

not chosen out of an earthly, but out of the heavenly University, and hath taken these three heavenly degrees—Union with Christ—The Anointing of the Spirit, and Experience of the Temptations of Satan; far better than all the University learning and degrees that can be had.' May

Bunyan's desire be realized, and his verses prove to all our readers

'As delighting
To thee in reading, as to me in writing.'

HACKNEY, August 22, 1819.

GEO. OFFOR.

SCRIPTURAL POEMS.

TO THE READER.

WROTE'N thou art that shall peruse this book,
This may inform thee, when I undertook
To write these lines, it was not my design
To publish this imperfect work of mine:
Composed only for diversion's sake.
But being inclin'd to think thou may'st partake
Some benefit thereby, I have thought fit,
Imperfect as it is, to publish it.
The subjects are a part of the contents,
Both of the Old and the New Testaments;
The word are for the most part all the same,
For I affected plainness more than fame.
Nor could'st thou hope to have it better done:
For I'm no poet, nor a poet's son,
But a mechanic, guided by no rule,
But what I gained in a grammar school
In my minority: I can't commend it,
Such as it is into the world I send it,
And should be glad to see some hand to mend it.

Would but these men whose genius leads them to t,
And who have time and parts wherewith to do't,
Employ their pens in such a task as this,
'Twould be a most delightsome exercise
Of profit to themselves and others too:
If what the learned Herbert says, holds true,
A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice;*
Thus I conclude, and wish it as delighting
To thee in reading as to me in writing.

JOHN BUNYAN.

* George Herbert, in that admirable poem call'd 'The Temple,' introduces his reader to the church porch thus:—

'Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes enhance
Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure;
Hearken unto a verser, who may chance
Rhyme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure.
A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.'

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

A VERY RUDE WOODCUT:—RUTH GLEANING.—RUTH CREEPING TO BOAZ, WHO IS ASLEEP.

CHAP. I.

In ancient times, e'er Israel knew the way
Of kingly power, when judges bore the sway:
A certain man of Bethlehem Juda fled,
By reason of a famine that o'erspread
The land, into the land of Moab, where
He and his wife, and sons, sojourners were.
His name Elimelech, his oldest son
Was called Mahlon, t'other Chilion,
His wife was Naomi, Ephrathites they were:
They went to Moab and continued there:
Where of her husband Naomi was bereft,
And only she and her two sons were left:
Who took them wives of Moab in their youth.
The name of one was Orpah, t'other Ruth:
And there they died ere twice five years were gone;
And Naomi was wholly left alone.
Then she arose, and her step-daughters with her,
To leave the land of Moab altogether:
For she had heard the Lord had visited
Her native country, with increase of bread,
Wherefore the land of Moab she forsook,
And to her native place her course she took,

Her daughters with her: whom she did desire,
That to their mother's house they would retire.
The Lord, said she, be kind to you again,
As you to me, and to the dead have been.
God grant you each may be with husbands blest,
And in the enjoyment of them both find rest.
Then she embraced them, and there withal,
Down from their cheeks, the tears began to fall.
They wept aloud, and said, Most surely we
Unto thy people will return with thee.
But Naomi replied, Wherefore will ye,
My daughters, thus resolve to go with me?
Are there yet any more sons in my womb,
That may your husbands be in time to come?
Return again, my daughters, go your way,
For I'm too old to marry: should I say
I've hope? Should I this night conceive a son?
Would either of you stay till he is grown?
Would you so long without an husband live?
Nay, nay, my daughters, for it doth me grieve
Exceedingly, even for your sakes, that I
Do under this so great affliction lie.

† An husband, c. i. 12.

And here they wept again. And Orpah kiss'd
Her mother, but Ruth would be not dismiss'd
But clave unto her: unto whom she spake
And said, Behold, thy sister is gone back,
With her own gods, and people to abide,
Go thou along with her. But Ruth replied,
Intreat me not to leave thee, or return:
For where thou goest, I'll go, where thou sojourn,
I'll sojourn also. And what people's thine,
And who thy God, the same shall both be mine.
Where thou shalt die, there will I die likewise,
And I'll be buried where thy body lies.
The Lord do so to me, and more, if I
Do leave thee, or forsake thee till I die.
And when she saw the purpose of her heart,
She left off to desire her to depart.
So they two travelled along together
To Bethlehem, and when they were come thither,
Behold! the people were surprised, and cried,
What, is this Naomi? But she replied,
Oh! call me Mara, and not Naomi;
For I have been afflicted bitterly.
I went out from you full, but now I come,
As it hath pleased God, quite empty home:
Why then call ye me Naomi? Since I
Have been afflicted so exceedingly.
So Naomi return'd, and Ruth together,
Who had come from the land of Moab with her:
And unto Bethlem Judah did they come,
Just as the Barley Harvest was begun.

