God." Oh, if you can share the lot of Christians when they are in trouble, if you can take God and affliction, if you can accept Christ and a cross, then your decision to be His follower is true and real. It has been tested by the afflictions and the trials which you know belong to the people of God, yet you are content to suffer with them in taking their God to be your God, too.

Next, Ruth's decision had been tested when *she was bidden to count the cost*. Naomi had put the whole case before her. She had told her daughter-in-law that there was no hope that she should ever bear a son who could become a husband to Ruth, and that she had better stay and find a husband in her own land. She set before her the dark side of the case—possibly too earnestly. She seemed as if she wanted to persuade her to go back, though I do not think that, in her heart she could really have wished her to do so. But, my young friend, before you say to any Christian, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," count the cost. Recollect, if you are following an evil trade, you will have to give it up; if you have formed bad habits, you will have to forsake them; and if you had bad companions, you will have to leave them. There are a great many things which have afforded you pleasure, which must become painful to you, and must be renounced. Are you prepared to follow Christ through the mire and the slough, as well as along the high road, and down in the valley as well as upon the hills? Are you ready to carry his cross as you hope, afterwards, to share his crown? If you can stand the test in detail—such a test as Christ set before those who wanted to be his followers on earth, then is your decision a right one, but not else.

Ruth had been tried, too, by *the apparent coldness of one in whom she trusted*, and whom she had a right to trust, for Naomi did not at all encourage her; indeed, she seemed to discourage her. I am not sure that Naomi is to be blamed for that, and I am not certain that she is to be much praised. You know, it is quite possible for you to encourage people too much. I have known some encouraged in their doubts and fears till they never could get out of them. At the same time, you can certainly very easily chill inquirers and seekers. And though Naomi showed her love to Ruth, yet she did not seem to have any very great desire to bring her to follow Jehovah. This is a test that many young people find to be very trying; but this young woman said to her mother-in-law, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Another trial for Ruth was *the drawing back of her sister-in-law*. Orpah kissed Naomi, and left her; and you know the influence of one young person upon another when they are of the same age, or when they are related as these two were. You went to the revival meeting with a friend, and she was as much impressed as you were. She has gone back to the world, and the temptation is for you to do the same. Can you stand out against it? You two young men went to hear the same preacher, and you both felt the force of the Word; but your companion has gone back to where he used to be. Can you hold out now, and say, "I will follow Christ alone if I cannot find a companion to go with me?" If so, it is well with you.

But one of the worst trials that Ruth had was *the silence of Naomi*. I think that is what is meant, for after she had solemnly declared that she would follow the Lord, we read, "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her." She left off stating the black side of the case, but she does not appear to have talked to her about the bright side. "She left speaking unto her." The good woman was so sorrowful that she could not talk, her heartbreak was so great that she could not converse, but such silence must have been very trying to Ruth; and when a young person had just joined the people of God, it is a severe test to be brought face to face with a very mournful Christian, and not to get one encouraging word. Sometimes, brethren and sisters, we must swallow our own bitter pills as fast as ever we can, that we may not discourage others by making a wry face over them. It is sometimes the very best thing a sorrowful person can do to say, "I must not be sad; here is young So-and-so coming in. I must be cheerful now, for here comes one who might be discouraged by my grief." You remember how the psalmist, when he was in a very mournful state of mind, said, "If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me." Let it be too painful for us to give any cause for stumbling or disquietude to those who have just come to the Savior, but let us cheer and encourage them all we can. Still, Naomi's silence did not discourage Ruth; she was evidently a strong-minded though gentle young woman, and she gave herself up to God and his people without any reserve. Even though she might not be helped much by the older believer, and might even be discouraged by her, and still more by the departure of her sister-in-law, Orpah, yet still she pressed on in the course she had chosen. Well, you do the same, Mary; and you, Jane, and John and Thomas. Will you be like Mr. Pliable, and go back to the City of Destruction? Or will you, like Christian, pursue your way, and steadfastly hold on through the Slough of Despond, or whatever else may be in your pathway to the Celestial City?

Now, thirdly, and very briefly, TRUE GODLINESS MUST MAINLY LIE IN THE CHOICE OF GOD. THAT IS THE VERY PITH OF THE TEXT: "THY GOD SHALL BE MY GOD."

First, *God is the believer's choicest possession*; indeed, it is the distinguishing mark of a Christian that he owns a God. Naomi had not much else—no husband, no son, no lands, no gold, no silver, no pleasure even; but she had a God. Come now, my friend, are you determined that, henceforth, and forever, the Lord shall be your chief possession? Can you say, "God shall be mine; my faith shall grasp him now, and hold him fast"?

Next, *God was, henceforth, to Ruth, as he had been to Naomi, her Ruler and Lawgiver*. When anyone truthfully says, "God shall be my God," there is some practical meaning about that declaration; it means, "He shall influence me; he shall direct me; he shall lead me; he shall govern me; he shall be my King. I will yield to him and obey him in everything. I will endeavor to do all things according to his will. God shall be my God." You must not want to take God to be your helper, in the sense of making him to be your servant; but to be your Master, and so to help you. Dear friends, does the Holy Spirit lead you to make this blessed choice, and to declare, "This God shall be mine, my Lawgiver and Ruler from this time forth"?

