

MEALTIME IN THE CORN FIELDS

“And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come you here and eat of the bread and dip your morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn and she did eat and was sufficed and left.”

Ruth 2:14

IF we lived in the country it would not be necessary for me to remind you that the time of harvest has again happily come upon us. I saw, one day last week, a fine sample of the new wheat, part of a considerable quantity which had just been sold. And in many places I have observed the fields yielding their sheaves to the reapers' sickle. Let us loudly lift our praises to God for the abundance which loads the land. An unusually heavy crop has been given in many quarters and scarcely anywhere is there any deficiency.

While there is so much of distress abroad—while the great factories of our country are standing still—we should be grateful that God is pleased to alleviate the sufferings of the poor by an unusually bountiful harvest. And we must not forget to pray that during the next few weeks the Lord would be pleased to give suitable weather so that the corn may be safely gathered into the garner. That there may be abundance of bread and no complaining in our streets. I always feel it necessary, just at this season, to give these hints, because God's natural remembrances cannot reach us—we hear not the lark teaching us how to praise, nor do the green fields of grass, and the yellow ears of corn preach to us of the Lord's bounty.

Little is there to be learned from these long corridors of dreary cells which we call streets and houses. I see dull brown or dirty-white bricks everywhere—enough to make one earthly—however much we may pant for heavenly things. We see neither the green blade nor the full corn in the ear, and we are so apt to forget that we all depend upon the labor of the field. Let us unite with the peasant and his master in blessing and praising the God of Providence, who first covered the fields with grass for the cattle and now with herbs for the food of man.

This morning we are going to the corn fields, as we did last year, not however, so much to glean, as to rest with the reapers and the gleaners, when under some wide-spreading oak they sit down to take refreshment. We hope there will be found some timid gleaner here who will accept our invitation to come and eat with us, and who will find confidence enough to dip their morsel in the vinegar. May they have courage to feast to the full on their own account, and then to carry home a portion to their needy friends at home.

1. Our first point this morning is this—THAT GOD'S REAPERS HAVE THEIR MEALTIMES. Those who work for God will find Him a good Master. He cares for oxen, and has commanded His Israel, “You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the corn.” Much more does He care for His servants who serve Him. “He has given meat unto them that fear Him: He will ever be mindful of His Covenant.” The reapers in Jesus' fields shall not only receive a blessed reward at the last, but they shall have plenteous comforts by the way.

He is pleased to pay His servants twice—first in the labor itself—and a second time in the labor's sweet results. He gives them such joy and consolation in the service of their Master that it is a sweet employ, and they cry, “We delight to do Your will, O Lord.” As Heaven is made up of serving

God day and night, so to true workers, their constantly serving God on earth brings with it a rich foretaste of Heaven.

God has ordained certain mealtimes for His reapers. And He has appointed that one of these shall be when they come together to listen to the Word preached. If God is with our ministers, they act as the disciples did of old. They received the barley loaves and fishes from Christ, and handed them to the people as He multiplied them. We, of ourselves, cannot feed one soul, much less thousands. But when the Lord is with us, we can keep as good a table as Solomon himself, with all his fine flour, fat, roebucks, and small deer.

When the Lord blesses the provisions of His House, no matter how many thousands there may be, all His poor shall be filled with bread. I hope, Beloved, you know what it is to sit under the shadow of the Word with great delight and find the fruit sweet unto your taste. Where the Doctrines of Grace are boldly and plainly delivered to you in connection with the other Truths of Revelation. Where Jesus Christ upon His Cross is always lifted up. Where the work of the Spirit is not forgotten. Where the glorious purpose of the Father is never despised—there is sure to be food for the children of God.

We have learned not to feed upon oratorical flourishes or philosophical fineries. We leave these fine things, these twelfth-cake ornaments, to be eaten by those little children who can find delight in such unhealthy dainties—we prefer to hear the Truth of God, even when roughly spoken—to the fine garnishing of eloquence without the Truth. We care little about how the table is served, or of what ware the dishes are made—so long as the Covenant bread and water, and the promised oil and wine are given to us. Certain grumblers among the Lord's reapers do not feed under the preached Word because they do not intend to feed. They come to the House of Bread on purpose to find fault, and therefore they go away empty.