CHAP. II.

There was a man of kin to Naomi,
One that was of her husband's family,
His name was Boaz, and his wealth was great.
And Ruth, the Moabitess, did intreat
Her Mother's leave, that she might go, and gather
Some ears of corn, where she should most find favour:
Go, daughter, go, said she. She went and came
Near to the reapers, to glean after them:
And lo, it was her hap to light among
The reapers, which to Boaz did belong.
Behold, now Boaz came from Bethlehem
Unto his reapers, and saluted them,
And they bless'd him again: and he enquired
Of him that was set over them he hired,
From whence the damsel was, and was inform'd
She was the Moabitess that return'd
With Naomi: and she did ask, said he,
That here amongst the reapers she might be,
And that she might have liberty to glean
Among the sheaves. And she all day hath been,
Ev'n from the morning until now, with us,
That she hath stay'd a little in the house.
Then Boaz said to Ruth, observe, my daughter,
That thou go not from hence, or follow after
The reapers of another field, but where
My maidens are, see that thou tarry there:
Observe what field they reap, and go thou there,
Have I not charged the young men to forbear
To touch thee? And when thou dost thirst, approach
And drink of what the youths have set *abroach.

Then she fell on her face, and to the ground
She bow'd herself, and said, Why have I found
Such favour in thine eyes; that thou, to me
Who am a stranger, should so courteous be?
And Boaz said, it hath been fully shewn
To me, what to thy mother-in-law thou'st done,
Since of thine husband thou hast been bereft:
How thou thy father and thy mother left,
And thine own native land; to come unto
A land which thou before didst never know:
The Lord, the God of Israel, the defence
Whom now thou'st chosen, be thy recompence.
Then said she, let me in thy sight, my lord,
Find favour in that thou dost thus afford
Me comfort, and since thou so kind to me
Dost speak, though I thereof unworthy be.
And Boaz said, at meal time come thou near,
Eat of the bread, and dip i' th' vinegar.
And by the reapers she sat down to meat,
He gave her parched corn, and she did eat,
And was suffic'd; and left, and rose to glean:
And Boaz gave command to the young men,
Let her come in among the sheaves, said he,
To glean, and let her not reproached be.
Let fall some handfuls also purposely,
And let her take them without injury.
So she till even glean'd, and then beat out
Her barley, being an *ephah or thereabout.
She took it up, and to the city went,
And to her mother-in-law did it present:
And what she had reserv'd to her she gave,
When she had took what she design'd to have.
Then unto her, her mother-in-law did say,
In what field hast thou been to glean to-day?
And where hast thou been working? Bless be he,
That thus hath taken cognizance of thee.
She told with whom, and furthermore did say,
The man's name's Boaz, where I wrought to-day.
And Naomi replied, may he be blest,
Even of the Lord, whose kindness manifest
Unto the living and the dead hath been:
The man's our kinsman, yea, the next of kin.
And Ruth, the Moabitess, said, he gave
Me likewise a commandment not to leave,
Or to depart from following his young men,
Until they had brought all his harvest in.
And Naomi said unto Ruth, my daughter,
'Tis good that thou observe to follow after
His maidens, that they meet thee not elsewhere.
So she to Boaz's maidens still kept near,
Till barley and wheat harvest both, she saw
Were done, and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

CHAP. III.

Then Naomi said, Shall I not, my daughter,
Seek rest for thee, that thou do well hereafter?
And is not Boaz, with whose maids thou wast,
One of the nearest kinsmen that thou hast?
Behold, this night he in his threshing floor
Is winnowing Barley, wash thyself therefore,
Anoint thee, put thy clothes on, and get down
Unto the floor; but make not thyself known,

* 'Set abroach,' in a posture to run out, or yield the liquor contained.
—Ed.

* 'An ephah,' a measure containing three pecks and three pints.—
Calvert.