Well, then, *he must also be your Instructor*. At the present day, I am afraid that nine people out of ten do not believe in the God who is revealed to us in the Bible. "What?" you say. It is so, I grieve to say. I can point you to newspapers, to magazines, to periodicals, and also to pulpits by the score, in which there is a new god set up to be worshiped; not the God of the Old Testament, he is said to be too strict, too severe, too stern for our modern teachers. They do not believe in him. The God of Abraham is dethroned by many nowadays; and in his place they have a molluscous god, like those of whom Moses spoke, "new gods that come newly up, whom your fathers feared not." They shudder at the very mention of the God of the Puritans. If Jonathan Edwards were to rise from the dead, they would not listen to him for a minute, they would say that they had quite a new god since his day; but brethren, I believe in the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; this God is my God—ay, the God that drowned Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea, and moved his people to sing "Hallelujah" as he did it; the God that caused the earth to open, and

swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their company—a terrible God is the God whom I adore—he is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, full of mercy, compassion, and grace, tender and gentle, yet just and dreadful in his holiness, and terrible out of his holy places. This is the God whom we worship, and he who come to him in Christ, and trusts in him, will take him to be his Instructor, and so shall he learn aright all that he needs to know. But woe unto the men of this day, we have made unto themselves a calf of their own devising, which has no power to bless or to save them! “Thy God” says Ruth to Naomi, not another god, not Chemosh or Moloch, but Jehovah “shall be my God”; and so she took him to be her Instructor, as we also must do.

Then, let us take him to be *our entire trust and stay*. O my beloved friends, the happiest thing in life is to trust God, first to trust him with your soul through Jesus Christ the Savior, and then to trust him with everything, and in everything. I am speaking what I do know. The life of sense is death, but the life of faith is life indeed. Trust God about temporals—nay, I do not know any division between temporals and spirituals; trust God about everything, about your daily livelihood, about your health, about your wife, about your children; live a life of faith in God, and you will truly live, and all things will be right about you. It is because we get partly trusting God and partly trusting ourselves that we are often so unhappy. But when, by simple faith, you just cast yourselves on God, then you find the highest joy and bliss that is possible on earth, and a whole series of wonders is spread out before you; your life becomes like a miracle, or a succession of miracles, God hearing your prayers, and answering you out of heaven, delivering you in the time of trial, supplying your every need, and leading you ever onward by a matchless way which you know not, which every moment shall cause you greater astonishment and delight as you see the unfoldings of the character of God. Oh, that each one of you would say, “This God shall be my God; I will trust him; by his grace, I will trust him now.”

The last thing is, that THIS DECISION SHOULD LEAD US TO CAST IN OUR LOT WITH GOD’S PEOPLE AS WELL AS WITH HIMSELF, FOR RUTH SAID, “THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”

She might have said, “You are not well spoken of, you Jews, you Israelites; the Moabites, among whom I have lived, hated you.” But in effect, she said, “I am no Moabite now. I am going to belong to Israel, and to be spoken against, too. They have all manner of bad things to say in Moab about Bethlehem-Judah; but I do not mind that, for I am going to be henceforth an inhabitant of Bethlehem, and to be reckoned in the number of the Bethlehemites, for no longer am I of Moab and the Moabites.”

Now, will you thus cast in your lot with God’s people; and though they are spoken against, will you be willing to be spoken against, too? I daresay that the Bethlehemites were not all that Ruth could have wished them to be. Even Naomi was not; she was too sad and sorrowful; but, still, I expect that Ruth thought that her mother-in-law was a better woman than she was herself. I have heard people find fault with the members of our churches, and say that they cannot join with them, for they are such inferior sort of people. Well, I know a great many different sorts of people; and, after all, I shall be quite content to be numbered with God’s people, as I see them even in his visible Church, rather than to be numbered with any other persons in the whole world. I count the despised people of God the best company I have ever met with.

“Oh!” says one, “I will join the church when I can find a perfect one.” Then you will never join any. “Ah!” you say, “but perhaps I may.” Well, but it will not be a perfect church the moment after you have joined it, for it will cease to be perfect as soon as it receives you into its membership. I think that, if a church is such as Christ can love, it is such as I can love; and if it is such that Christ counts it as his Church, I may well be thankful to be a member of it. Christ “loved the Church, and gave himself for it”; then may I not think it an honor to be allowed to give myself to it?

Ruth was not joining a people out of whom she expected to get much. Shame on those who think to join the Church for what they can get! Yet the loaves and fishes are always a bait for some people. But there was Ruth, going with Naomi to Bethlehem, and all that the townsfolk would do would be to turn out and stare at them, and say, “Is this Naomi? And pray who is this young woman that has come with her? This Naomi—dear me! How altered she is! How worn she looks! Quite the old woman to what she was when she left us.” Not much sympathy was given to them, as far as I gather from that remark; yet Ruth seemed to say, “I do not care how they treat me; they are God’s people, even if they have a great many faults and imperfections, and I am going to join them.” And I invite all of you who can say to us, “Your God is our God,” to join with the people of God, openly, visibly, manifestly, decidedly, without any hesitancy, even though you may gain nothing by it. Perhaps you will not; but, on the other hand, you will bring a good deal to it, for that is the true spirit of Christ. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Yet, in any case, cast in your lot with the people of God, and share and share alike with them.

