

DECEMBER 7.

Ruth and Naomi

Ruth 1: 16 22

"WHEN THE JUDGES JUDGED."

We are not to think of the period of the judges as one of continuous consternation, sorrow, and war. There were many times of peace and prosperity when the people were faithful to their leaders and to Jehovah. There were also extremely dark pictures of wickedness and sin. Our lesson today is a beautiful episode out of this period. A family often heard of in Palestine, had driven some of its inhabitants to neighboring peoples for food and residence until it should pass by.

**GOLDEN TEXT** -- Be kindly affectioned one to another. -- Rom. 12: 10.

ON THE LESSON TEXT.

I. Ruth clings to Naomi's People and God. Ver 16-18. Elimelech and his wife Naomi, with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, had gone from Bethlehem Judah to the land of Moab to escape the ravages of a famine. The husband and father died in this country. The sons married Moabish wives, Orpah and Ruth, and ere long these two young husbands died. Naomi, upon hearing a report of the prosperity which had come to her homeland, set out upon her return. She persuaded Orpah to remain at home. Ruth, however, says: "Treat me not to leave thee. Her love for Naomi was so strong, that on no conditions could she leave her. "Where you go, I will go," even away from my kindred and homeland. "Where you lodge, I will lodge," in the long, dangerous journey homeward, among strangers, in caravansaries, etc. Yea, more than that thy people shall be my people; love was stronger than family and national ties; it was so strong as to include Naomi's own kinsfolk. And still more, giving a climax to Ruth's three former radical resolutions, and thy God my God. What more could she say? She has resolved to (1) be the constant companion of Naomi, (2) brave the dangers ahead of Nahomi, (3) adopt Israel as her people, and (4) make Naomi's God her own God. To emphasize more forcibly than ever the meaning of her resolution she adds, whither thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. This resolution of lifelong companionship is sealed by an oath in which she uses the name of Naomi's God, showing that she has already begun to carry out her religious transformation. The affirmation, which touched the mainsprings of Ruth's life, affection, love, and constancy, completely won over Naomi, and she ceased trying to send her back.

II. Naomi and Ruth returns to Bethlehem. Ver 17-22. We have no means of knowing from what part of Moab they traveled, nor the way by which they came. "When they reached Bethlehem, Naomi having been gone ten years (ver. 4), all the city was moved about them; all the li the city or village, where each person probably knew every other inhabitant; they said; the Hebrew form of the verb's feminine, "the women said," those who would be most interested in this strange case. Is this Naomi? She resents being called Naomi, "pleasant," and requests the women to give her a new name, Mara, "bitter," for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. This bitterness is explained by, I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Her husband and her two sons had found graves in a strange land—a great calamity (comp. Jer. 22: 11, 12), and she returns as the only remaining one of her family, the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me; is there an implied punishment in the words? May it not have been that Naomi and her family had sinned by going to Moab or while there? Naomi speaks of her affliction, but does not say that it was undeserved or cruel. Or there may be lurking in this chastisement some deeper meaning, such as that which appears in the subsequent career of Ruth. The last verse (22) summarizes the preceding verses, and adds that they came in the beginning of the barley harvest. This harvest begins in April on the lowest lands of Palestine, and becomes later as

one climbs the hills. It is earlier than the wheat harvest (Exod. 9: 31, 32), and seems here to be a date easily recognized by the peoples of Bethlehem or the readers of this record.

Religious News.

**DORCHESTER, N. B.** A note from Pastor Thomas speaks very encouragingly of the work of the church and promises fuller information later.

**SUSSEX.** It was my privilege to baptize at Ward's Creek Mrs. Samuel Virtue, Miss Sarah Virtue and Miss Ethel H. H. Our work in this section is most encouraging. W. CAMP.

**HILLSDALE, KINGS CO. N. B.** We have decided to remain with these churches (D. V.) another year. Last Lord's Day one was received by baptism. More will follow. R. M. BYNON.

**November 22.** We are moving along quietly. The interest on the field is as encouraging as it has been at any time during the two years that I have been here. In each one of the three churches there are a faithful few, who are always ready and willing to assist and cheer the pastor in all his efforts. After two years of labor on the field, we can truthfully and gladly state, that the best of feelings exist between pastor and people. We are praying and hoping and expecting a refreshing, for Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given," and he did not say one thing and meant another. CALVIN CURRIE.

