

## Lesson X.

## RUTH'S WISE CHOICE

December 8, 1907

**THE LESSON SETTING**—In the days of the Judges, a man named Elimelech, with his wife Naomi and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion lived at Bethlehem. A famine, probably caused by drought, came upon the land, and Elimelech and his family went to dwell in the fertile land of Moab. Here Elimelech died, and his two sons married Moabitish wives, Orpah and Ruth respectively. After a while Mahlon and Chilion die likewise, and Naomi decides upon returning to Bethlehem. Her two daughters-in-law accompany her in her journey, probably as far as the boundary between Moab and Israel. There she bids them return to their own home in Moab.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.—Ruth 1: 16.

Memorize vs. 16, 17. **THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Ruth 1: 14-22. Read Ruth, chs. 1 to 4.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her <sup>1</sup> gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, <sup>2</sup> or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: my people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me.

18 <sup>3</sup> When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, <sup>4</sup> then she *le* speaking unto her.

**Revised Version**—<sup>1</sup>god; <sup>2</sup>and; <sup>3</sup>And when; <sup>4</sup>Omit then; <sup>5</sup>the women said.

**Daily Readings**—(Courtesy, I. B. R. A.)—M.—A sad parting, Ruth 1: 1-10. T.—Ruth's wise choice, Ruth 1: 14-22. W.—Ruth and Boaz, Ruth 2: 1-12. Th.—Kindness of Boaz, Ruth 2: 13-23. F.—Boaz marries Ruth, Ruth 4: 1-12. S.—The love of Christ, Eph. 3: 14-21. 8.—Inseparable love, Rom. 8: 31-39.

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

**I. THE DECISION.**—14. They; Orpah and Ruth. Lifted up their voice, and wept; because either they must part with one who had become a mother to them, or they must leave their own country to go amongst strangers. Again. For the second time Naomi had bidden them return to their own people. At first they had

both said they would go with her to Bethlehem, v. 10. Orpah kissed her; and returned to her people. Ruth clave unto her; with a tender, faithful love.

15. Behold. See in Orpah's return an example, which it were wise to follow. Sister in law . . . unto her people. The attraction of her own mother's home and life among her kindred was stronger than her love to Naomi or her interest in God's land and law. Unto her god (Rev. Ver.). By going back to her mother's house Orpah returned to the worship of the Moabites' god.

16, 17. Intreat me not to leave thee. Ruth had counted the cost, and nothing could move her from her fixed resolve. Or to return. For Naomi's sake she would give up home and kindred and country. Thou . . . I. Thenceforth these two would share the same lot. Thy people . . . my people. Strong indeed was the love which could overcome the ties of race and kindred. Thy God my God;

19 So they two went until they came to Beth'lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth'lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and <sup>5</sup> they said, Is this Na'omi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Na'omi, call me Mar'a: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why <sup>4</sup> then call ye me Na'omi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Na'omi returned and Ruth the Moabi'tess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Mo'ab: and they came to Beth'lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

the best part of Ruth's choice. Where thou . . . there will I be buried; a declaration of her resolve to be one with Naomi, in the other world, as well as in this world. The Lord do so to me, etc.; a common form of oath.

**II. THE JOURNEY.**—18, 19a. Stedfastly minded . . . left speaking.

The choice had been made and further opposition was useless. So they two went; on their long and toilsome journey.

**III. THE HOMECOMING.**—19b-22. Came to Bethlehem; where Naomi had a little property, ch. 4: 3. City was moved. See Oriental Sidelight. Is this Naomi? Who left the place some ten years before this. Not Naomi; "winsome" "pleasant". Mar'a; "bitter". Went out full; rich, not in money, but in the possession of a husband and two sons. Home again empty; bereft of both husband and sons.

The Lord hath testified against me. Naomi thought that her troubles were a proof that the Lord was displeased with her; but see Heb. 12: 6. Naomi . . . and Ruth . . . came to Bethlehem in . . . barley harvest; that is, in April. The beautiful story goes on to tell that Boaz, a rich kinsman of Naomi, took Ruth as his wife, and that she became the mother of Obed, the grandfather of King David (ch. 4: 13-17), thus finding a place



REAPING WITH A SICKLE