

comforts, they would not comfort you. How could the mother rest upon a bed of ivory, knowing that her boy was plaintively calling to her out of a dungeon; would she take time to clothe herself in gorgeous array and descend slowly to him in a gilded chariot, but would she not rather rush to him in her night drapery, aye, even in nakedness to her boy, despising the shame and hiding his in her great love.—And though he were a criminal, rejected by men, yet would not the mother fail to recognize in the beloved countenance of the outcast, the features of the innocent babe that once nestled in her bosom; and, her love would yearn towards him, and the deep fountain of her love would be broken up. I can't conceive how it would be possible for one of Christ's loved ones to be lost; for his work to stop short of their complete salvation. "For he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;" and could He be satisfied with the loss of the least member of his body? And if such a one was lost, it could not be because He was not able to prevent it, for all power is given him over all flesh, to give eternal life to all that were given him.—Your boy is lying in some far off grave to-day, but it is because you lacked power to prevent it—you had the will and love, but your arm was short; but it is not so with Christ, he has both, power and disposition.

According to the laws of Israel, if a brother died without issue, his widow might go unto his next of kin, and call upon him to raise up a seed to inherit the name and estate of the dead brother, that his name be not cut off from amongst his brethren. If the living brother had the spirit of the dead brother and loved him, it was a labor of love, if not, it was a sacrifice too great to be made, in fact, it could not be righteously done without it was prompted by love, thought it might be done in the letter, which was a deceitful work, as was Onan's, who said the seed should not be his, and the Lord slew him for it. It would be to the praise of the dead, and he wanted the praise himself. It is hard to the flesh to render all the praise to another, to expend our own money to build up another's name and house. We are all willing to make the sacrifice that honors us, even if we get it by preaching fifty times from the same text, or

preaching the same sermon from fifty texts. The old man is quite a rascal. But to build up the house of another at our own expense, the expense of our own honor and estate, to our own humiliation, is not fleshly enough to please the flesh, in fact it is piritual and it is building up a spiritual house. That is why there is so much false doctrine, deceitful work and practice in the world. "The seed shall not be mine." But if the living brother possessed, as before said, the spirit of the dead brother, the work would not be a deceitful work, but a work of faith and prayer—a labor of love; nor would he want the seed to be his to build up his flesh, but to be for the humbling of the flesh. Therefore the christian is solicitous in the discharge of his duty, that his works go to the honor of Christ, to the building up of the spiritual man and to the humbling of the fleshly man. The trouble is, whether we are prompted by the right spirit, especially when we are fresh from the threshingfloor, and have seen the riches of grace separated from the husks and heaped up. When we can see a little of the riches of grace after having lived upon "doves' dung," to realize that the oil in the cruse is unwaisting and the meal unfailing, what care we if our own barrel is empty, there is plenty in the great store house of Jesus, *always* a plenty; why need we fear then, when our own resources are exhausted.—But the prophet only came to the widow when she got the last meal out of her barrel and was picking up sticks to cook it, that her and her son might eat it and die—*then* the prophet came. "When the bottle was empty, the well was nigh." Then why don't we use all our own meal up at once and be done with it, and live thenceforth upon Christ? And what is it that makes us dread so much to get to the bottom of the barrel; and who else ever gets to the bottom of the barrel but the christian; the barrels of the others get fuller and fuller—they get better and better. The true doctrine and order goes to the honor of Christ.—And this is the sign: You shall find him in a manger. Do you want a sign that you are a christian? Do you want a sign to find the church? It is in lowliness. Have you got the sign? Can you give the password? and does it build your flesh up? Then say shibboleth and enter in,

you'll not enter into your own honor and praise; you enter this lodge without money and without price; you learn the secret before you enter, for those within cannot teach it to you. But my experience, says one, is not big enough. No, and it never will be big enough to honor you, if it is a christian experience; you've got the sign and the word, go along, therefore bring forth to the honor of Christ and the building up of the church. If it was a big one, as you want it, it would be too congenial to your flesh, it would bring forth no humility, there would be no travail of soul. And, we might get a hundred in the church and be very proud of it and them; there might not be a negro amongst them, and yet the church might not be built up by it at all. But perhaps I have said enough on this part of the subject, unless it were better said.

And Boaz went about his work. "Then went Boaz up to the gate and sat him down there; and behold the kinsman of whom he spake came by; unto whom he said, ho, such a one! turn aside sit down here. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, sit ye down here; and they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's, and I thought to advertise thee saying: Buy it before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me that I may know; for there is none to redeem it besides thee, and I am after thee. And he said I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, what day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself lest I mar mine own inheritance; redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things, a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor, and this was testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the el-

ders and to the people, ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the hand of Naomi; and moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day." They all witnessed his righteous redemption of Ruth from the curse of her Moabitish origin. He now therefore had a legal right to Ruth—he represented her in the gate of the city before the elders of his people. He possessed her now in word and in spirit. The espousals were public and sanctioned by heaven. "And all the people that were in the gate and the elders said, we are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah and be famous in Bethlehem; and let thine house be like the house of Pharez whom Tamar bare unto Judah of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

And so Boaz and Ruth were married, and he went in unto her, and she bare a son—the Lord gave her conception. And the women said unto Naomi, blessed be the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel; and he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.—And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse unto it. And the women gave it a name, saying this is a son born unto Naomi.

I am now going to quit for the present, feeling the need of more light before advancing further; not as some, after preaching two or three hours, conclude by saying, that they could "go on until night, but will forbear"—having told all they knew may-be more than once. I ask the prayers of the christians, that the Lord would open the scriptures to my understanding; and, may none of us ever undertake to unfold them when the cloud is upon us.

I think it unnecessary to sign my name, as I have no reason to be proud of what I have written. It is my purpose to finish it some day, should the Lord afford me the liberty. O.