My verdict is, "It serves them right." Little care I to please such hearers. I would as soon feed bears and jackals, as attempt to supply the wants of grumbling professors. How much mischief is done by observations made upon the preacher! How often do we censure where our God approves. We have heard of a high doctrinal deacon who said to a young minister who was supplying the pulpit on probation, "I should have enjoyed your sermon very much, Sir, if it had not been for that last appeal to the sinner. I do not think that dead sinners should be exhorted to believe in Jesus."

When that deacon reached home he found his own daughter in tears. She became converted to God and united with the Church of which that young man ultimately became the minister. How was she converted, do you think? By that address at the close of the sermon, which her father did not like. Take heed of railing at that by which the Holy Spirit saves souls! There may be much in the sermon which may not suit you, or me, but then we are not the only persons to be considered. There is a wide variety of characters and all our hearers must have "their portion of meat in due season."

Is it not a selfishness very unlike the spirit of a Christian which would make me find fault with the provisions, because I cannot eat them all? There should be the unadulterated milk for the babe in Grace, as well as the strong substantial meat for the full grown Believer. Beloved, I know that murmurers may call our manna, "light bread," yet our gracious God does, "in this mountain make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

Often, too, our gracious Lord appoints us mealtimes in our private readings and meditations. Here it is that His "paths drop fatness." Nothing can be more fattening to the soul of the Believer than feeding upon the Word and digesting it by frequent meditations. No wonder that some grow so little, when they meditate so little. Cattle must chew the cud. It is not what they crop with their teeth, but that which is masticated and afterwards digested by rumination that nourishes them. We must take the Truth of God and roll it over and over again in the inward parts of our spirit, and so we shall extract Divine nourishment from it.

Have you not, my Brothers and Sisters, frequently found a Benjamin's mess prepared for you in a choice promise of your God? Is not meditation the land of Goshen to you? If men once said, "There is corn in Egypt," may they not always say that the finest of the wheat is to be found in secret prayer? Private devotion is a land which flows with milk and honey—a Paradise yielding all manner of fruits—a banqueting house of choice wines. Ahasuerus might make a great feast, but all his hundred and twenty provinces could not furnish such dainties as the closet offers to the spiritual mind! Where can we feed and lie down in green pastures in so sweet a sense as we do in our musings on the Word?

Meditation distils the quintessence from the Scriptures and gladdens our mouth with a sweetness which exceeds the virgin honey dropping from the honeycomb. Your retired seasons and occasions of prayer should be to you regal entertainments, or at least refreshing seasons, in which, like the reapers at noonday, you sit with Boaz and eat of your Master's generous provisions. "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain"—you who have read that excellent book will remember—was custom to say, "that when he was lonely and when his wallet was empty, his Bible was to him meat and drink and company, too." He is not the only man who has found a fullness in the Word when there is want without.

During the battle of Waterloo a godly soldier, mortally wounded, was carried by his comrade into the rear, and being placed with his back propped up against a tree, he besought his friend to open his knapsack and take out the Bible which he had carried in it. "Read to me," he said, "one verse, before I close my eyes in death." His comrade read him that verse—"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you." And there, fresh from the whistling of the bullets, the roll of the drum, and the tempest of human conflict, that believing spirit enjoyed such holy calm that before he fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, he said, "Yes, I have a peace with God which passes all understanding, which keeps my heart and mind through Jesus Christ." Saints most surely have their mealtimes when they are alone in meditation.

Let us not forget that there is one specially ordained mealtime which ought to occur oftener, but which, even monthly, is very refreshing to us. I mean the Supper of the Lord. There you have literally, as well as spiritually, a meal. The table is richly spread. It has upon it both meat and drink. There is the bread and the wine, and looking at what these symbolize, we have before us a table richer than that which kings could furnish. There we have the flesh and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which if a man eats, he shall never hunger and never thirst, for that bread shall be unto him everlasting life.

Oh, the sweet seasons we have known at the Lord's Supper! If some of you really did understand the enjoyment of feeding upon Christ in that ordinance, you would chide yourselves for not having united with the Church in fellowship! In keeping the Master's commandments there is a "great reward," and consequently, in neglecting them there is a great loss of reward. Christ is not so tied to the Sacramental table as to be always found of those who partake there, but still it is in the way that we may expect the Lord to meet with us. "If you love Me, keep My commandments"—it is a sentence of touching power. "And His commandments are not grievous," is the confession of all obedient sons.

