

## 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 eldest 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,  
 Wherfore 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<sup>3</sup> live?  
 Nay, nay, my daughters, for it doth me grieve  
 Exceedingly, even for your sakes, that I  
 Do under this so great affliction lie.  
 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

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<sup>3</sup> 'An husband,' c. i. 12.

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.<sup>4</sup>  
 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<sup>5</sup> 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? Blest 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?

<sup>4</sup> 'Set abroach,' in a posture to run out, or yield the liquor contained.--Ed.

<sup>5</sup> 'An ephah,' a measure containing three pecks and three pints.--*Calmet*.

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,  
 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 and 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 thereinto 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 sate,  
 The kinsman of whom he had spoke, came by,  
 To whom he said, Ho,<sup>6</sup> 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 Moabitess, 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;

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<sup>6</sup> Similar to Christian's exclamation, when calling to Faithful to stop and bear him company. See Pilgrim's Progress, Part 1st.

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 land of Naomi,  
That was Elimelech's or did belong  
Either to Mahlon or to Chilion:  
And Ruth the Moabitess, 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 extinguished:  
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 Ephratah exalt thy name,  
And through the town of Bethl'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:  
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