

His Brother's Name

by W. Race

This article first appeared in our church paper, *The Messenger of Living Righteousness*, August & September 1971. Brother Bill Race was a friend of Fred Wright, and fellow-believer in the message at least as early as 1962, when they were both involved in the Brinsmead Awakening.

Continually the spiritual leaders of Israel were seeking to ensnare Christ by asking Him questions designed to put words in His mouth which they could later turn against Him. Typical of this was the occasion when they asked Him if it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not. The question was not asked in order for them to understand the truth and they were quite baffled when He replied,

Matthew 22

²¹ ...Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

The Desire of Ages, p. 602:

The spies had expected Jesus to answer the question directly, in one way or the other. If He should say, It is unlawful to give tribute to Caesar, He would be reported to the Roman authorities and arrested for inciting rebellion. But in case He should pronounce it lawful to pay the tribute, they designed to accuse Him to the people as opposing the law of God.

Thus they approached Him again and again ever seeking to find some occasion against Him until finally they came and posed this question to which He gave an answer that was a pointed rebuke against their ignorance.

Matthew 22

²³ The same day came to Him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection and asked him,

²⁴ Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

²⁵ Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when

he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

²⁷ And last of all the woman died also.

²⁸ Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her.

As will be better seen as this study progresses, those men completely missed the message of this Heaven-ordained requirement. They failed to see that the Lord of heaven was teaching, or perhaps it would be better to say, attempting to teach them, the gospel of Jesus Christ in this ordinance. But they missed that completely and saw only a domestic problem which they believed to be insoluble.

To this the answer of Christ was very much to the point,

Matthew 22

²⁹ You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

The power of God is the gospel of Jesus Christ so that when Christ told them they did not know the power of God, then He most certainly was telling them they did not know the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God to save from sin.

When He told them that their answer revealed that they did not know the power of God, then He was telling them that they had not been able to recognize in this commandment concerning the brother marrying his childless brother's widow, a revelation of the power of God which is the gospel.

Then in the last verses of this chapter the Questioned turned on the questioners with a question which silenced them forever as it is written,

Matthew 22

⁴⁶ And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

What was that all-silencing question? It was this:

Matthew 22

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

⁴² Saying, What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.

⁴³ He said unto them, How then does David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, till I make your enemies thy footstool?

⁴⁵ If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

⁴⁶ And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

To them, that question was quite unanswerable nor dared they thereafter ask Him any more questions for the fear that He would pose to them further such questions beyond their comprehension.

The reason as to why they could not answer this question of Jesus lay in the fact that they could not understand even the question they posed to Him over the matter of the seven husbands which the woman had in turn. The fact is that if they had understood the power of God as revealed in the first question as posed by them to Jesus, then they would most certainly have been able to answer the question posed by Jesus, for they are closely and intimately related to each other.

These are not dead questions belonging to that distant time alone, but are equally pertinent and filled with the revelation of the power of God in these times of today. As those who possess the living gospel in this time, we are to understand both the Scriptures and the power of God and be able to answer both the questions put by the Pharisees and by Christ.

The Law of the Childless Brother

The Pharisees described the declaration in regard to the brother who died without issue as being the word of Moses, but in fact it was the Word of the Living God. It was He who through the ministry of His servant Moses, charged the house

of Israel with the responsibility of keeping the name of one of the people from dying out, by doing something for him which in his state of death he was absolutely powerless to do for himself.

As this theme is studied through, it is important that this fact be kept in mind, that it was God who commanded it. The directions as given by God to Moses are recorded here:

Deuteronomy 25

⁵ If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her.

⁶ And it shall be, that the first-born which she bears shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

⁷ And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuses to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.

⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;

⁹ Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.

¹⁰ And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that has his shoe loosed.

This states plainly enough that it was a responsibility of considerable proportions which rested upon the brother of the dead, and the seriousness of refusal was shown in the contempt heaped upon the unwilling one in the presence of the elders of the city and the spectators who were bound to be present. The fact is that the spirit of the unwilling brother was one at total variance with the spirit of Christ and as such was a denial of the gospel. Whoever, even to this day refuses to do

in principle what the unwilling brother refused to do, show that they too do not have a heart in harmony with Christ's but rather one bent on self-serving and self-pleasing.

