

Ruth's Resolutions

by Jonathan Edwards

When those we have formerly been conversant with are turning to God, we should make a firm resolution to cleave to them, have their God for our God, and their people for our people.

Scripture: Psalm 45:10

Topics: "Faith And Conversion", "Following God"

Description

Jonathan Edwards preaches about Ruth's unwavering resolution to follow Naomi and embrace her God, emphasizing the importance of standing firm in faith and choosing to cleave to those who turn to God. He highlights Ruth's virtuous behavior in forsaking her past and committing to a new life with God's people, drawing parallels to believers' conversion experiences. Edwards underscores the glorious nature of God, the excellence of His people, and the happiness found in following Him, urging sinners to make a firm resolution to pursue salvation and join the community of believers.

Transcript

Ruth's Resolution

Dated April 1735

Ruth 1:16

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

Subject: When those that we have formerly been conversant with, are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, it ought to be our firm resolution, that we will not leave them.

THE historical things in this book of Ruth, seem to be inserted in the canon of the Scripture, especially on two accounts:

First, because Christ was of Ruth's posterity. The Holy Ghost thought fit to take particular notice of that marriage of Boaz with Ruth, whence sprang the Savior of the world. We may often observe it, that the Holy Spirit who indited the Scriptures, often takes notice of little things, or minute occurrences, that do but remotely relate to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, because this history seems to be typical of the calling of the Gentile church, and indeed of the conversion of every believer. Ruth was not originally of Israel, but was a Moabitess, and alien from the commonwealth of Israel, but she forsook her own people, and the idols of the Gentiles, to worship the God of Israel, and to join herself to that people. Herein she seems to be a type of the Gentile church, and also of every sincere convert. Ruth was the remote mother of Christ. He came of her posterity. So the church is Christ's mother, as she is represented, Rev. 12 at the beginning. And so also is every true Christian his mother. Mat. 12:50, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Christ is what the soul is in travail with, at the new birth. Ruth forsook all her natural relations, and her own country, the land of her nativity, and all her former possessions there, for the sake of the God of Israel, as every true Christian forsakes all for Christ. Psa. 45:10, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

Naomi was now returning out of the land of Moab, into the land of Israel, with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, who will represent to us two sorts of professors of religion. Orpah [represents] those who indeed make a fair profession, and seem to set out well, but continue only for a while, and then turn back. Ruth [represents] those who are sound and sincere, and therefore are stedfast and perservering in their way. Naomi, in the preceding verses, represents to her daughters the difficulties of their leaving their own country to go with her. And in this verse may be observed,

1. The remarkable conduct and behavior of Ruth on this occasion: with what inflexible resolution she cleaves to Naomi, and follows her. When Naomi first arose to return from the country of Moab into the land of Israel, Orpah and Ruth both set out with her, and Naomi exhorts them both to return. And both wept, and seemed as if they could not bear the thoughts of leaving her, and appeared as if they were resolved to go with her. Verse 10, "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." Then Naomi says to them again, "Turn again, my daughters, go your way," etc. And then they were greatly affected again, and Orpah returned and went back. Now Ruth's stedfastness in her purpose had a greater trial, but yet is not overcome: "She clave unto her," verse 14. Then Naomi speaks to her again, verse 15, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law." And then she shows her immovable resolution in the text and following verse.

2. I would particularly observe that wherein the virtuousness of this her resolution consists, viz. that it was for the sake of the God of Israel, and that she might be one of his people, that she was thus resolved to cleave to Naomi: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." It was for God's sake that she did thus, and therefore her so doing is afterwards spoken of as a virtuous behavior in her, Ruth 2:11,12, "And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou has left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." She left her father and mother, and the land of her nativity, to come and trust under the shadow of God's wings, and she had indeed a full reward given her, as Boaz wished. For besides immediate spiritual blessings to her own soul, and eternal rewards in another world, she was rewarded with plentiful and prosperous outward circumstances in the family of Boaz. And God raised up David and Solomon of her seed, and established the crown of Israel (the people that she chose before her own people) in her posterity; and, which is much more, of her seed he raised up Jesus Christ, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

From the words thus opened, I observe this for the subject of my present discourse: -- "When those that we have formerly been conversant with, are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, it ought to be our firm resolution, that we will not leave them, but that their people shall be our people, and their God our God."

