

Call me not Naomi, call me Mara. Ruth 1 : 20

So she spoke, as many have spoken since, not knowing that God's ways are ways of pleasantness and all his paths peace, when they are not isolated from the plan of our life, but considered as parts of the whole. We cannot pronounce on any part of God's dealing with us until the entire plan has been allowed to work itself out. How grieved God's Spirit must be, who is lovingly doing his best, when He hears these words of murmuring and complaint! Let us lift the vail, and notice the pleasant things in Naomi's life.

True, her husband and sons were dead; but their deaths in a foreign land had left her free to come back to her people and her God; to nestle again under the wings of Jehovah; and to share the advantages of the Tabernacle.

True, Orpah had gone back. Mahlon and Chillon were both buried in Moab; but she had Ruth, who was better to her than seven sons.

True, she had no male child to perpetuate her name; but the little Obed would, within a few months, be nestling in her aged arms, and laughing into her withered face.

True, she was very poor; but it was through her poverty that Ruth was brought first into contact with that good man, Boaz; and, besides, there was yet a little patrimony which pertained to her.

Yes, Naomi, like thousands more, thou must take back thy words. Thou didst deal bitterly with thine own happiness in leaving the Land of Promise for Moab; but God dealt pleasantly with thee in thy return and latter end. "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in his mercy."

不要叫我拿俄米，要叫我瑪拉。 得一20

拿俄米說這話，以後也有許多人說過同樣的話，因為不認識神的道路是喜樂的，祂的路徑是平安的，如果神的道路和路徑不被孤立在我們人生的計畫之外，而是作為整體計畫的一部分。在整個計畫得以實現之前，我們不能隨意斷定神對我們安排的任何部分。神的靈該是多麼憂傷，祂本是慈愛地盡力幫助我們，卻聽到這些嘟囔抱怨的話。現在讓我們揭開帷幕，來看拿俄米生活中令人欣慰的事。

誠然，她的丈夫和兒子們都死了；但他們在外邦過世，讓她能自由地回到她的本族，並且回到她的神那裡去；再次投靠在耶和華神的翅膀底下；而且有分於神的帳幕所帶來的好處。

誠然，俄珥巴已經回去了。瑪倫和基連被埋葬在摩押地；但她有路得，有她比有七個兒子還好。

誠然，她沒有兒子來存留她的名；但小俄備得在不久之後，就將依偎在她年老的膀臂中，對著她衰老的臉面歡笑。

誠然，她很貧窮；但就是因為她的貧窮，使路得與那個好人波阿斯有初次接觸；另外，她仍然擁有一些祖傳的產業。

是的，拿俄米，還有成千的「拿俄米」，你該收回你這些抱怨的話。你痛苦地看待你自己從前開心地離開應許之地往摩押去；但神喜悅地對待你的歸回，給你好的結局。「耶和華的眼目，看顧敬畏祂的人，和仰望祂慈愛的人。（詩卅三18）」

Under whose wings thou art come to trust. Ruth 2: 12

In after-days this was a favourite image with David in his wanderings and escapes among those same hills. Perhaps he had received it as a fragrant legacy from the life of his good ancestor, Boaz. At least on one occasion Jesus employed it in saying that He had wished to gather Jerusalem as a hen her chicks.

How warm, cosy, and safe, the chickens are when they have gathered under the wings of the brooding hen! It must be a very heaven for them. The storm may roll through the sky, the heavy raindrops fall, the hawk may hover above, poising itself on its wings; but the body of the parent-bird is interposed between them and all that threatens. What wonder that the Psalmist said that he would hide under the shadow of God's wings till all his calamities were overpast!

Are you sheltering there? Have you come out of the storm and tempest to hide there? Can you say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust"? If so, remain in happy confidence. God is between you and all evil or alarm. Be still; yea, be still.

If you have not come to trust under the outspread wings of the Cherubim, do as Ruth did. Leave the land of your nativity, the far country of Moab; leave your people and your gods; tear yourself away even from some twin-soul, dear as Orpah; come across the border-line, and glean in the fields of the Gospel. There you will meet with the true Boaz, who will show kindness unto you, and you will become affianced to Him, and live at home for evermore in the house of bread, where you will be blessed indeed.

你來投靠耶和華以色列神的翅膀下。 得二 12

後來的日子裡，大衛在那些相同的山地漂流逃亡，這個就成為他最喜愛的圖像。也許大衛是從他良善的祖先波阿斯那裡，繼承了這個令人愉快的教誨。耶穌至少一次使用過這個比喻，祂說祂願意聚集耶路撒冷，如同母雞把小雞聚集在翅膀底下(太廿三 37)。

當小雞們被聚集在母雞的翅膀底下，牠們是多麼溫暖、舒適和安全！對牠們來說就像天堂一樣。風暴可以呼嘯掠過天空，大雨驟降，也許老鷹還在天空盤旋，張開翅膀等待著；但母雞的身體擋住一切威脅，來保護小雞。難怪詩篇的作者說，他要隱藏在神翅膀的蔭下，直到他的災害都過去！(詩五十七 1)。

你在那裡藏身嗎？你是否已經從暴風雨出來，躲藏在那裡？論到神，你能說：「祂是我的避難所，我的山寨，是我的神，我所倚靠的。」嗎？(詩九十一 2)。如果你能這樣說，繼續保持快樂的信心。神為你擋住所有的邪惡和驚恐。你當安靜；是的，當安靜(詩四十六 10)。

如果你還沒有來投靠在祂展開的翅膀之下，要學路得所作的。離開你的故鄉，那遙遠的摩押地；離開你的本族和你的神祇；離開一些很親近的人，像俄珥巴；跨過國界，到福音的田地裡來拾穗。在那裡你將遇到真正的波阿斯，祂會恩待你，你會與祂訂婚，永遠安居在糧食之家，在那裡你將得到祝福。

The man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day. Ruth 3: 18

Boaz had many good traits--his religious demeanour and speech, his courtesy in greeting his servants, his refusal to take advantage of Ruth's trust; but none are more satisfactory as an index of a noble character than this well-known and acknowledged promptness of action, when he had once taken in hand the cause of the needy. From of old, Naomi had recognized this quality in her kinsman, and knew that he was a man of his word, who would assiduously complete what he had undertaken to perform.