This service was not new to the days of Moses. It had been part of the ceremonial law which illuminated the ministry of Christ, at least as far back as the days of Judah, the son of Jacob. This is made very clear from the narrative in *Genesis* 38:1-30. The entire chapter will not be quoted here though there is the recommendation that the reader take his Bible and read it through carefully. The story in summary is as follows:

Judah, the son of Jacob and the one to whom the promise of the royal line through to the Messiah had been given, married a woman of Canaan named Shuah who bore him three sons Er, Onan, and Shelah. In time the first came to the age of marriage and he married Tamar, but being a very wicked man he suffered the judgments of God and died very soon after, childless.

It was now the duty of Onan his brother, to marry Tamar and raise up a child in the dead father's name. This would be only if, of course, the requirement had been made known by God at this time, whereas if it was not to be originally made known till Moses day, then it would not have been required back there.

That it was required and well-known back there is revealed in the instruction given by Judah to his next son Onan:

Genesis 38

⁸ And Judah said to Onan, Go in unto your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to your brother.

The marginal reading for this verse, says, "and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her."

But Onan had no desire to make the sacrifice of giving to a son of his, the name of his dead brother. Instead of refusing in the way provided for, he basely went ahead with the work so

far as appearances were concerned but frustrated nature by refusing to fulfill the duty of a husband's brother to Tamar. The result was that he too paid the supreme penalty.

This was not merely, as some folk have argued, because he practiced contraception, but because he broke a direct command of God. Death was signally metered out to him because the Lord desires that we understand that the penalty for the refusing of the gospel is death. Those who argue that he died simply because he practiced contraception "do err not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." It was not the act in itself, but the setting in which the act was performed which made it so evil in the sight of God.

Judah seemed now to be afraid that he would also lose his last son if he continued in the way of obeying the Lord in this matter, for although he told Tamar to wait till the lad was old enough to become a father, when the time came, Shelah was not called upon to fulfill the duty of a dead husband's brother.

But she for her part was determined to fulfill the word of the Lord and resorted to stratagem to do it. Judah's wife died and some time after he went to Timnath. When Tamar heard about this she covered her face and waited for him in the way. When he came to her he made a proposition to her, for he supposed that she was a harlot.

This was according to her plan, but it was important that she have a security from him if the plan was to be successfully accomplished. So, when he had promised to send her a kid from the flock by way of the contract, she asked him for his signet, his bracelets and the staff in his hand. When the servant brought the kid of the goats, she was nowhere to be found, so that he had to return with the kid instead of with the securities.

Three months later Judah received with indignation the word that she was with child, and supposing that she had disgraced the family name by turning into a woman of infamy,

he proposed that she be put to death by burning.

She had anticipated this, and when the moment came she brought forth the securities which she had held till that time. When these were presented to Judah and he saw them, he was fair enough to acknowledge that they were his and that he therefore was the father of the as-yet-unborn child.

Genesis 38

²⁵ When she was brought forth, she said to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose these are, the signet, the bracelets and staff.

²⁶ And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She has been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son.

An Act of Righteousness

Judah could not possibly put her to death now and it was vital for the plan of God that he did not. In his reply though, he stated the righteousness of her case and her cause, and stated that she had been more righteous than he himself.

This may seem strange to us today for as we look back on that story we are almost repelled by the way in which she went about the whole matter. It is doubtful if any of us, at least at first glance before we came to look beyond the actual procedure she followed, would declare that she had been righteous in what she did.

But it was an act of righteousness, her only motive being to obey the law of God, strengthened no doubt also by love for her deceased husband.

It was something that the Lord required even though Er was as wicked and base a man as he was. The depth of his wickedness did not mean that his brother or his father were excused from the preservation of his name in Israel. It was not Tamar's fault that her husband was so unrighteous as to die in his sins and that his brother Onan shared his character to the

same degree.

When both were dead there still remained one more son and while there was that one more, then the opportunity to raise up the name of the dead still was there, but Judah then proved himself unfaithful to God by not giving to Tamar that which was hers and her husband's.

But Tamar would obey the law despite their unfaithfulness. She could not force them to do it with her, nor would she demand that they share in the work with her. If they would not willingly be a party to it, then she would go it alone, and would see to it that Judah, who was preeminently responsible, would supply the means for its accomplishment. This she did with success, and to the rebuke of Judah, so that of him it is said, "And he knew her no more."