I conclude by saying that, whatever the other Bethlehemites might be, there was among them one notable being, and it was worthwhile to join the nation for the sake of union with him. Ruth found it all out by degrees. There was a near kinsman among those people, and his name was Boaz. She went to glean in his field; and, by and by, she was married to him. Ah! that was the reason why I cast in my lot with the people of God, for I said to myself, “There is One among them who, whatever faults they may have, is so fair and lovely that he more than makes up for all their imperfections. My Lord Jesus Christ, in the midst of his people, makes them all fair in his fairness; and makes me feel that, to be poor with the poorest and most illiterate of the Church of Christ, meeting in a village barn, is an unspeakable honor, since he is among them.” Our Lord Jesus Christ himself is always present

wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. If his name is in the list, there may be a number of odds and ends put down with him, members of different denominations, some queer persons, some very old people; but as long as his name is in the list, I do not mind about what others are there, put my name down.

Oh, that I might have the eternal honor of having it written even at the bottom of the page beneath the name of Jesus, my Lord, the Lamb! As Boaz was there, it was enough for Ruth; and as Christ is here, that is quite enough for me. So I hope I have said sufficient to persuade you, who say that our God is your God, to come and join with us, or with some other part of Christ's Church, and so to make his people to be your people. And mind you do it at once, and in the scriptural fashion, and God bless you in the doing of it, for Christ's sake!

Spiritual Gleaning

by

C. H. SPURGEON

"Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not." — Ruth 2:15.

Our country cousins have been engaged recently in harvest occupations, and most of them understand what is meant by gleaning. Perhaps they are not all of them so wise as to understand the heavenly art of spiritual gleaning. That is the subject which I have chosen for our meditation on this occasion, my attention having been called to it while I have been riding along through the country; and as I like to improve the seasons of the year as they come and go, I shall give you a few homely remarks with regard to spiritual gleaning. In the first place, we shall observe, that there is a great Husbandman. It was Boaz in this case; it is our Heavenly Father who is the Husbandman in the other case. Secondly, we shall notice a humble gleaner. It was Ruth in this instance; it is every believer who is represented by her; at least, we shall so consider the subject. And, in the third place, here is a very gracious permission given: "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not."

I. In the first place, then, we will consider something concerning The Great Husbandman - God.

The God of the whole earth is a great Husbandman; in fact, all farming operations are really dependent on him. Man may plough the soil, and he may sow the seed, but God alone gives the increase. It is he that sends the clouds and the sunshine, it is he that directs the winds and the rain, and so, by various processes of nature, he brings forth the food for man. All the farming, however, which God does, he does for the benefit of others, and never for himself. He has no need of any of those things which are so necessary for us. Remember how he spoke to Israel of old: "I will take no bullock out of thy house, no he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof." All things are God's, and all he does in creation, all the works of his providence, are not done for himself, but for his creatures, out of the benevolence of his loving heart.

And in spiritual matters, also, God is a great Husbandman; and there, too, all his works are done for his people, that they may be fed and satisfied, as with marrow and fatness. Permit me, then, to refer you to the great gospel fields which our Heavenly Father farms for the good of his children. There is a great variety of them, but they are all on good soil, for the words of Moses are true of the spiritual Israel: "The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew." God, as the great spiritual Husbandman, hath many fields, but they are all fertile, and there is always an abundant harvest to be reaped in them.

One field is called doctrine field. Oh, what large sheaves of blessed corn are to be found there! He who does but glean in it will find very much spiritual nutriment. There is the great sheaf of election, full, indeed, of heavy ears of corn like Pharaoh saw in his first dream, "fat and good." There is the great sheaf of preservation, wherein it is promised to us that the work that God has begun he will assuredly complete. And if we have not faith enough to partake of either of these sheaves, there is the most blessed sheaf of all, — ay, it is many sheaves in one, — the sheaf of redemption by the blood of Christ. Many a poor soul, who could not feed on electing love, has found satisfaction in the blood of Jesus. He could sit down, and rejoice that redemption is finished, and that for every penitent soul there is provided a great atonement, whereby he is reconciled to God.

I cannot stop to tell you of all the sheaves in the doctrine field. Some say there are only five; I believe the five great doctrines of Calvinism are, in some degree, a summary of the rest; they are distinctive points wherein we differ from those who "have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." But there are many more doctrines beside these five; and all are alike precious, and all are alike valuable to the true believer's soul, for he can feed upon them to his heart's content.