Sitting at this table, our soul has mounted up from the emblem to the reality. We have eaten bread in the kingdom of God and have leaned our head upon Jesus' bosom. "He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me was love." On these occasions we may compare ourselves to poor Mephibosheth, who though lame and despicable in his own esteem, yet was made to sit at King David's table. Or we may liken ourselves to the little ewe lamb in the parable which did eat of its Master's bread and drink from his cup and slept in his bosom. The prodigal, who once fed upon husks, sits down to eat the bread of children. We, who were worthy to be esteemed as dogs, are here permitted to take the place of adopted sons and daughters.

Besides these regular mealtimes, there are others which God gives us, at seasons when perhaps we little expect them. You have been walking the street and suddenly you have felt a holy flowing out of your soul toward God. Or, in the middle of business your heart has been melted with love and made to leap for joy even as the brooks which have been bound with winter's ice leap to feel

the touch of spring. You have been groaning, dull and earth-bound. But the sweet love of Jesus has embraced you when you scarcely thought of it, and your spirit, all free and all on fire, has rejoiced to dance before the Lord with tambourines and high-sounding cymbals, like Miriam of old.

I have had times occasionally in preaching when I would gladly have kept on far beyond the appointed hour, for my happy soul was like a vessel wanting vent. Seasons, too, you have had on your sick-beds when you would have been content to be sick always, if you could have your bed so well made and your head so softly pillowed—

*“These are the joys He lets us know
In fields and villages below—
Gives us a relish of His love,
But keeps His noble feast above.”*

Our blessed Redeemer sometimes comes to us in the morning and wakes us up with such sweet thoughts upon our soul, we know not how they came. And when the dew is visiting the flowers in the cool eventide, sometimes a few drops of Heaven’s dew falls upon us, too. And as we have gone to our beds, our meditation of Him has been sweet. And in the night watches, when we tossed to and fro and could not sleep, He has been pleased to become our song in the night—

*“He is the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights;
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.”*

God’s reapers find it hard work to reap. But they find a blessed solace when they sit down and eat of their Master’s rich provisions. Then, with renewed strength they go with sharpened sickles to reap again in the noontide heat.

Let me observe that while these mealtimes come, even though we know not exactly when, there are certain seasons when we may expect them. The Eastern reapers generally sit down under the shelter of a tree, or a booth, to take refreshment during the heat of the day. And I am certain that when trouble, affliction, persecution and bereavement become the most painful to us, it is then that the Lord hands out to us the sweetest comforts. As we said last Thursday night, some promises are written in sympathetic ink and can only have their meaning brought out by holding them before the fire of affliction.

Some verses of Scripture must be held to the fire till they are scorched before the glorious meaning will stand forth, in clear letters, before our eyes. We must work till the hot sun forces the sweat from our face. We must bear the burden and heat of the day before we can expect to be invited to those choice meals which the Lord prepares for those who are diligent in His work. When your day of trouble is the hottest, then the love of Jesus shall be sweetest. When your night of trial is the darkest, then will His candle shine most brightly about you. When your head aches most severely. When your heart palpitates most terribly. When heart and flesh fail you—then He will be the strength of your life and your portion forever.

Again, these mealtimes frequently occur before a trial. Elijah must be entertained beneath a juniper tree, for he is to go a forty days’ journey in the strength of that meat. You may suspect some danger near when your delights are overflowing. If you see a ship taking in great quantities of provision, it is bound for a distant port. And when God gives you extraordinary seasons of communion with Jesus, you may look for long leagues of tempestuous sea. Sweet cordials prepare us for stern conflicts. Times of refreshing also occur after trouble or arduous service. Christ was tempted by the devil, and afterwards angels came and ministered unto Him.