True, some may turn aside from the true lessons to be learned from this story, and debate to no profit at all the actual means used by Tamar to have Judah become the father of the child and thus perpetuate the name of his own son. Let it be rather that we concentrate on the actual message of the sacrifice made by the living brother on behalf of the dead and see how it is that this reveals the work of Christ in the salvation of mankind.

Twins were born to her in the course of time. They were named Phares and Zarah. Now Er, the husband of Tamar was the firstborn of Judah, and therefore the one to perpetuate the name of Judah and the birthright blessings. We find that all this is continued on behalf of Judah and of Er by the elder of these twins, Phares. What Er had laid down and forfeited by dying childless, Phares now picked up and carried forward. He came into the direct line of Christ, the Saviour of the world eventually being born through him along with the others in the royal line.

It is not without significance that in the line of Christ there should be at least one instance of this requirement being ful-

filled, because it is as it must be, a type of the sacrifice which Christ Himself made to perpetuate His dead Brother's name.

Every service and command of God as found in the Old Testament is a type of the work of Christ as the Saviour of the world. So deep and broad is that work on the part of the Saviour that not one service alone can tell it all. Many and varied services were required to illustrate the full compass of that work.

This requirement of the brother performing this service on the part of his dead brother who had died childless, illustrates an aspect of the work of Christ which could be revealed in no other way. As this study proceeds this will come clearly into view, but first we must establish the facts of the service so that the lesson can the more clearly be read.

Nothing is clear in the Word of God except in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Therefore we must expect that God would give us a second witness to the truth of this revelation of the ministry and work of Jesus. That second witness we should expect to see in the actual line of the coming Messiah, and we do.

To this we will turn to further learn the facts of the case as there are points revealed in this second story which still further illuminate the whole picture. That second witness is found in the story of Ruth the Moabitess.

How many people have seen nothing more in the story of Ruth than a pretty love story, which if this were true, would mean that it was something out of line with the message of the rest of the Bible, the whole of which is the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is the truth that this is so, that the whole of the word of God, including both the Old and the New Testaments is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the *Book of Ruth* is not in any sense of the word put there in the Old Testament as a

pretty love story, but as the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the unfolding of the plan of salvation. This is the message of it and if we fail to see this message in the Book of Ruth, then we “do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.”

Once again the whole book is too large to be quoted here in full so that a summary of the story will serve with certain texts being quoted to fill the details in. The story opens with the account of Elimelech with his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion, departing to settle in Moab to escape the rigors of a drought in their own area of Bethlehem-Judah.

Apparently they had not long been in Moab when Elimelech died after which his two sons took wives of the daughters of Moab, Ruth and Orpah by name. But the two young men also died leaving both their wives childless widows along with their widowed mother.

In the meantime the drought had lifted back home so that on hearing this, Naomi decided to return to the land of Israel. She set out in company with her two daughters, who went along with her to a certain parting place where Naomi encouraged them both to return to their homeland again and leave her to go on alone.

Orpah acceded to this request, but Ruth determined that she would not go back to Moab. It is plain that she had received the gospel of Jesus Christ and could not bear to return to live as a lone witness among the heathen. Having cast aside the religion of darkness, she determined to separate herself completely from all her former associations, and cast in her lot with the people of God. Her surrender to this was complete as the whole of her afterlife was to show, for when she came to the land of Israel, she did all that the gospel required, even though it required a great sacrifice for her to do it.

So it was that a very sad Naomi together with her daugh-

ter-in-law Ruth, returned to her own city again. The time of their arrival was the beginning of the barley harvest. Naomi, perceiving how fully dedicated Ruth was to the gospel of Jesus Christ, had the confidence that no sacrifice would be too great for her to obey the law of God.

The Lord God of heaven saw too how true Ruth was to His righteousness, so He sent an angel to guide her footsteps to the very field where Boaz was working his men in the harvest. There she attracted the attention of Boaz, no doubt at first because she was obviously a foreigner, and then when he learned who she was, because he recognized the presence of a new believer in the truth who had really witnessed to the presence of a new born life, by leaving her own land and coming with such sacrifice and devotion to care for her mother-in-law.

As is so natural in a case like this, he showed great kindness to her and instructed her to stay by his field where she would be safe from molestation by any of the young men. They in turn were told to drop extra grain in her way so that she would be well supplied in the gleanings.