It sometimes happens, that of those who have been conversant one with another -- who have dwelt together as neighbors, and have been often together as companions, or united in their relation, and have been together in darkness, bondage, and misery, in the service of Satan -- some are enlightened, and have their minds changed, are made to see the great evil of sin, and have their hearts turned to God. They are influenced by the Holy Spirit of God, to leave their company that are on Satan's side, and to join themselves with that blessed company that are with Jesus Christ. They are made willing to forsake the tents of wickedness, to dwell in the land of uprightness with the people of God.

And sometimes this proves a final parting or separation between them and those with whom they have been formerly conversant. Though it may be no parting in outward respects, they may still dwell, and converse one with another. Yet in other respects, it sets them at a great distance. One is a child of God, and the other his enemy. One is in a miserable, and the other in a happy, condition. One is a citizen of the heavenly Zion, the other is under condemnation to hell. They are no longer together in those respects wherein they used to be together. They used to be of one mind to serve sin, and do Satan's work, now they are of contrary minds. They used to be together in worldliness and sinful vanity, now they are of exceeding different dispositions. They are separated as they are in different kingdoms. The one remains in the kingdom of darkness, the other is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And sometimes they are finally separated in these respects: while one dwells in the land of Israel, and in the house of God, the other, like Orpah, lives and dies in the land of Moab.

Now it is lamentable, it is awful being parted so. It is doleful, when of those who have formerly been together in sin, some turn to God, and join themselves with his people, that it should prove a parting between them and their former companions and acquaintance. It should be our firm and inflexible resolution in such a case, that it shall be no parting, but that we will follow them, that their people shall be our people, and their God our God, and that for the following reasons:

I. .Because their God is a glorious God. There is none like him, who is infinite in glory and excellency. He is the most high God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. His name is excellent in all the earth, and his glory is above the heavens. Among the gods there is none like unto him. There is none in heaven to be compared to him, nor are there any among the sons of the mighty that can be likened unto him. Their God is the fountain of all good, and an inexhaustible fountain. He is an all-sufficient God, able to protect and defend them, and do all things for them. He is the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: a strong rock, and a high tower. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heaven in their help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms. He is a God who has all things in his hands, and does whatsoever he pleases. He killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up; he maketh poor and maketh rich: the pillars of the earth are the Lord's. Their God is an infinitely holy God. There is none holy as the Lord. And he is infinitely good and merciful. Many that others worship and serve as gods, are cruel beings, spirits that seek the ruin of souls, but this is a God that delighteth in mercy. His grace is infinite, and endures forever. He is love itself, and infinite fountain and ocean of it.

Such a God is their God! Such is the excellency of Jacob! Such is the God of them who have forsaken their sins and are converted! They have made a wise choice who have chosen this for their God. They have made a happy exchange indeed, that have exchanged sin, and the world, for such a God!

They have an excellent and glorious Savior, who is the only-begotten Son of God: the brightness of his Father's glory. One in whom God from eternity had infinite delight; a Savior of infinite love; one that has shed his own blood, and made his soul an offering for their sins, and one that is able to save them to the uttermost.

II. Their people are an excellent and happy people. God has renewed them, and stamped his own image upon them, and made them partakers of his holiness. They are more excellent than their neighbors, Pro. 12:26. Yea, they are the excellent of the earth, Psa. 16:3. They are lovely in the sight of the angels, and they have their souls adorned with those graces that in the sight of God himself are of great price.

The people of God are the most excellent and happy society in the world. That God whom they have chosen for their God, is their Father. He has pardoned all their sins, and they are at peace with him, and he has admitted them to all the privileges of his children. As they have devoted themselves to God, so he has given himself to them. He is become their salvation, and their portion: his power and mercy, and all his attributes are theirs. They are in a safe state, free from all possibility of perishing. Satan has no power to destroy them. God carries them on eagle's wings, far above Satan's reach, and above the reach of all the enemies of their souls. God is with them in this world. They have his gracious presence. God is for them: who then can be against them? As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah is round about them. God is their shield, and their exceeding great reward, and their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. They have the divine promise and oath, that in the world to come they shall dwell forever in the glorious presence of God.