Jacob wrestled with God and then afterwards, at Mahanaim, hosts of angels met him. Abraham wars with the kings and returns from their slaughter. Then is it that Melchisedek refreshes him with bread and wine. After conflict, content. After battle, banquet. When you have waited on your Lord, then you shall sit down and your Master will gird Himself and wait upon you. Yes, let the worldling say what he will about the hardness of religion, we do not find it so. We do confess that reaping is no child's play—that toiling for Christ has its difficulties and its troubles. But still the bread which we eat is very sweet and the wine which we drink is crushed from celestial clusters—

*“I would not change my blessed estate
For all the world calls good or great
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner's gold.”*

II. Follow me while we turn to a second point. TO THESE MEALS THE GLEANER IS AFFECTIONATELY INVITED. That is to say, the poor trembling stranger who has not strength enough to reap—who has no right to be in the field, except the right of charity. The poor trembling sinner, conscious of his own demerit and feeling but little hope and little joy. To the meals of the strong-handed, fully-assured reaper, the gleaner is invited. The gleaner is invited, in the text, to come. “At mealtime, come you here.” We have known some who felt ashamed to come to the House of God. But we trust you will, none of you, be kept away from the place of feasting by any shame on account of your dress, or your personal character, or your poverty—no, nor even on account of your physical infirmities. “At mealtime come you here.”

I have heard of a deaf woman who could never hear a sound, and yet she was always in the House of God. And when asked why, her reply was, “Because a friend found her the text and then God was pleased to give her many a sweet thought upon the text while she sat in his House. Besides,” she said, “she felt that as a Believer, she ought to honor God by her presence in His courts, and recognize her union with His people. And, better still, she always liked to be in the best of company. And as the Presence of God was there, and the holy angels and the saints of the Most High—whether she could hear or not—she would go.”

There is a Brother whose face I seldom miss from this House. He, I believe, has never in his life heard a sound, and cannot make an articulate utterance Yet he is a joyful Believer and loves the place where God's honor dwells. Well, now, I think if such persons find pleasure in coming, we who can hear, though we feel our unworthiness—though we are conscious that we are not fit to come—should be desirous to be laid in the House of God, as the sick were at the pool of Bethesda, hoping that the waters may be stirred, and that we may step in and be healed. Trembling Soul, never let the temp

Moreover, she was bid not only to come, but to eat. Now, whatever there is sweet and comfortable in the Word of God, you that are of a broken and contrite spirit, are invited to partake of it. “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners”—sinners such as you are. “In due time Christ died for the ungodly”—for such ungodly ones as you feel yourselves to be. You are desiring, this morning, to be Christ's. Well, you may be Christ's. You are saying in your heart, “O that I could eat the children's bread!” You may eat it. You say, “I have no right.” But He gives you the invitation! Come without any other right than the right of His invitation. I know you will say how unworthy you are—

*“Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream.”*

But since Christ bids you, “come,” take Him at His word. And if there is a promise, believe it. If there is rich consolation, drink it. If there is an encouraging word, accept it and let the sweetness of it be yours. Note further, that she was not only invited to eat the bread, but to dip her morsel in the vinegar. We must not look upon this as being some sour stuff. No doubt there are crabbed souls in the Church who always dip their morsel in the sourest imaginable vinegar, and with a

grim liberality invite others to share a little comfortable misery with them. But the vinegar in my text is altogether another thing.

This was either a compound of various sweets extracted from fruits, or else it was that weak kind of wine mingled with water which is still commonly used in the harvest fields of Italy and the warmer parts of the world—a drink not exceedingly strong, but excellently cooling and good enough to impart a relish to the reapers' food. It was, to use the only word which will give the meaning, a sauce which the Orientals used with their bread. As we use butter, or as they on other occasions used oil, so in the harvest field, believing it to have cooling properties, they used what is here called vinegar.

Beloved, the Lord's reapers have sauce with their bread. They have sweet consolations. They have not merely doctrines, but the holy unction which is the essence of doctrines. They have not merely the Truths of God, but a hallowed and ravishing delight accompanies the Truths. Take, for instance, the doctrine of election, which is like the bread. There is a sauce to dip that in. When I can say, "He loved me before the foundations of the world," the personal application, the personal enjoyment of my interest in the Truth of God becomes a sauce into which I dip my morsel.