When Naomi heard of the day's experiences, she recognized the workings of the Lord and rejoiced that Ruth could continue to glean with the maidens who gleaned after the reapers in the fields of this man. So Ruth continued there right along till the end of the harvest with Boaz keeping a watchful eye over her to see that she was well cared for.

In all this he was but doing the work of a Christian, whose duty it is to watch over the poor who come within the circle of their influence. But the Lord noted it all and saw the spirit and the behavior of both of these godly souls and gave to them a great and wonderful reward. Not only do their names appear immortalized in the living records of God, but they became the parents in the line of David and of Jesus.

Now Boaz was one who was very near of kin to Naomi and

to Ruth. Naomi noted this and saw in it the opportunity and the obligation to fulfill the law of God in the raising up of the name of the dead. Therefore Naomi gave some special instructions to Ruth whereby Boaz would be informed of his duty in regard to the dead Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion.

The time of the end of the harvest had come and it seemed that there was some feasting to celebrate the occasion. That night Boaz would sleep in the threshing floor and Ruth was to note the spot where he lay down. When he was asleep she was to go to where he lay, uncover his feet and lay there at his feet. This she did, so that when he awoke in the midst of the night he was startled to find a woman at his feet.

Ruth 3

⁹ And he said, Who are you? And she answered, I am Ruth your handmaid: spread therefore your skirt over your handmaid; for you are a near kinsman.

Thus Ruth called upon Boaz to share with her in the fulfilling of the work of the gospel of Christ. He showed himself to be more righteous than Judah, for without hesitation he declared that he would do his part, provided that the one who was a nearer kinsman than he did not do it.

Thus in his answer Boaz provides us with the information that it was the nearest of kin who was to perform this service, if he would. Furthermore it is shown that if there were no more brothers, the task still must be fulfilled. It would now fall to the lot of the next nearest of kin to do it.

Of course, one's brother next in line is obviously the nearest of kindred, but should there be no other brothers in the family, or if they should all be dead as in this case, then the task was taken to the next nearest of kin. By this the Lord would show to us that the name of the dead is to be perpetuated by His declaration and by the spirit of self-sacrifice.

That it was something of a sacrifice for Ruth to enter into this work of the gospel is clear from the reply given to her by

Boaz.

Ruth 3

¹⁰ And he said, Blessed be you of the Lord, my daughter: for you have showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as you followed not young men, whether poor or rich.

¹¹ And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that you required: for all the city of my people do know that you are a virtuous woman.

¹² And now it is true that I am a near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

¹³ Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform the part of a kinsman, well: let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to you, then will I do the part of a kinsman to you, as the Lord lives: lie down till the morning.

Not a Usurper

Thus Boaz expressed his complete willingness to do his part in the fulfilling of the law of the gospel with Ruth, while at the same time he acknowledged her virtue in that she had not chosen to follow a young man but the older Boaz.

Now, from the point of view of natural inclination and desire, Ruth certainly would have sought a younger man to be her husband, but this would have been impossible for her under her circumstances to obey the law of God. Therefore she showed that she was prepared to make any sacrifice no matter what the cost might be in order to fulfill the law of God.

Even when she heard that it might not be Boaz, but another quite unknown to her as a near kinsman, who possibly would be the one who would fulfill the law with her, she made no protest but merely waited on the Lord to see the outcome.

Thus she demonstrated that the considerations of her own fleshly interests were completely subordinate to the higher principles of righteousness. Thus she showed herself to be a

true Christian and entirely fitted to provide as she did, the revelation to us of the particular phase of the ministry of Christ as revealed in this ordinance in Israel.

Every day the call of God is for us to renounce the things of the flesh and natural inclination, and to yield to the higher demands of the principles of righteousness. Every day, the call to the doing of it presents a pathway which appears to be filled with loss. One cannot deny that those who do follow the ways of God do have to give things up, things which at times are even legitimate and quite desirable, but let it be understood that those who do, do not go unrewarded.

See what a treasure was given to Ruth, a woman from Moab, when she placed duty before inclination. Not only did she become a mother in the direct line of Christ, but as we shall see, she became honored by all the dwellers in that land, and was privileged to be the one who, with Boaz, has given to us the revelation of the character of Christ.