I wonder why it is that some of our ministers are so particular about locking the gate of this doctrine field. They do not like God's people to get in. I believe it is because they are afraid Jeshurun would wax fat and kick, if he had too much food; at least, that is what I must be charitable enough to suppose. I fear that many are like the huge corn monopolist; they buy the doctrine of election, but keep it to themselves; they believe it is true, yet they never preach it. They say that all the distinguishing doctrines of grace are true; but they never proclaim them to others. There are Particular Baptists who are as sound in doctrine as any of us; but, unfortunately, they never make any sound about it; and though they are very sound when alone, they are very unsound when they come into their pulpits, for they never preach doctrine there. I say, swing the gate wide open, and come in, all ye children of God! I am sure there is no charlock in my Master's field. If the doctrine be a true one, it cannot hurt the child of God; and so, as it is the truth, you may feast upon it till your soul is satisfied, and no harm will come of it. The idea of reserve in preaching, — keeping back some doctrines because they are not fit to be preached! — I will repeat what I have said before, it is a piece of most abominable impudence on the part of man, to say that anything which God has revealed is unfit to be preached. If it is unfit to be preached, I am sure the Almighty would never have revealed it to us. No, like the old man described by Solomon, these preachers, who do not proclaim good, sound doctrine, are "afraid of that which is high." It is a mark of their senility that they fear to talk of these great things. God was not afraid to write them, and we, therefore, ought not to be afraid to preach them. The doctrine field is a glorious field, beloved; go often into it, and glean; you may find there more than an ephah of the finest wheat every day.

Then, next, God has a field called promise field; on that I need not dwell, for many of you have often been there. But let us just take an ear or two out of one of the sheaves, and show them to you, that you may be tempted to go into the field to glean more for yourselves. Here is one: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." There is a heavy ear for you, now for another: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Here is another; it has a short stalk, but there is a great deal of corn in it: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Here is another: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Here is another one: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." There is the promise of Christ's glorious second coming; and is not that a heavy ear of wheat for the Lord's children to pick up? Yes, beloved, we can say of the promise field what cannot be said of any farmer's field in England, namely, that it is so rich a field, it cannot be richer, and has so many ears of corn in it, that you could not put in another one. As the poet sings, —

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,

Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!

What more can he say than to you he hath said,

You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"

Go and glean in that field, Christian; it is all your own, every ear of it; pull great handfuls out of the sheaves, if you like, for you are truly welcome to all you can find.

Then there is ordinance field; a great deal of corn grows in that field. One part of it reminds us of the ordinance of believers' baptism; and, verily, God's children are greatly profited even by the sight of the baptism of others; it comforts and cheers them, and helps them to renew their own dedication vow to the Lord Most High. But I must not detain you long in this field, though it is to many of us very hallowed spot. Some of my friends never go into this field at all, it is too damp a soil for them; and though the corn is very fine, and very high, they are afraid to go there. Let us leave that part of the field, and pass on to the place of communion. Oh, it is sweet, divinely sweet, to sit at the table of our Lord, to eat the bread and drink the wine! What rich dainties are there provided for us! Hath not Jesus often given us there "the kisses of his mouth," and have we not there tasted his love, and proved it to be "better than wine"? Beloved, go into that ordinance field; walk in the ordinances of the Lord blameless, and do not despise either of them. Keep his commandments, for so will you find a great reward, and so will he fill your souls with marrow and fatness.

But God has one field on a hill which is as rich as any of the others; and, indeed, you cannot really and truly go into any of the other fields unless you go through this one, for the road to the other fields lies through this one, which is called the field of fellowship and communion with Christ. Ah! that is the field to glean in; some of you have only run through it, you have not stopped in it; but he who knows how to abide in it, and to walk about it, doth never lose anything, but gaineth much. Beloved, it is only in proportion as we hold fellowship with Christ, and commune with him, that either ordinances, or doctrines, or promises, can profit us. All those other things are dry and barren unless we have entered into the love of Christ, unless we have realized our union with him, unless we have a sympathy with his heart, unless we bear his likeness, unless we dwell continually with him, and feel his love, and are ravished with his delights. I am sorry to say that few Christians think as much as they ought of this field; it is enough for them to be

sound in doctrine, and tolerably correct in practice; they do not think as much as they should about holding' fellowship with Christ. I am sure, if they did, there would not be half so many evil tempers as there are; nor half so much pride, and not a tithe so much sloth, if our brethren went into that field oftener. Oh, it is a blessed one; there is no such field as that I You may go into it and revel in delights, for it is full of everything good that the heart can wish, or the soul imagine, or the mind conceive. Blessed, blessed field is that I And God leaves the gate of that field wide open for every believer.

Children of God, go into all these fields; do not despise one of them; but go and glean in them all; for there is the richest gleaning in all creation.

II. Now, in the second place, we have to think and speak of A Humble Gleaner.

Ruth was a gleaner, and she may serve as an illustration of what every believer should be in the fields of God.

He should be a gleaner, and he may take a whole sheaf home if he likes; he may be something more than a gleaner if he can be; but I use the figure of a gleaner, because I believe that is the most a Christian ever is. Some may ask, "Why does not the Christian go and reap all the field, and take all the corn home with him?" So he may, if he can; if he likes to take a whole sheaf on his back, and go home with it, he may do so. And if he will bring a great wagon, and carry away all there is in the field, he may have it all; but, generally, our faith is so small that we can only glean, we take away but a little of the blessing which God has prepared so abundantly; and though, sometimes, faith does take and enjoy much, yet, when we compare it with what there is to be enjoyed, a gleaner is the true picture of faith, and more especially of little faith. All it can do is to glean; it cannot cart the wheat home, or carry a sheaf on its shoulders; it can only take it up ear by ear.