Till he hath eat and drank, and shall prepare
 To lie him down; then take good notice where
 He goes about to take his night's repose,
 And go thou in there, and lift up the clothes
 From off his feet, and likewise lay thee down,
 And what thou hast to do he will make known.
 And she made answer, Whatsoever thou
 Hast me commanded, will I gladly do.
 And down unto the floor she hasted, and
 Forthwith fulfilled her mother-in-law's command.
 So now when Boaz had his heart refresh'd,
 With meat and drink, he laid him down to rest,
 Near to the heap of corn; she softly came,
 Uncover'd's feet, and lay down by the same.
 And, lo! at midnight, as he turn'd him round,
 He was afraid, for at his feet he found
 A woman lay. Who art thou? then said he.
 I am thine handmaid Ruth, replied she,
 Over thine handmaid therefore spread thy skirt,
 I pray, because thou a near kinsman art.
 Blessed be thou, said he, because thou hast
 Made manifest more kindness at the last,
 Than at the first, in that thou did'st, my daughter,
 No young men, whether poor or rich, go after.
 And now, my daughter, be not thou afraid,
 I will do to thee all that thou hast said:
 For all the city of my people knows,
 Thou art a woman truly virtuous;
 And now though I am kin undoubtedly,
 Yet there is one that's nearer kin than I.
 Tarry this night, and when 'tis morning light,
 If he will like a kinsman, do thee right,
 We'll let him, but if not, I myself will,
 As the Lord lives; till morning lie thou still.
 And till the morning at his feet she lay,
 And then arose about the break of day;
 And he gave her a charge, not to declare
 That there had any womankind been there.
 He also said, bring here thy veil, and hold
 To me; she did, and thercinto he told
 Six measures full of barley, and did lay
 It on her, and she hasted thence away.
 And when unto her mother-in-law she came,
 Art thou, said she, my daughter come again?
 Then what the man had done she told, and said,
 He these six measures full of barley laid
 Upon me, for said he, This I bestow,
 Lest to thy mother thou should'st empty go.
 Then, said she, sit still daughter, till thou see
 What the event of this intrigue will be;
 For till the man this day hath made an end,
 No satisfaction will on him attend.

CHAP. IV.

And Boaz went up to the city gate,
 And after a short space, while there he sat,
 The kinsman of whom he had spoke, came by,
 To whom he said, Ho,* such a one, draw nigh,
 And sit down here. He came and sat him down.
 Then he took ten men, elders of the town,

And caused them to sit down. Then to the man
 That was of kin, thus he his speech began,
 Naomi, said he, who not long since sojourn'd
 Among the Moabites, is now return'd;
 And doth intend to sell a piece of ground,
 The which Elimelech our brother own'd.
 And now to give thee notice, I thought fit,
 That if thou pleasest, thou may'st purchase it,
 In presence of these men assembled here.
 Then if thou wilt redeem it, now declare
 Thy mind, but if thou wilt not, then let me,
 For thou art next of kin, and I next thee.
 Then said the kinsman, I will it redeem.
 Boaz reply'd, if good to thee it seem,
 To buy it of the hand of Naomi,
 Thou also art obliged the same to buy
 Of Ruth the Moabites, wife o' th' dead;
 On his inheritance to raise up seed.
 The kinsman said, I cannot do this thing
 Myself, lest I an inconvenience bring
 Upon mine own inheritance, what's mine
 By right, therefore I now to thee resign.
 Now this in Israel did a custom stand,
 Concerning changing and redeeming land;
 To put all controversy to an end,
 A man pluck'd off his shoe, and gave his friend;
 And this in Israel was an evidence,
 When e'er they changed an inheritance.
 Then said the kinsman unto Boaz, do
 Thou take my right. And off he pluck'd his shoe.
 Then Boaz to the elders thus did say
 And to the people, all of you this day
 Appear for me as witnesses, that I
 Have bought all of the hand of Naomi,
 That was Elimelech's or did belong
 Either to Mahlon or to Chilion:
 And Ruth the Moabites, who some time
 Was Mahlon's wife, I've purchas'd to be mine,
 Still to preserve alive the dead man's name
 On his inheritance, lest that the same
 Should in the gate where he inhabited,
 Or 'mongst his brethren be extinguish'd:
 Behold, this day, my witnesses you are.
 Then all the people that were present there,
 And elders said, We are thy witnesses:
 May God this woman thou hast taken bless,
 That she, like Rachel, and like Leah be,
 Which two did build up Israel's family:
 And thou in Ephrath exalt thy name,
 And through the town of Beth'hem spread thy fame;
 And may the seed which God shall give to thee
 Of this young woman, full as prosperous be,
 As was the house of Pharez heretofore,
 (Pharez, whom Tamar unto Judah bore.)
 So he took Ruth, and as his wife he knew her,
 And God was pleased, when he went in to her
 To grant the blessing of conception,
 And she accordingly bare him a son.
 Then said the woman, Blessed be the Lord!
 Bless thou him Naomi, who doth afford
 To thee this day a kinsman, which shall be
 Famous in Israel; and shall be to thee
 As the restorer of thy life again,
 And in thy drooping age shall thee sustain:

* Similar to Christian's exclamation, when calling to Faithful to stop and bear him company. See Pilgrim's Progress, Part 1st.