**MACNAQUAC.** We finished our work at Woodland's and Cardigan Oct 15th. We baptized three candidates and gave the hand of fellowship to 5 which we trust will greatly cheer and help the little church. A new clerk was appointed for the church in place of the former one removed from the place. From Cardigan we came to Jerusalem where the little church has been pastorless for some time, we concluded our work there Nov. 17th. The cause was strengthened and helped, two were baptized and six added to the church and a committee appointed to raise funds to repair the interior of the church building. We trust that a pastor will soon be found for both of the above fields. We are at present spending a few days with Pastor Howard on his field at Macnaquac where God is richly pouring out his Spirit and rewarding the faithful labours of our dear brother. No new methods or strange doctrines have been used, but there has been a mighty movement among the young people of the congregation. Last Sunday, 16th, Bro. Howard baptized ten candidates, one of them his own daughter. Last night, Nov. 20th, which was my second night with him, 16 more signified their desire to follow Jesus. Next Lord's day nearly all young people, one of them Bro. Howard's own son. This should be an encouragement for pastor's to go on preaching the old gospel of the blessed God, remembering the gracious promise—"My word shall not return unto me void." May a gracious baptism of the Holy Spirit come upon all our pastors and churches during the coming months is our earnest prayer. A. H. HAYWARD.

Those who have labored on SECOND MONCTON CHURCH. that the Word has been used by the Spirit, the church has been aroused and sinners converted. Eight were baptized and three others received for baptism. We are anxious to have a man settled on this field at once. J. A. MARPLE.

The pastor of the Sussex Baptist Church, Rev. W. Camp, entered upon his fifth year as pastor of the Cardwell Church, last Sunday. The four years have been full of encouragement. The Sunday services are well attended.

The prayer-meetings have been growing in interest and are now more largely attended than at any time during the four years. The outlook of this church is hopeful. South Branch, a section of this Church, is cared for by the pastor. He preaches once a month in this section. The members of the church conduct an evergreen Sunday school; a regular conference meeting once a month, and a Sunday evening service. These meetings are largely attended and very helpful to the church. The two sections of the church raise about \$250.00 per year for all purposes. W. CAMP.

**UPPER POINT DE BUTE.** On the finest of Autumnal mornings, at Jolicure Bridge, Nov 2, six young people, the fruits of recent special services by Rev S. P. McGregor, were baptized by Dr. Steele and received into the fellowship at the morning service, Upper Point De Bute. Instead of the usual sermon, the minister addressed the new members on the all important duties devolving on them, as those who had professed repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a hope-inspiring occasion, and the older devotedly members thanked God for this new accession.

**COLLINA.** During the past few days we have been engaged in moving our church building to a better site and more central location. Although it was moved more than 100 rods not a pain of glass was broken. While it is undergoing necessary repairs services will be held in Temperance Hall near by. For more than a year Rev. W. Camp has been our pastor, but as Sussex and Cardwell require so much of his labors he has but little time to spend with us, but during the time he has been with us there has been an advance all along the lines. His sermons are rich in thought and full of gospel truth and he is much esteemed for his work's sake. Our Senior Deacon William Kierstead is in his 94th year. He and his wife (Elizabeth Ganong) who is now 90 years of age came to this place from Springfield their native parish seventy-one years ago and have since that time continuously resided on the same farm. They have both been members of the Baptist church 69 years, while he has served as deacon for (i. e.) Studholm Baptist church 62 years or during its entire existence. That their long and Godly lives have had a powerful influence for good in this community all admit and while mostly all of their associates of earlier years have preceded them to the "Better Land" quite a large number of their friends of later years met at their home on the evening of Oct. 27th to unite with them in celebrating the 71st anniversary of their marriage. They both addressed those present giving some of their pleasant experiences and telling of their kind relations with their neighbors during all the years. As a token of respect they were presented with \$60.00. There were present as visitors their double nephew, G. W. Ganong, M. P., and a more distant relative Dr. J. H. Gray of Fairville, both whom made admirable speeches just suitable to the occasion. Their living descendants are 7 children, 52 grand children, 49 great grand children and 5 great great grand children. Among their relations are Deacon James Keirstead of Springfield, aged 90 years, an only surviving brother of our deacon and Mrs. Sarah West of Hampton aged 88 years his only surviving sister. The names of three of their nephews may be given, Rev. E. K. Ganong of Springfield, Rev. E. M. Keirstead, D. D. of Acadia University (double nephew) and Rev. J. B. Ganong, B. D., of Hillsboro. What gives added interest to the occasion and is surely unique is the fact that on the same evening of the 71st anniversary of the aged couple their eldest son H. B. Keirstead and wife of Groton, Mass., celebrated the 51st anniversary of their marriage. The writer remembers being present 51 years ago on the occasion of their marriage which was solemnized by his father the late Rev. Elias Keirstead eldest brother of our aged deacon.

Nov. 8th, 1902.

J. I. K.