Again, I may remark, that the gleaner, in her business, has to endure much toil and fatigue. She riseth early in the morning, and trudgeth off to a field; if that be shut, she trudgeth to another; and if that be closed, or the corn has all been gleaned, she goeth to another. All day long, though the sun is shining on her, except when she sits down under a tree, to rest and refresh herself a little, still she goes on stooping, and gathering up her ears of corn; and she returns not home till nightfall, for she desires, if the field is good, to pick up all she can in the day, and she would not like to go back unless her arms were full of the rich corn she so much desires to find.

Beloved, so let it be with every believer; let him not be afraid of a little weariness in his Master's service. If the gleaning is good, the spiritual gleaner will not mind fatigue in gathering it. One says, "I walk five miles every Sunday to chapel;" another says, "I walk six or seven miles." Very well, if it is the gospel, it is worth, not only walking six or seven miles, but sixty or seventy, for it will pay you well. The gleaner must look for some toil and trouble; he must not expect that everything will come to him very easily. We must not think that it is always the field next our house that is to be gleaned; it may be a field at the further end of the village. If so, let us go trudging off to it, that we may get, our hands and arms full.

But I remark, next, that the gleaner has to stoop for every ear she gets. Why is it that proud people do not profit under the Word? Why is it that your grand folk cannot get any good out of many gospel ministers? Why, because they want the ministers to pick up the corn for them! And beside that, many of the ministers hold it so high above their heads, that they can scarcely see it. They say, "Here is something wonderful;" and they admire the cleverness of the man who holds it up. Now, I like to scatter the corn on the ground as much as ever I can; I do not mean to hold it up so high that you cannot reach it. One reason is that I cannot; I have not the talent to hold it up where you cannot see it; my ability will only allow me just to throw the corn on the ground, so that the people can pick it up; and if it is thrown on the ground, then all can get it. If we preach only to the rich, they can understand, but the poor cannot; but when we preach to the poor, the rich can understand it if they like, and if they do not like it, they can go somewhere else. I believe that the real gleaner, who gets any spiritual food, will have to stoop to pick it up; and I would gladly stoop to know and understand the gospel. It is worth while going anywhere to hear the gospel; but, nowadays, people must have fine steeples to their places of worship, fine gowns for their ministers, and they must preach most eloquently. But that is not the way the Lord ordained; he intended that there should be plain, simple, faithful preaching; and it is by the foolishness of such preaching that he will save them that believe. Beloved friends, remember that gleaners who are to get anything must expect to stoop.

Note, in the next place, that what a gleaner gather, she gets by ear. Sometimes, it is true, she gets a handful; but that is the exception, not the rule. In the case of Ruth, handfuls were let fall on purpose for her; but the usual way is to glean ear by ear. The gleaner stoops, and picks up first one ear, and then another, and then another; only one ear at a time. Now, beloved, where there are handfuls to be got at once, there is the place to go and glean; but if you cannot get handfuls, go and get ear by ear. I have heard of certain people, who have been in the habit of hearing a favorite minister in London, saying, when they go to the sea-side," We cannot hear anybody after him; we shall not go to that chapel any more." So they stay at home all day on the Sunday, I suppose forgetting that passage, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." They cannot get a handful, and therefore they will not pick up an ear. So the poor creatures are starved: and they are glad enough to get back home again. They should have gone, if they could get but one ear; and he is a sorry minister who cannot gave them that; and if they got only one ear, it would be worth having. If it be only six words of God, if we think of them, they will do us good. Let us be content, then. to

glean ear by ear; let us take away a whole sheaf with us if we can; but if we cannot do that, let us get the good corn an ear at a time.

“Oh!” says a friend, “I cannot hear some ministers at all; they preach such a mangle-mangle of truth and error.” I know they do; but it will be a strange thing if you cannot get an ear or two of wheat even from them. There is a great deal of straw, you are not required to take that away; but it will be remarkable if you cannot pick up an ear or two of good grain. You say, “The error that the man preaches distresses my mind.” No doubt it does; but the best way is to leave the falsehood alone, and pick out the sound truth; and if there is no sound truth in the sermon, a good plan is to read it all backwards, and then it will be sure to be sound. I heard a man of that kind once, and when he said a thing was so-and-so, I said to myself that it was not; and when he said such-and-such a thing would happen, I said it would not; and I enjoyed the sermon then. He said that the people of God, through their sin, would perish; I had only to put a “not” into his sentence, and what a sweet and comforting message it was then! That is the way, when you hear a bad sermon, just to qualify what the preacher says. Then, after all, you can make his discourse suggest spiritual thoughts to you, and do you good. But you must be content, wherever you go to hear the Word, to pick up the corn ear by ear.

Note, next, that what the gleaner picks up, she keeps in her hand; she does not pick it up, and then drop it down, as some do in their spiritual gleaning. There is a good thought at the beginning of the sermon; but you are all agape to hear another, and you let the first go. Then, towards the end of the discourse, there is another flash perhaps; and, in trying to catch that, you have forgotten all the rest. So, when the sermon is over, it is nearly all gone; and you are about as wise as a gleaner, who should set out in the morning, and pick up one ear, then drop that, and pick up another; then drop that, and pick up another; she would find, at night, that she had got — ay, what? — that she had got nothing for all her trouble. It is just the same in hearing a sermon: some people pick up the ears, and drop them again as fast as they pick them up.