It is a characteristic that we should do well to cultivate. Let us not arouse hopes, and finally disappoint them; let us not make promises to forget them. Our words should be yea, yea. Those who commit their cause to us should feel perfectly at rest about our executing what we have promised.

How true this is of Jesus! If we have put our matters into his hands, we have no further need of worry or fear, but may sit still in assured trust. For Zion's sake He does not hold his peace, and for Jerusalem's sake He will not rest. He has undertaken the cause of the Church, albeit that it is so largely composed of Gentiles, and He will not be in rest until the marriage-feast is celebrated. He has made Himself responsible for thee and me; and He will not rest until He has played the part of a Goel to the furthest limit, and accomplished our redemption. When we have fully yielded ourselves to Him, and have tasted the joys of complete rest, we may assuredly say with the Apostle, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

那人今日不辦成這事必不休息。 得三18

波阿斯有許多美好的特質 — 他虔誠的言談舉止，他禮貌地問候僕人，他拒絕利用路得對他的信任佔便宜；他一旦承接需要者的訴求，就採取眾人皆知並公認的立刻行動，再沒有一項指標比這更令人滿意地顯示他高貴的品格。拿俄米從過去就知道她這位親屬的這種品質，也知道他是一位信守承諾的人，一旦承辦一件事情，就會勤勉不懈地去完成。

這是我們都應該努力培養的一種特質。但願我們不要激起希望而最終又使希望破滅；我們不要作出承諾又忘記。我們的話應該：是，就說是(太五37)。使那些將他們的訴求交託我們的人，完全放心我們會實踐所許的諾言。

耶穌是多麼信守承諾！如果我們將我們的事交在祂的手中，我們不再需要擔心害怕，只要在確實的信靠中安坐等候。祂因錫安必不靜默，為耶路撒冷必不息聲(賽六十二1)。祂已經承擔起教會的訴求，儘管教會大部分是由外邦人所組成的，祂不會休息，直到舉行婚筵的時候(啟十九7)。祂自己為你我負責；祂不歇息，直到祂已經克盡了一個「至近親屬」的本分，完成了買贖(救贖)我們的工作。當我們全然順服祂，並嘗到完全安息的喜樂，我們確實能和使徒一起說：「我知道我所信的是誰，也深信祂能保全我所交付祂的，直到那日。(提後一12)」

Ruth have I purchased to be my wife. Ruth 4: 10

So this exquisite idyll, which began with three deaths and famine, ends with marriage rejoicings. Shall not all God's idylls end thus? Shall it be left to the dream of the novelist only to make happy for ever after? God has eternity at his disposal, as well as time. Only trust Him; "thy darkest night shall end in brightest day."

It is impossible not to read between these lines and see the foreshadowing of another marriage, when the purchase of the Church shall issue in her everlasting union with the Son, in the presence of God the Father. Let us, however, apply these words to ourselves as individuals.

THE LORD JESUS HAS PURCHASED US TO BE HIS OWN, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his precious blood.

HE HAS ALSO WON BACK OUR PATRIMONY; this earth is his; and shall be yet rid of all intruding evil, to shine as the brightest jewel in his crown.

HE HAS RECEIVED THE SHOE, the symbol of dominion and authority. He is not only our lover, but our Lord.

HE WAITS TO TAKE US TO HIMSELF, in a love that shall not cease, and compared to which all the love we have ever known is as moonlight compared with sunshine.

我娶了... 路得為我的妻子。 得四10 [「娶」原文為「贖」]

就這樣，這首優美的田園詩，以饑荒和三個人的死亡開始，卻以結婚的歡欣結束。所有神的田園詩不都應該這樣結束嗎？難道永遠的幸福只留在小說家的夢境裡嗎？永恆和時間都由神來支配。只要信靠祂：「你最黑暗的深夜，將變為最明亮的白晝。」[註]

讀到這些記載，我們不可能不從字裡行間看到另一個婚姻的預告，那時教會被買贖的結局是，她與神的兒子在父神面前永遠結合。讓我們把這些話應用到我們個人身上。

主耶穌已經買贖我們歸祂自己，不是用能壞的金銀等物，乃是用祂的寶血(彼前一18-19)。

祂也贖回我們的產業。這個地是祂的，將要清除所有侵入的罪惡，並要成為祂冠冕上最明亮的珍寶。

祂已經接受了那隻鞋，就是統治和權柄的象徵。祂不僅是我們的愛人，也是我們的主。

祂等待著迎娶我們，在那永不止息的愛裡。一切我們所知道的愛與祂的愛相比，就好像月光與日光相比。

[註] 出自聖詩 *Put Thou Thy Trust in God* 《你當信靠神》。