And you, poor Gleaner, are invited to dip your morsel in it, too. I used to hear people sing that hymn of Toplady's, which begins—

*"A debtor to mercy alone,
Of Covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear with Your righteousness on,
My person and offerings to bring."*

And rises to its climax—

*"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in Heaven."*

And I used to think I could never sing that hymn. It was the sauce, you know. I might manage to eat some of the plain bread, but I could not dip it in that sauce. It was too high doctrine, too sweet, too consoling. But I thank God I have since ventured to dip my morsel in it and now I hardly like my bread without it.

I would have every trembling sinner be prepared to take the comfortable parts of God's Word, even those called "HIGH." I hope, Brothers and Sisters, you will never grow as some Christians do—who like all sauce and no bread. There are some high-flying Brothers and Sisters who must have nothing but the vinegar. And very sour it turns upon their stomachs, too. I hope you will love the bread. A little of the vinegar, a little of the spice, and much savor. But let us keep to the bread as well. Let us love all revealed Truth of God. And if there is a trembling gleaner here, let me invite and persuade her to come here, to eat the bread and to dip her morsel in the sauce.

Now I think I see her and she is half prepared to come. She is very hungry, and she has brought nothing with her this morning. But she begins to say, "I have no right to come, for I am not a reaper. I do nothing for Christ. I did not even come here this morning to honor Him. I came here, as gleaners go into a corn field, from a selfish motive, to pick up what I could for myself. And all the religion that I have lies in this—the hope that I may be saved. I do not glorify God. I do no good to other people. I am only a selfish gleaner. I am not a reaper."

Ah, but you are invited to come. Make no questions about it. Boaz bids you. Take his invitation and enter at once. But, you say, "I am such a poor gleaner. Though it is all for myself, yet it is little I get at it. I get a few thoughts while the sermon is being preached, but I lose them before I reach home." I know you do, poor weak-handed Woman. But still, Jesus invites you. Come! Take the sweet promise as He presents it to you, and let no bashfulness of yours send you home hungry. "But," you say, "I am a stranger. You do not know my sins, my sinfulness, and the waywardness of my heart."

But Jesus does. And Jesus still invites you! He knows you are but a Moabitess, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. But He bids you! Is not that enough? "Eat the bread and dip your morsel in the vinegar." "But," you say, "I owe so much to Him already. It is so good of Him to spare my forfeited life and so tender of Him to let me hear the Gospel preached at all. I cannot have the presumption to be an intruder and sit with the reapers." Oh, but He bids you. There is more presumption in your doubting than there could be in your believing. HE bids you! Will you refuse Boaz? Shall Jesus' lips give the invitation, and will you say no?

Come, now, come. Remember that the little which Ruth could eat did not make Boaz any the poorer. And all that you want will make Christ none the less glorious, or full of Grace. What? Are your necessities large? Yes? But His supplies are larger! Do you require great mercy? He is a great Savior. I tell you that His mercy is no more to be exhausted than the sea is to be drained. Or than the sun is to be rendered dim by the excess of the light which he pours forth today. Come! There is enough for you, and Boaz will not be hurt by what you get.

Moreover, let me tell you a secret—Jesus loves you. Therefore it is that He would have you feed at His table. If you are now a longing, trembling sinner, willing to be saved, but conscious that you deserve it not, Jesus loves you, Sinner, and He will take more delight in seeing you eat than you will take in the eating! Let the sweet love He feels in His soul toward you draw you to Him. And what is more—but this is a great secret and must only be whispered in your ear—He intends to be married to you. And when you are married to Him, why, the fields will be yours! For, of course, if you are the spouse, you are joint-proprietor with Him.

Is it not so? Does not the wife share with the husband? All those promises which are, "yes, and Amen in Christ" shall be yours—no, they all are yours NOW, for, "the man is next of kin unto you," and before long He will spread His skirt over you and take you unto Himself forever, espousing you in faithfulness and truth and righteousness. Will you not eat of your own? "Oh, but," says one, "how can it be? I am a stranger." Yes, a stranger—but Jesus Christ loves the stranger. "A publican, a sinner." But He is "the Friend of publicans and sinners." "An outcast." But He "gathers together the outcasts of Israel." "A stray sheep." But the Shepherd "leaves the ninety and nine" to seek it. "A lost piece of money." But He "sweeps the house" to find you. "A prodigal son." But He sets the bells a ringing when He knows that you will return. Come, Ruth! Come, trembling Gleaner! Jesus invites you—accept the invitation. "At mealtime come you here and eat of the bread and dip your morsel in the vinegar."