But one says, “I have kept nearly the whole of the sermon.” I am glad to hear it, my friend; but just allow me to make a remark. Many a man, when he has nearly the whole sermon, loses it on the way home. Very much depends on our conduct on our way back from the house of God. I have heard of a Christian man who was seen hurrying home, one Sunday, with all his might. A friend asked him why he was in such haste. “Oh!” said he, “two or three Sundays ago, our minister gave us a most blessed discourse, and I greatly enjoyed it; but as soon as I was outside the chapel, there were two deacons, and one pulled one way, and the other pulled the other way, till they tore the sermon all to pieces; and though it was a most blessed discourse, I did not remember a word of it when I got home; all the savior and unction had been taken out of it by those deacons; so I thought I would hurry home to-night, and pray over the sermon without speaking to them at all.” It is always the best way, beloved, to go straight home from your places of worship; if you begin your chit-chat about this thing and the other, you lose all the savior and unction of the discourse; therefore I would advise you to go home as quickly as you can after service; possibly, you might then get more good than you usually do from the sermon, and from the worship altogether.

Then, again, the gleaner takes the wheat home, and threshes it. It is a blessed thing to thresh a sermon when you have heard it. Many persons thrash the preacher; but that is not half so good as threshing the sermon. They begin finding this fault and the other with him, and they think that is doing good; but it is not. Take the sermon, beloved, when you have listened to it, lay it down on the floor of meditation, and beat it with the flail of prayer; so you will get the corn out of it. But the sermon is no good unless you thresh it. Why, that is as if a gleaner should stow away her corn in the room, and the mice should find it; in that case, it would be a nuisance to her rather than a benefit. So, some people hear a sermon, and carry it home, and then allow their sins to eat it all up; thus, it becomes an injury to them, rather than a blessing. But he who knows how to flail a sermon well, to put it into the threshing machine, and thresh it well, has learned a good art, from which he shall profit much.

I have heard of an aged Scotchman, who, one Sunday morning, returned from “kirk” rather earlier than usual, and his wife, surprised to see him home so soon, said to him, “Donald, is the sermon all done?” “No,” he answered, “it is all said, but it is not all done by a long way.” We ought to take the sermon home, to do what the preacher has said; that is what I mean by threshing it. But some of you are content if you carry the sermon home; you are willing enough, perhaps, to talk a little about it; but there is no thorough threshing of it by meditation and prayer.

And then, once more, the good woman, after threshing the corn, no doubt afterwards winnowed it. Ruth did this in the field; but you can scarcely do so with the sermons you hear; some of the winnowing must be done at home. Observe, too, that Ruth did not take the chaff home; she left that behind her in the field. It is an important thing to winnow every sermon that you hear. My dear friends, I would not wish you to be spongy hearers, who suck up everything that is poured into their ears. I would have you all to be winnowers, to separate the precious from the vile. With all ministers, there is a certain quantity of chaff mixed with the corn; but I have noticed in some hearers a sad predilection to take all the chaff, and leave the corn behind. One exclaims, when he gets out of the building, or even before, “That was a curious story that the preacher told; won’t it make a good anecdote for me at the next party I attend?” Another says, “Mr. Spurgeon used such-and-such an expression.” If you hear a man talk in that way, do you know what you should say to him? You should say, “Stop, friend; we all have our faults, and perhaps you have as many as anybody else; cannot you tell us something Mr. Spurgeon said that was good?” “Oh, I don’t recollect that; that is all gone!” Just so; people are

ready to remember what is bad, but they soon forget anything that is good. Let me advise you to winnow the sermon, to meditate upon it, to pray over it, to separate the chaff from the wheat, and to take care of that which is good. That is the true art of heavenly gleaning; may the Lord teach us it, that we may become "rich to all the intents of bliss," that we may be filled and satisfied with the favor and goodness of the Lord!

III. Now, in the last place, here is A Gracious Permission Given:

"Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not."

Ruth had no right to go among the sheaves to glean, but Boaz gave her a right to go there by saying, "Let her do it." For her to be allowed to go amongst the sheaves, in that part of the field where the wheat was not already carted, was a special favor; but to go among the sheaves, and to have handfuls of corn dropped on purpose for her, was a further proof of the kindness of Boaz.

Shall I tell you the reasons that moved the heart of Boaz to let Ruth go and glean among the sheaves? One reason was, because he loved her. He would have her go there, because he had conceived a great affection for her, which he afterwards displayed in due time. So the Lord lets his people come and glean among the sheaves, because he loves them. Didst thou have a rich gleaning amongst the sheaves, the other Sabbath? Didst thou carry home thy sack, filled like the sacks of Benjamin's brothers, when they went back from Egypt? Didst thou have an abundance of the good corn of the land? Wast thou satisfied with favor, and filled with the blessing of the Lord? That was all owing to thy Master's goodness; it was because he loved thee that he dealt so bountifully with thee. Look, I beseech thee, on all thy mercies as proofs of his love; especially, look on all thy spiritual blessings as being tokens of his grace. It will make thy corn grind all the better, and taste all the sweeter, if thou thinkest that it is a proof of love that thy sweet seasons, thy high enjoyments, thy blessed ravishments of spirit, are so many proofs of thy Lord's affection to thee. Boaz allowed Ruth to go and glean among the sheaves because of his love to her; so, beloved, it is God's free grace that lets us go among his sheaves, and that lets us lay hold of doctrinal blessings, promise blessings, or experience blessings. We have no right to be there of ourselves; it is all the Lord's free and sovereign grace that lets us go there.