It may well be sufficient to induce us to resolve to cleave to those that forsake their sins and idols to join themselves with this people, that God is with them, Zec. 8:23, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, in those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." So should persons, as it were, take hold of the skirt of their neighbors and companions that have turned to God, and resolve that they will go with them, because God is with them.

III. Happiness is no where else to be had, but in their God, and with their people. There are that are called gods many, and lords many. Some make gods of their pleasures; some choose Mammon for their god; some make gods of their supposed excellencies, or the outward advantages they have above their neighbors; some choose one thing for their god, and other another. But men can be happy in no other but the God of Israel. He is the only fountain of happiness. Other gods cannot help in calamity. Nor can any of them afford what the poor empty soul stands in need of. Let men adore those other gods never so much, and call upon them never so earnestly, and serve them never so diligently. They will nevertheless remain poor, wretched, unsatisfied, undone creatures. All other people are miserable, but that people whose God is the Lord. -- The world is divided into two societies: the people of God, the little flock of Jesus Christ, that company that we read of, Rev. 14:4, "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb:" and, those that belong to the kingdom of darkness, that are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. All that are of this latter company are wretched

and undone. They are the enemies of God, and under his wrath and condemnation. They are the devil's slaves, that serve him blindfold, and are befooled and ensnared by him, and hurried along in the broad way to eternal perdition.

IV. When those that we have formerly been conversant with are turning to God and to his people, their example ought to influence us. Their example should be looked upon as the call of God to us, to do as they have done. God, when he changes the heart of one, calls upon another, especially does he loudly call on those that have been their friends and acquaintance. We have been influenced by their examples in evil, and shall we cease to follow them, when they make the wisest choice that ever they made, and do the best thing that ever they did? If we have been companions with them in worldliness, in vanity, in unprofitable and sinful conversation, it will be a hard case, if there must be a parting now, because we are not willing to be companions with them in holiness and true happiness. Men are greatly influenced by seeing one another's prosperity in other things. If those whom they have been much conversant with, grow rich, and obtain any great earthly advantages, it awakens their ambition, and eager desire after the like prosperity. How much more should they be influenced, and stirred up to follow them, and be like them, when they obtain that spiritual and eternal happiness, that is of infinitely more worth, than all the prosperity and glory of this world!

V. Our resolutions to cleave to and follow those that are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, ought to be fixed and strong, because of the great difficulty of it. If we will cleave to them, and have their God for our God, and their people for our people, we must mortify and deny all our lusts, and cross every evil appetite and inclination, and forever part with all sin. But our lusts are many and violent. Sin is naturally exceeding dear to us. To part with it is compared to plucking out our right eyes. Men may refrain from wonted ways of sin for a little while, and may deny their lusts in a partial degree, with less difficulty; but it is heart-rending work, finally to part with all sin, and to give our dearest lusts a bill of divorce, utterly to send them away. But this we must do, if we would follow those that are truly turning to God. Yea, we must not only forsake sin, but must, in a sense, forsake all the world, Luke 14:33, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." That is, he must forsake all in his heart, and must come to a thorough disposition and readiness actually to quit all for God, and the glorious spiritual privileges of his people, whenever the case may require it, and that without any prospect of anything of the like nature, or any worldly thing whatsoever, to make amends for it -- all to go into a strange country, a land that has hitherto been unseen, like Abraham, who being called of God, "went out of his own country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, for a land that God should show him, not knowing whither he went."

Thus, it was a hard thing for Ruth to forsake her native country, her father and mother, her kindred and acquaintance, and all the pleasant things she had in the land of Moab, to dwell in the land of Israel, where she never had been. Naomi told her of the difficulties once and again. They were too hard for her sister Orpah. The consideration of them turned her back after she was set out. Her resolution was not firm enough to overcome them. But so firmly resolved was Ruth, that she brake through all. She was stedfast in it, that let the difficulty be what it would, she would not leave her mother-in-law. So persons had need to be very firm in their resolution to conquer the difficulties that are in the way of cleaving to them who are indeed turning from sin to God.

Our cleaving to them, and having their God for our God, and their people for our people, depends on our resolution and choice, and that in two respects.