III. Now, thirdly—and here is a very sweet point in the narrative. BOAZ REACHED HER THE PARCHED CORN. "She did come and eat." Where did she sit? You notice she "sat beside the reapers." She did not feel that she was one of them—she "sat beside" them. Just as some of you do, who do not come down in the evening to the Lord's Supper, but sit in the gallery. You are sitting "beside the reapers." You are sitting this morning as if you were not one of us—had no right to be among the people of God—still you will sit beside us.

If there is a good thing to be had and you cannot get it, you will get as near as you can to those who do. You think there is some comfort even in looking on at the gracious feast. "She sat beside the reapers." And while she was sitting there, what happened? Did she stretch forth her hand and get the food herself? No, it is written, "HE reached her the parched corn." Ah, that is it. I give the invitation, Brothers and Sisters, today—give it earnestly, affectionately, sincerely. But I know very well that while I give it, no trembling heart will accept it unless the King Himself comes near and feasts His saints today.

He must reach the parched corn. He must give you to drink of “the juice of the spiced wine of His pomegranate.” How does He do this? By His gracious Spirit. He first of all inspires your faith. You are afraid to think it can be true, that such a sinner as you is accepted in the Beloved. He breathes upon you, and your faint hope becomes an expectancy—and that expectation buds and blossoms into an appropriating faith, which says, “Yes, my Beloved is mine, and His desire is toward me.” Having done this, the Savior does more. He sheds abroad the love of God in your heart. The love of Christ is like sweet perfume in a box.

Now, He who put the perfume in the box is the only Person that knows how to take the lid off. He, with His own skillful hands, takes the lid from the box. Then it is, “shed abroad,” like “ointment poured forth.” You know it may be there, and yet not be shed abroad. As you walk in the woods there may be a hare or a partridge there, and yet you may never see them. But when you startle them, and they fly or run before you, then you perceive them. And there may be the love of God in your heart, not in exercise, but still there. And at last you may have the privilege of seeing it—seeing your love mount with wings to Heaven, and your faith running without weariness. Christ must shed abroad that love—His Spirit must put your Graces into exercise.

But Jesus does more than this. He reaches the parched corn with His own hands when He gives us close communion with Him. Do not think that this is a dream! I tell you there is such a thing as talking with Christ today. As certainly as I can talk with my dearest friend, or find solace in the company of my beloved wife, so surely may I speak with Jesus, and find intense delight in the company of Immanuel. It is not a fiction! We do not worship a far-off Savior. He is a God near at hand. We do not adore Him as One who is gone away to Heaven, and who never can be approached. But He is near us, in our mouth, and in our heart. And we do, today, walk with Him as the elect did of old—and commune with Him as His Apostles did on earth—not after the flesh, it is true, but spiritual men value spiritual communion—better than any carnal fellowship.

Yet once more let me add the Lord Jesus is pleased to reach the parched corn, in the best sense, when the Spirit gives us the infallible witness within, that we are “born of God.” A man may know that he is a Christian infallibly. Philip de Morny, who lived in the time of Prince Henry of Navarre, was accustomed to say that the Holy Spirit had made his own salvation to him as clear a point as ever a problem proved to a demonstration in Euclid could be. You know with what mathematical precision the scholar of Euclid solves a problem or proves a proposition! And just the same, with as absolute a precision, as certainly as twice two are four, we may, “know that we have passed from death unto life.” The sun in the heavens is not more clear to the eye than his own salvation to an assured Believer—such a man would as soon doubt his own existence, as suspect his interest in eternal life!

Now let the prayer be breathed by poor Ruth, who is trembling yonder. Lord, reach me the parched corn! “Draw me, we will run after You.” Lord, send Your love into my heart—

*“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Your quickening powers,
Come, shed abroad a Savior’s love,
And that shall kindle ours.”*

There is no getting at Christ, except by Christ revealing Himself to us.