There was another reason why Boaz let Ruth glean amongst the sheaves,—that was, because he was related to her. And that is why the Lord sometimes gives us such sweet mercies, and takes us into his banqueting house, because he is related to us. He is our Brother, our Kinsman, nearly allied to us by ties of blood; ay, more than that, he is the Husband of his Church, and he may well let his wife go and glean among the sheaves, for all she gets is not lost to him; it is only putting it out of one hand into the other, since her interests and his are all one. So he may well say, "Beloved, take all thou pleasest; I am none the poorer, for thou art mine. Thou art my partner, thou art my chosen one, thou art my bride; so, take it, take it all, for it is still in the family, and there is none the less, when thou hast taken all that thou canst."

What more shall I say to you, my beloved brethren and sisters? Go a-gleaning, spiritually, as much as ever you can. Never lose an opportunity of getting a blessing. Glean at the mercy-seat; glean in the house of God; glean in private meditation; glean in reading pious books; glean in associating with gracious men and women; glean everywhere — wherever you go; and if you can pick up only an ear a day, you who are so much engaged in business, and so much penned up by cares, if you can only spare five minutes, go a-gleaning a little; and if you cannot carry away a sheaf, get an ear; or if you cannot get an ear, make sure of at least one grain. Take care to glean a little; if you cannot find much, get as much as ever you can.

Just one other remark, and then I will close. O child of God, never be afraid to glean! All there is in all thy Lord's fields is thine. Never think that your Master will be angry with you because you carry away so much of the good corn of the kingdom; the only thing he is likely to be offended with you for is, because you do not take enough. "There it is," he says; "take it, take it, and eat it; eat abundantly; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" If thou findest a sweet promise, suck all the honey out of the comb. And if thou gettest hold of some blessed sheaf, do not be afraid to carry it away rejoicing. Thou hast a right to it; let not Satan cheat thee out of it. Sharpen up the sickle of thy faith, and go harvesting; for thou mayest, if thou wilt; and if thou canst, thou mayest take a whole sheaf, and carry it away for spiritual food. But if thou canst not take a whole sheaf, the Lord teach thee how to glean among the sheaves, even as Ruth did in the fields of Boaz; and may he, in the greatness of his grace, let fall a few handfuls on purpose for thee, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

Cleaving with a Whole Heart

Ruth 1:14

by C. H. Spurgeon

"Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her."

[Ruth 1:14](#)

Both of them had an affection for Naomi, and therefore set out with her upon her return to the land of Judah. But the hour of test came; Naomi most unselfishly set before each of them the trials which awaited them, and bade them if they cared for ease and comfort to return to their Moabitish friends. At first both of them declared that they would cast in their lot with the Lord's people; but upon still further consideration Orpah with much grief and a respectful kiss left her mother in law, and her people, and her God, and went back to her idolatrous friends, while Ruth with all her heart gave herself up to the God of her mother in law. It is one thing to love the ways of the Lord when all is fair, and quite another to cleave to them under all discouragements and difficulties. The kiss of outward profession is very cheap and easy, but the practical cleaving to the Lord, which must show itself in holy decision for truth and holiness, is not so small a matter. How stands the case with us, is our heart fixed upon Jesus, is the sacrifice bound with cords to the horns of the altar? Have we counted the cost, and are we solemnly ready to suffer all worldly loss for the Master's sake? The after gain will be an abundant recompense, for Egypt's treasures are not to be compared with the glory to be revealed. Orpah is heard of no more; in glorious ease and idolatrous pleasure her life melts into the gloom of death; but Ruth lives in history and in heaven, for grace has placed her in the noble line whence sprung the King of kings. Blessed among women shall those be who for Christ's sake can renounce all; but forgotten and worse than forgotten shall those be who in the hour of temptation do violence to conscience and turn back unto the world. O that this morning we may not be content with the form of devotion, which may be no better than Orpah's kiss, but may the Holy Spirit work in us a cleaving of our whole heart to our Lord Jesus.

Gleaning God's Riches

Ruth 2:2

by C. H. Spurgeon

"Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn."

Ruth 2:2

Downcast and troubled Christian, come and glean to-day in the broad field of promise. Here are abundance of precious promises, which exactly meet thy wants. Take this one: "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Doth not that suit thy case? A reed, helpless, insignificant, and weak, a bruised reed, out of which no music can come; weaker than weakness itself; a reed, and that reed bruised, yet, he will not break thee; but on the contrary, will restore and strengthen thee. Thou art like the smoking flax: no light, no warmth, can come from thee; but he will not quench thee; he will blow with his sweet breath of mercy till he fans thee to a flame. Wouldst thou glean another ear? "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What soft words! Thy heart is tender, and the Master knows it, and therefore he speaketh so gently to thee. Wilt thou not obey him, and come to him even now? Take another ear of corn: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." How canst thou fear with such a wonderful assurance as this? Thou mayest gather ten thousand such golden ears as these! "I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thy transgressions." Or this, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Or this, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Our Master's field is very rich; behold the handfuls. See, there they lie before thee, poor timid believer! Gather them up, make them thine own, for Jesus bids thee take them. Be not afraid, only believe! Grasp these sweet promises, thresh them out by meditation and feed on them with joy.