1. The firmness of resolution in using means in order to it, is the way to have means effectual. There are means appointed in order to our becoming some of the true Israel, and having their God for our God. The thorough use of these means is the way to have success, but not a slack or slightly use of them. And that we may be thorough, there is need of strength of resolution, a firm and inflexible disposition and bent of mind to be universal in the use of means, and to do what we do with our might, and to persevere in it. Mat. 11:12, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

2. A choosing of their God, and their people, with a full determination, and with the whole soul, is the condition of an union with them. God gives every man his choice in this matter: as Orpah and Ruth had their choice, whether they would go with Naomi into the land of Israel, or stay in the land of Moab. A natural man may choose deliverance from hell, but no man does ever heartily choose God and Christ, and the spiritual benefits that Christ has purchased, and the happiness of God's people, till he is converted. On the contrary, he is averse to them. He has no relish of them; and is wholly ignorant of their inestimable worth and value.

Many carnal men seem to choose these things, but do it not really, as Orpah seemed at first to choose to forsake Moab to go into the land of Israel. But when Naomi came to set before her the difficulty of it, she went back, and thereby showed that she was not fully determined in her choice, and that her whole soul was not in it as Ruth's was.

APPLICATION

The use that I shall make of what has been said, is to move sinners to this resolution, with respect to those amongst us that have lately turned to God, and joined themselves to the flock of Christ. Through the abundant mercy and grace of God to us in this place, it may be said of many of you that are in a Christless condition, that you have lately been left by those that were formerly with you in such a state. Some of those with whom you have formerly been conversant, have lately forsaken a life of sin and the service of Satan, and have turned to God, and fled to Christ, and joined themselves to that blessed company that are with him. They formerly were with you in sin and in misery, but now they are with you no more in that state or manner of life. They are changed, and have fled from wrath to come. They have chosen a life of holiness here, and the enjoyment of God hereafter. They were formerly your associates in bondage, and were with you in Satan's business, but now you have their company no longer in these things. Many of you have seen those you live with, under the same roof, turning from being any longer with you in sin, to be with the people of Jesus Christ. Some of you that are husbands, have had your wives; some of you that are wives, have had your husbands; some of you that are children, have had your parents; and parents have had your children; many of you have had your brothers and sisters; and many your near neighbors, and acquaintance and special friends; many of you that are young have had your companions: I say, many of you have had those that you have been thus concerned with, leaving you, forsaking that doleful life and wretched state in which you still continue. God, of his good pleasure and wonderful grace, has lately caused in this place multitudes to forsake their old abodes in the land of Moab, and under the gods of Moab, and go into the land of Israel, to put their trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. Though you and they have been nearly related, and have dwelt together, or have been often together and intimately acquainted, they have been taken, and you hitherto left! O let it not be the foundation of a final parting! But earnestly follow them. Be firm in your resolution in this matter. Do not as Orpah did, who though at first she made as though she would follow Naomi, yet when she had the difficulty set before her, went back. But say as Ruth, "I will not leave thee; but where thou goest, I will go: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Say as she said, and do as she did. Consider the excellency of their God,

and their Savior, and the happiness of their people, the blessed state that they are in, and the doleful state you are in.

You are old sinners, who have lived long in the service of Satan, have lately seen some that have traveled with you in the paths of sin these many years, turning to God. They with you enjoyed great means and advantages, had calls and warnings with you, and with you passed through remarkable times of the pouring out of God's Spirit in this place, and hardened their hearts and stood it out with you, and with you have grown old in sin. Yet you have seen some of them turning to God, i.e. you have seen those evidences of it in them, whence you may rationally judge that it is so. O! let it not be a final parting! You have been thus long together in sin, and under condemnation. Let it be your firm resolution, that if possible, you will be with them still, now they are in a holy and happy state, and that you will follow them into the holy and pleasant land. -- You that tell of your having been seeking salvation for many years (though, without doubt, in a poor dull way, in comparison of what you ought to have done), have seen some old sinners and old seekers, as you are, obtaining mercy. God has lately roused them from their dullness, and caused them to alter their hand, and put them on more thorough endeavors. They have now, after so long a time, heard God's voice, and have fled for refuge to the rock of ages. Let this awaken earnestness and resolution in you. Resolve that you will not leave them.