IV. And now the last point. After Boaz had reached the parched corn, we are told that, “SHE DID EAT, AND WAS SUFFICED, AND LEFT.” So shall it be with every Ruth. Sooner or later every penitent shall become a Believer. There may be a space of deep conviction and a period of much hesitation. But, by God’s Grace, there shall come a season when the soul decides for the Lord. If I perish, I perish. I will go as I am to Jesus. I will not play the fool any longer with my buts and ifs. Since He bids me believe that He died for me, I will believe it, and will trust His Cross for my salvation. And oh, whenever you shall be privileged to do this, you shall be “satisfied.” “She did eat and was satisfied.”

Your head shall be satisfied with the precious Truth which Christ reveals. Your heart shall be content with Jesus, as the altogether lovely Object of affection. Your hope shall be satisfied, for whom have you in Heaven but Christ? Your desires shall be satiated, for what can even the hunger of your desire wish for more than “to know Christ and to be found in Him”? You shall find Jesus fills your conscience till it is at perfect peace. He shall fill your judgment till you know the certainty of His teachings. He shall fill your memory with recollections of what He did, and fill your imagination with the prospects of what He is yet to do. You shall be “satisfied.” Still, still it shall be true, that you shall leave something. “She was satisfied and she left.”

Some of us 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 down with a ravenous appetite at the table of the Lord’s love and said, “Now, 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 and found that there was a redundancy for others who were in a similar case.

There are certain sweet things in the Word of God which you and I have not enjoyed yet, and which we cannot enjoy yet. We are obliged to leave them for a while. “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot hear them now.” There is a knowledge to which we have not attained—a place of fellowship nearer yet to Christ. There are heights of communion which as yet our feet have not climbed—virgin snows upon the mountain untrod by the foot of man. There is yet a beyond, and there will be a forever.

But please notice—it is not in the text, but it is recorded a verse or two further on, what she did with her leavings. It is a very bad habit, I believe, at feasts, to carry anything home with you. But she did, for that which was left she took home. And when she reached Naomi and showed her the quantity of wheat in her apron, after she had asked, “Where have you gleaned today?” and had received the answer, she gave to Naomi a portion of that which she had reserved after she was sufficed. So it shall be even with you, poor Tremblers, who think you have no right to any for yourselves. You shall be able to eat and be quite satisfied—and what is more—you shall have a morsel to carry to others in a like condition.

I am always pleased to find the young Believer beginning to pocket something for other people. When you hear a sermon, you think, “Well, poor mother cannot get out today, I will tell her something about it. There now, that point will just suit her. I will take that, even if I forget everything else. I will tell her that by the bedside. There is my brother William, who will not come with me to Chapel. I wish he would. But now, there was something which struck me in the sermon and when I get close to him, I will tell him that. Then I will ask, ‘Will you not come this evening?’ I will tell him those portions which interested me. Perhaps they will interest him.”

There are your children in the Sunday school class. You say, “That illustration will do for them.” I think sometimes, when I see you putting down my metaphors on little scraps of paper, that you may remember to tell somebody else. I would gladly give more where they are so well used. I would let fall an extra handful on purpose, that there may be enough for you and for your friends. There is an abominable spirit of self among some professors, prompting them to eat their morsels alone. They get the honey. It is a forest full of honey, like Jonathan’s woods. And yet they are afraid—afraid lest they should eat it all up—so they try to maintain a monopoly.

I know some congregations which seem, to me, to be sort of spiritual protectionists. They are afraid Heaven will be too full, that there will not be room enough for them. When an invitation is given to a sinner, they do not like it—it is too open, too general. And when there is a melting heart and a tearful eye for the conversion of other people, they feel quite out of their element. They never know what it is to take home that which is left and give to others. Cultivate an unselfish spirit. Seek to love as you have been loved. Remember that “the Law and the Prophets” lie in this—to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.”

How can you love your neighbor as yourself if you do not love his soul? You have loved your own soul—through Divine Grace you have been led to lay hold on Jesus. Love your neighbor’s soul, and

never be satisfied till you see him in the enjoyment of those things which are the charm of your life and the joy of your spirit. I do not know how to give my invitation in a more comfortable way. But as we are sitting down to feed at His Table in the evening of this day, I pray the Master to reach a large handful of parched corn to some trembling sinner, and enable him to eat and be satisfied.