Not By Accident

Ruth 2:3

by C. H. Spurgeon

*"She gleaned in the field after the reapers: and **her hap was** to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech." [Ruth 2:3](#)*

Her hap was. Yes, it seemed nothing but an accident, but how divinely was it overruled! Ruth had gone forth with her mother's blessing, under the care of her mother's God, to humble but honourable toil, and the providence of God was guiding her every step. Little did she know that amid the sheaves she would find a husband, that he should make her the joint owner of all those broad acres, and that she a poor foreigner should become one of the progenitors of the great Messiah. God is very good to those who trust in him, and often surprises them with unlooked for blessings. Little do we know what may **happen** to us to-morrow, but this sweet fact may cheer us, that no good thing shall be withheld. Chance is banished from the faith of Christians, for they see the hand of God in everything. The trivial events of to-day or to-morrow may involve consequences of the highest importance. O Lord, deal as graciously with thy servants as thou didst with Ruth.

How blessed would it be, if, in wandering in the field of meditation tonight, our **hap** should be to light upon the place where our next Kinsman will reveal himself to us! O Spirit of God, guide us to him. We would sooner glean in his field than bear away the whole harvest from any other. O for the footsteps of his flock, which may conduct us to the green pastures where he dwells! This is a weary world when Jesus is away—we could better do without sun and moon than without him—but how divinely fair all things become in the glory of his presence! Our souls know the virtue which dwells in Jesus, and can never be content without him. We will wait in prayer this night until our **hap** shall be to light on a part of the field belonging to Jesus wherein he will manifest himself to us.

SATISFIED

Ruth 2:14

by C. H. Spurgeon

*"And she did eat, and was **sufficed**, and left."*

[Ruth 2:14](#)

Whenever we are privileged to eat of the bread which Jesus gives, we are, like Ruth, **satisfied** with the full and sweet repast. When Jesus is the host no guest goes empty from the table. Our head is satisfied with the precious truth which Christ reveals; our heart is content with Jesus, as the altogether lovely object of affection; our hope is **satisfied**, for Whom have we in heaven but Jesus? and our desire is satiated, for what can we wish for more than "to know Christ and to be found in Him?" Jesus fills our conscience till it is at perfect peace; our judgment with persuasion of the certainty of his teachings; our memory with recollections of what he has done, and our imagination with the prospects of what He is yet to do. As Ruth was "**sufficed**, and left," so is it with us. We have had deep draughts; we have thought that we could take in all of Christ; but when we have done our best we have had to leave a vast remainder. We have sat at the table of the Lord's love, and said, "Nothing but the infinite can ever satisfy me; I am such a great sinner that I must have infinite merit to wash my sin away;" but we have had our sin removed, and found that there was merit to spare; we have had our hunger relieved at the feast of sacred love, and found that there was a redundancy of spiritual meat remaining. There are certain sweet things in the Word of God which we have not enjoyed yet, and which we are obliged to leave for awhile; for we are like the disciples to whom Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Yes, there are graces to which we have not attained; places of fellowship nearer to Christ which we have not reached; and heights of communion which our feet have not climbed. At every banquet of love there are many baskets of fragments left. Let us magnify the liberality of our glorious Boaz.

GLEANING IN GOD'S FIELD

Ruth 2:17

by C. H. Spurgeon

*"So she **gleaned** in the field until even."*

[Ruth 2:17](#)

Let me learn from Ruth, the gleaner. As she went out to gather the ears of corn, so must I go forth into the fields of prayer, meditation, the ordinances, and hearing the word to gather spiritual food. The **gleaner** gathers her portion ear by ear; her gains are little by little: so must I be content to search for single truths, if there be no greater plenty of them. Every ear helps to make a bundle, and every gospel lesson assists in making us wise unto salvation. The **gleaner** keeps her eyes open: if she stumbled among the stubble in a dream, she would have no load to carry home rejoicingly at eventide. I must be watchful in religious exercises lest they become unprofitable to me; I fear I have lost much already - O that I may rightly estimate my opportunities, and **glean** with greater diligence. The **gleaner** stoops for all she finds, and so must I. High spirits criticize and object, but lowly minds **glean** and receive benefit. A humble heart is a great help towards profitably hearing the gospel. The engrafted soul-saving word is not received except with meekness. A stiff back makes a bad **gleaner**; down, master pride, thou art a vile robber, not to be endured for a moment. What the **gleaner** gathers she holds: if she dropped one ear to find another, the result of her day's work would be but scant; she is as careful to retain as to obtain, and so at last her gains are great. How often do I forget all that I hear; the second truth pushes the first out of my head, and so my reading and hearing end in much ado about nothing! Do I feel duly the importance of storing up the truth? A hungry belly makes the **gleaner** wise; if there be no corn in her hand, there will be no bread on her table; she labours under the sense of necessity, and hence her tread is nimble and her grasp is firm; I have even a greater necessity, Lord, help me to feel it, that it may urge me onward to **glean** in fields which yield so plenteous a reward to diligence.