You who are in your youth how many have you seen of your age and standing, that have of late hopefully chosen God for their God, and Christ for their Savior! You have followed them in sin, and have perhaps followed them into vain company. Will you not now follow them to Christ? -- And you who are children, know that there have lately been some of your sort who have repented of their sins, loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusted in him, and are become God's children, as we have reason to hope. Let it stir you up to resolve to your utmost to seek and cry to God, that you may have the like change made in your hearts, that their people may be your people, and their God your God.

You who are great sinners, who have made yourselves distinguishingly guilty by the wicked practices you have lived in, know that there are some of your sort who have lately (as we have reason to hope) had their hearts broken for sin, and have forsaken it, and trusted in the blood of Christ for the pardon of it. They have chosen a holy life, and have betaken themselves to the ways of wisdom: let it excite and encourage you resolutely to cleave to them, and earnestly to follow them.

Let the following things be considered:

1. That your soul is as precious as theirs. It is immortal as theirs is, and stands in as much need of happiness, and can as ill bear eternal misery. You was born in the same miserable condition that they were, having the same wrath of God abiding on you. You must stand before the same Judge, who will be as strict in judgment with you as with them. Your own righteousness will stand you in no more stead before him than theirs, and therefore you stand in as absolute necessity of a Savior as they. Carnal confidences can no more answer your end than theirs, nor can this world or its enjoyments serve to make you happy without God and Christ more than them. When the bridegroom comes, the foolish virgins stand in as much need of oil as the wise, Mat. 25 at the beginning.

2. Unless you follow them in their turning to God, their conversion will be a foundation of an eternal separation between you and them. You will be in different interests, and in exceeding different states, as long as you live. They the children of God, and you the children of Satan, and you will be parted in another world; when you come to die, there will be a vast separation made between you. Luke 16:26, "And besides

all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

And you will be parted at the day of judgment. You will be parted at Christ's first appearance in the clouds of heaven. While they are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be ever with the Lord, you will remain below, confined to this cursed ground, that is kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. You will appear separated from them, while you stand before the great judgment-seat, they being at the right hand, while you are set at the left.

Mat. 25:32, 33, "And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." And you shall then appear in exceeding different circumstances: while you stand with devils, in the image and deformity of devils, and in ineffable horror and amazement, they shall appear in glory, sitting on thrones, as assessors with Christ, and as such passing judgment upon you, 1 Cor. 6:2.

And what shame and confusion will then cover you, when so many of your contemporaries, your equals, your neighbors, relations, and companions, shall be honored, and openly acknowledged, and confessed by the glorious Judge of the universe, and Redeemer of saints, and shall be seen by you sitting with him in such glory. You shall appear to have neglected your salvation, and not to have improved your opportunities, and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, the same person that will then appear as your great Judge, and you shall be the subjects of wrath, and as it were, trodden down in eternal contempt and disgrace.

Dan. 12:2, "Some shall rise to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And what a wide separation will the sentence then passed and executed make between you and them! When you shall be sent away out of the presence of the Judge with indignation and abhorrence, as cursed and loathsome creatures they shall be sweetly accosted and invited into his glory as his dear friends, and the blessed of his Father! When you, with all that vast throng of wicked and accursed men and devils, shall descend with loud lamentings and horrid shrieks, into that dreadful gulf of fire and brimstone, and shall be swallowed up in that great and everlasting furnace, they shall joyfully, and with sweet songs of glory and praise, ascend with Christ, and all that beauteous and blessed company of saints and angels, into eternal felicity, in the glorious presence of God, and the sweet embraces of his love.

You and they shall spend eternity in such a separation, and immensely different circumstances! You have been intimately acquainted and nearly related, closely united and mutually conversant in this world, and you have taken delight in each other's company! And shall it be -- after you have been together a great while, each of you in undoing yourselves, enhancing your guilt, and heaping up wrath -- that their so wisely changing their minds and their course, and choosing such happiness for themselves, should now at length be the beginning of such an exceeding and everlasting separation between you and them? How awful will it be to be parted so!