But neither Boaz nor Ruth had the spirit of usurpation. When the moment came that they agreed together that there was a work to be done, Boaz did not immediately take the work to himself. He knew that it would only be his privilege to do it if the other man declined to do it. There was the very real possibility that the other man, who was the actual nearest of kin, would take Ruth, thus cutting Boaz out of the picture.

Boaz did not allow this to weigh in his mind. The other man was the nearest of kin. Therefore it was his privilege to have the first opportunity and there was not the least trace of the usurper in Boaz to cause him to seek to deprive the other man of the work which was to be done.

So it was then that Boaz went to the gate of the city as the law required and there he waited on the nearest of kin to Naomi. To him he announced that the inheritance of Elim-elech needed to be redeemed and that it was his duty as the nearest of kin to buy back this field. In reply the kinsman to

whom Boaz was speaking, quite quickly replied that he would buy the material possessions of Elimelech, until he was informed that the redemption of the material possession also involved the marriage to Ruth in order that the duty of a husband's brother might be performed.

To do this would involve a serious sacrifice on his part, a sacrifice which he was not prepared to make. Perhaps he was already married or it could be that he was betrothed to a lady whom he desired very much to have. Then again, he did not desire to produce a son who would belong to another man even though he was dead. He was prepared to go so far as to make a money sacrifice to redeem the landed possessions of the dead, a sacrifice which he thought would return him in kind anyway, but when the sacrifice touched him personally, he was not prepared to go forward with it.

So he then declined, and passed the task over to Boaz who, with due ceremony involving the taking of the shoe off the foot of the man who would not do it, accepted the responsibility, the responsibility of building up both the name and the possessions of the deceased.

Ruth 4

⁹ And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, You are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and all that was Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

¹⁰ 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: you are witnesses this day.

The people of that day must have watched the whole drama with no small interest, understanding as they did that it was a very large sacrifice for a man, especially if he was already successful in his own right and in his own business, to turn and devote the rest of his life to the building up of the

name and the estate of a dead brother.

Perhaps too, and we would certainly like to think it, they understood the gospel lesson contained in the whole affair and recognized that Ruth and Boaz were acting out the gospel, not merely as a ceremony but as a living experience in their own lives.

No sooner had the whole case been settled with the responsibility resting on the shoulders of Boaz, than the elders pronounced a solemn and wonderful blessing on the union of Boaz and Ruth.

Ruth 4

¹¹ And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come unto your house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do you worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:

¹² And let your house be like unto the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

How significant it is that these men of Israel in their blessing upon the house of Boaz and Ruth should link that blessing with the name of Pharez who was born of Tamar and her father-in-law Judah. Either they spoke better than they knew by the inspiration of the Spirit, or they understood that in the birth of Pharez of Judah and Tamar, was to be seen a marvelous illustration of the gospel of which they in their own day, in a special way, were seeing a second illustration.

What was being enacted out before their eyes that day was a preview of the work of Christ as the Saviour of mankind. How proper and fitting that this working out should be repeated as a double witness right in the line of His forebears, for the eldest son of Boaz and Ruth was Obed, whose son was Jesse the father of David the king, the very great grandfather of Jesus the Messiah.

To this day the names of Boaz and Ruth come down to us with a beautiful and wonderful luster which eternity cannot and will not dim. At the cost of great personal sacrifice on the part of each of them, they put away any and all plans which they might have had for their lives individually, and chose to do the will of God, so that the name of the dead might not be either lost or forgotten.

Jesus, the Nearest of Kin

So far we have studied the law of the duty of a dead husband's brother, and in addition we have seen the two examples of it as they are recorded in the Bible and as they appeared in the lineage of Jesus the Son of God and man. With these facts so plainly laid out, it is time to go and see how they are a revelation of a phase of Christ's work as the Saviour of mankind.

There are many generations and family names together with their inheritances in the universe of God. At the head of one of those families in one of those creations, God placed Adam and Eve. None of the other families in the universe have sinned, and so therefore have never come under the dominion of death. This means that they have no need that another should come in and raise up their names and build up their inheritances for them.

But in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve allowed the tempter to lead them astray with the result that the name of the generation of man upon this earth was doomed to pass out of existence and his fair inheritance to go into the hands of an alien power. Just as any man who had died childless had no hope in the world of himself for the continuation of his name, so man was helpless to escape his fate. He was doomed now to pass out of existence altogether unless someone was prepared to make the unbelievable sacrifice of all of His own extensive interests and raise up the name, the generation and the inheritance for him.