For that thy daughter-in-law, who loves thee well
And in thy sight doth seven sons excel,
Hath born this child. Then Naomi took the boy
To nurse; and did him in her bosom lay.

Her neighbours too, gave him a name, for why,
This son, say they, is born to Naomi:
They called him Obed, from whose loins did spring
Jesse, the sire of David, Israel's king.

THE HISTORY OF SAMSON.

JUDGES, CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Israel's sins th' Almighty did provoke,
To make them subject to Philistine yoke
For forty years: in Zorah dwelt a man,
His name Manoah, of the tribe of Dan;
His wife was barren, unto whom appeared
The angel of the Lord, and thus declared:
Though thou, said he, art barren, time shall come
Thou shalt enjoy the blessing of thy womb;
Now therefore I entreat thee to refrain
From wine, strong drink, and things that are unclean,
For lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son,
Upon whose head there shall no razor come:
For he to God a Nazarite shall be,
And shall begin to set his people free
From the Philistine yoke. The woman came
And told her husband, she had seen a man
Of God: his dreadful look made me, said she,
Think him an angel of the Lord to be:
But I inquired not from whence he came,
Neither did he make known to me his name:
But thus he said, Thou shalt conceive a son;
Wherefore strong drink and wine, see that thou shun,
And have a care that thou be not defil'd
With things that are unclean; for why, the child
Shall from his separation from the womb,
Become a Nazarite, ev'n to his tomb.
Manoah then did supplicate the Lord,
And said, O Lord, be pleased to afford
This favour unto me, to send again
The man of God, more fully to explain
Thy will to us, that we may rightly know,
When this child shall be born, what we must do.
And to Manoah's prayer God gave ear,
And to his wife the angel did appear
Again, as she did in the field retire,
At such time as her husband was not nigh her.
And she made haste, and ran, and strait declared
Unto her husband, that the man appeared
Again, whom she had seen the other day.
Manoah then arose, and went his way,
And when he came, he said, Art thou the man
That spakest to my wife? He said, I am.
Manoah said, Now let thy words be true;
How shall we use the child, What must we do?
Then said the angel of the Lord, let her
Of all that I have charged her beware:
She may not taste of what comes of the vine,
Nor may she drink strong drink, or any wine,
Nor may she eat of things that are unclean,
From all that I have said let her refrain.
Manoah said unto the angel, stay

With us, till we have dress'd a kid, I pray.
But he reply'd, though thou shalt me detain,
I'll eat no bread, but if thou dost design
A sacrifice unto the Lord, then offer:
For ne'er till now, Manoah did discover
It was a man of God he spake unto.
Then said he to the angel, Let me know
Thy name, that when these things shall be perform'd,
The honour due to thee may be return'd.
Whereto the man of God made this reply,
Why askest thou, since 'tis a mystery?
So he a kid, and a meat-offering took,
And offer'd to the Lord upon a rock.
And there the man of God did wondrously,
The whilst Manoah and his wife stood by:
For as the altar did send up the flame,
The man of God ascended in the same.
Manoah and his wife stood looking on,
And on their faces to the ground fell down.
But then the angel did appear no more.
Manoah then knew who he was: therefore
He said unto his wife, most surely we
Shall die, for we the face of God did see.
But she repli'd, If God would such a thing,
He would not now accept our offering,
Or would he have to us these things made known;
Or told us, as at this time he hath done.
And now, according to the angel's word,
The woman bare a son, to whom the Lord
Was pleas'd, his blessing graciously to give:
She call'd him Samson, and the child did thrive.
And lo! the spirit of the Lord began,
At times to move him in the camp of Dan.

CHAP. XIV.

Now down to Timnath Samson's steps incline,
Where seeing the daughter of a Philistine,
He came up and did of his parents crave,
That he in marriage might the woman have.
Then thus his father and his mother said,
'Mongst all thy kin can'st thou find ne'er a maid;
Nor yet among my people, fit to make
A wife, but thou wilt this Philistine take,
Of race uncircumcised? He replied,
Get her for me, for I'm well satisfied.
But neither of his parents then did know,
It was the Lord that moved him thereto,
To seek a way to accomplish his designs,
Upon the then o'er-ruling Philistines.
Then Samson and his parents both went down
To Timnath, and as they came near the town,
Among the vineyards a young lion roar'd:
Then on him came the spirit of the Lord,