3. Consider the great encouragement that God gives you, earnestly to strive for the same blessing that others have obtained. There is great encouragement in the Word of God to sinners to seek salvation, in the revelation we have of the abundant provision made for the salvation even of the chief of sinners, and in the appointment of so many means to be used with and by sinners, in order to their salvation, and by the blessing which God in his Word connects with the means of his appointment. There is hence great encouragement for all, at all times, that will be thorough in using of these means. But now God gives

extraordinary encouragement in his providence, by pouring out his Spirit so remarkably amongst us, and bringing savingly home to himself all sorts, young and old, rich and poor, wise and unwise, sober and vicious, old self-righteous seekers, and profligate livers: no sort are exempt. There is at this day amongst us the loudest call, and the greatest encouragement, and the widest door opened to sinners, to escape out of a state of sin and condemnation, that perhaps God ever granted in New England. Who is there that has an immortal soul, so sottish as not to improve such an opportunity, and that will not bestir himself with all his might? How unreasonable is negligence, and how exceeding unreasonable is negligence, and how exceeding unreasonable is discouragement, at such a day as this! Will you be so stupid as to neglect your soul now? Will any mortal amongst us be so unreasonable as to lag behind, or look back in discouragement, when God opens such a door? Let every person be thoroughly awake! Let everyone encourage himself now to press forward, and fly for his life!

4. Consider how earnestly desirous they that have obtained are that you should follow them, and that their people should be your people, and their God your God. They desire that you should partake of that great good which God has given them, and that unspeakable and eternal blessedness which he has promised them. They wish and long it. If you do not go with them, and are not still of their company, it will not be for want of their willingness, but your own. That of Moses to Hobab is the language of every true saint of your acquaintance to you. Num. 10:29, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." As Moses, when on his journey through the wilderness, following the pillar of cloud and fire, invited Hobab -- with whom he had been acquainted in the land of Midian, where Moses had formerly dwelt with him -- to go with him and his people to Canaan, to partake with them in the good that God had promised them, so do those of your friends and acquaintance invite you: out of a land of darkness and wickedness, where they have formerly been with you, to go with them to the heavenly Canaan. The company of saints, the true church of Christ, invite you. The lovely bride calls you to the marriage supper. She has authority to invite guests to her own wedding, and you ought to look on her invitation and desire, as the call of Christ the bridegroom. For it is the voice of his Spirit in her, Rev. 22:17, "The Spirit and bride say, Come." Where seems to be a reference to what has been said, chap. 19:7-9, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." It is with respect to this her marriage-supper that she, from the motion of the Spirit of the Lamb in her, says, Come. So that you are invited on all hands. All conspire to call you, [and] God the Father invites you. This is the King who has made a marriage for his Son, and he sends forth his servants, the ministers of the gospel, to invite the guests. And the Son himself invites you: it is he that speaks, Rev. 22:17, "And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come." He tells us who he is in the foregoing verse, "I Jesus, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." And God's ministers invite you, and all the church invites you; and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God that hour that you accept the invitation.

5. Consider what a doleful company will be left after this extraordinary time of mercy is over. We have reason to think that there will be a number left. We read that when Ezekiel's healing waters increased so abundantly, and the healing effect of them was so very general. Yet there were certain places, where the waters came, that never were healed. Eze. 47:9-11, "And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed, and everything shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it, from En-gedi even unto

En-eglain; they shall be a place to spread forth nets: there fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt." And even in the apostles times, when there was such wonderful success of the gospel wherever they came, there were some that did not believe. Acts 13:48, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." And chap. 28:24, "And some believed, and some believed not." So we have no reason to expect but there will be some left amongst us. It is to be hoped it will be but a small company, but what a doleful company will it be! How darkly and awfully will it look upon them! If you shall be of that company, how well may your friends and relations lament over you, and bemoan your dark and dangerous circumstances! If you would not be one of them, make haste, delay not, and look not behind you. Shall all sorts obtain, shall everyone press into the kingdom of God, while you stay loitering behind in a doleful undone condition? Shall everyone take heaven, while you remain with no other portion but this world? Now take up that resolution, that if it be possible you will cleave to them that have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. Count the cost of a thorough, violent, and perpetual pursuit of salvation, and forsake all, as Ruth forsook her own country, and all her pleasant enjoyments in it. Do not do as Orpah did; who set out, and then was discouraged, and went back. But hold out with Ruth through all discouragement and opposition. When you consider others that have chosen the better part, let that resolution be ever firm with you: "Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

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