Just as the man whom Boaz approached, had a full interest of his own and could not or would not come and do the work, and just as Boaz himself had a fully successful work on his hands and a full inheritance to take care of, so Jesus likewise had a most successful work which He was carrying forward in His Father's kingdom. He had His own eternal Name and His own eternal inheritance, yet He was fully prepared to step right out and down and build up the lost name and the lost inheritance of another.

Nor was this sacrifice on his part something which He did as a mere aside, after which He returned to the place where He was originally. By no means. When Boaz linked his life and interests with those of Ruth, it was a lifelong responsibility. He did not merely build up the name of the other man for a short time and then lay that work down. The dead man did not come back to life to take it up from him again. Boaz was involved in that work for the rest of his life upon this earth.

In like manner Jesus entered into humanity and that humanity is now His for eternity. He will always and forever be One of us and One with us, the Son of God and of man for eternity without end. So great and tremendous was the sacrifice which Jesus made that even eternity will never reveal the full extent of it.

The old law stipulated that it had to be the nearest of kin, which meant, as we have seen, that Boaz could not take up the responsibility until he was the nearest in fact who could and would do it.

Likewise there was no one who was closer to mankind than Jesus. The inhabitants of the other worlds were distant and different families who were not even known to the human family of Adam and Eve at the time they fell into sin. The angels too were a different order of beings. But Jesus as the Creator was the Father of the human race. They were of Him, for all things are of Him who is the Firstborn of every crea-

ture and He held a communion with them from day to day such as even the angels could not hold with Adam and Eve. Furthermore, he was the only one nearest of kin who was able to succor them and raise up their name, their generation and their inheritance.

But He did not need to be engineered into it as Judah was, but did it openly, gladly and willingly, as did Boaz in the case of Ruth. The redemption price in the case of Boaz was his own life for he literally gave his life as a living sacrifice for another, which is, as we know it to be in literal fact, the true outworking of the Gospel.

The redemption price in the case of the sacrifice of Himself was nothing less than the same: His life, which He gave both as a living sacrifice and a dead one for the redemption of mankind. As a result of this, dead mankind receives back a name which shall live forever and forever and an inheritance which shall not pass away.

In the light of all this we can better understand the question of Christ to the Pharisees when He asked them how it was that David could call the Christ His Lord when in fact He was his Son?

It was in the first case that Jesus was the Father of the whole human race simply because He was the Creator of the race. In *Isaiah* 9:6. He is called “the everlasting Father.”

But in order for Him to restore the name and the inheritance lost by the race, He had to become married into the race, for is it not true that in the incarnation Divinity becomes united to humanity? Humanity of which Mary was the representative, became the wife of Divinity, so that Christ was born into the world as the Son of David, Himself both the Husband and the Child.

It is true that the Bible tells us that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary,

but it must not be forgotten that the whole work of redemption is the work of Creation and Jesus is the Creator. With Him, as the active agent in that creation, is the Holy Spirit at all times and in all places. But whatever the Holy Spirit does, He does as Christ's agent.

By this we know that whenever we are told that the Holy Spirit has done something, then we know it is Christ who has done it just as truly. Therefore we can know that Jesus was both the Father and the Child in the birth in Bethlehem.

Thus the marriage of Christ with humanity, the wife of the dead husband, produced the living Son who would spend all of Himself in the raising up of the lost name of mankind and of the lost inheritance of mankind.

Oh! Wonderful saving Redeemer who was not afraid to leave behind His own work and His own inheritance and come down and marry into the family of the dead and spend all that He had even to His very life in raising up the name and the family of another.

Conclusion

May it be that every reader of these lines will take the book of Ruth and read it with an enlightened understanding, seeing in it the shadow of the cross, the revelation of the righteousness of Christ who has given to us a righteous generation which shall never pass away and an inheritance which is eternal.

Then may the response of your hearts be, that we shall be like Boaz and Ruth, who considered no sacrifice too great to obey the living principles of the gospel. If we can learn and practice this lesson then we shall have with them a part in the eternal inheritance and possess a name, a generation and an inheritance which shall never pass away.

*Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down
his life for his friends.*

John 15:13