



LESSON.—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1907.

Ruth's Wise Choice.

Ruth i., 14-22. Memory verses 16, 17. Read the book of Ruth.

Golden Text.

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.—Ruth i., 16.

Home Readings.

Monday, December 2.—Ruth i., 1-13.
 Tuesday, December 3.—Ruth i., 14-22.
 Wednesday, December 4.—Ruth ii., 1-17.
 Thursday, December 5.—Ruth ii., 18—iii., 7.
 Friday, December 6.—Ruth iii., 8-18.
 Saturday, December 7.—Ruth iv., 1-17.
 Sunday, December 8.—Psa. cxvi.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Have any of you ever been very hungry and not able to get anything to eat? I do not suppose you have, but it is a very awful thing to suffer from. Here in our beautiful country we do not have the awful famines that sometimes sweep over other lands such as China and India. You will likely remember hearing about the sad things that happened in the recent famine in China. Long, long ago, in Canaan, probably about the same time that Samson was alive, a mother and father lived with their two little boys. One of these terrible famines came over their country, and they decided to go away from home.

Complete the story until the lesson opens, and then spend a little while longer on showing how it was Ruth's beautiful love that has made her remembered for so many years. Try to make the children understand how much love can do. Of necessity Naomi must have first shown love to Ruth, and this can be used to illustrate how we, by our loving natures, may be able to win others to God as Naomi did Ruth. Complete the story before closing the lesson, as it all comes within the scope of the study.

FOR THE SENIORS.

It is impossible when reading this short but marvellous little book to help wondering at the sweetness of the characters concerned in the tale, considering the disturbances of the times, the corrupt practices of the surrounding heathen nations, and the laxity into which the Israelites as a nation had fallen. The probable contemporaries are either Gideon or Eli, and in either case at any time between the land was exceedingly unsettled. In the family concerned the true worship of God seems to have been largely retained. Although we learn little of Elimelech, his name signifies 'Man of God.' As to Naomi the power of her religion is evident in the effect it had on those who were likely more than any others to discover and enlarge on any defects. Her daughter-in-law loved her with the deepest affection, both being ready to sacrifice home and friends, to exile themselves for her sake. Truly Orpah was deterred by Naomi's plain speech with regard to any future prospects, but nothing could destroy Ruth's resolve. Naomi, 'Win-some' or 'Pleasant,' must have truly won her name. The two sons bore names signifying ill health, Mahlon, 'the Sickly,' and Chilion, 'the Pining One,' and their early death seems to bear out the supposition that they were never strong. It was probably the thought of how the famine might affect these boys that induced the mother and father to leave home. Of the remaining member of the family, Boaz,

the next of kin, little too high can be said. He is a character whose greatness shines out in all his recorded words and acts. The gentle Moabitish girl trusted him implicitly, and the characteristic signified by his name, 'Active,' was thoroughly understood by Naomi (Ruth iii., 18). A decisive, God-fearing, chivalrous, just and gentle man, his character is a pleasing study.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verse 18. She was steadfastly minded. Steadfastness is one of the virtues crowned by history. Whether seen in Antigone of the Greeks—that ideal sister who would not desert even the dead body of her brother—or in Penelope, who trusted for twenty years in the returning ships of her husband, or in the disciples around Christ who died at last, here and there, in obedience to their attachment, or in the long line of martyrs whose blood is sprinkled all over the leaves of history, this steadfastness stands forth in unwavering excellence.—David Swing.

Why Mr. Moody insisted upon Immediate Decision. One Sunday night in Chicago, Dwight L. Moody chose for his text 'What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' and his closing words to his immense congregation were: 'I wish you would take this text home with you and turn it over in your minds during the week, and next Sunday we will decide what to do with Jesus of Nazareth.' That night the great fire broke out and many of his audience perished. Mr. Moody never forgot the impression thus made upon him of the lost opportunity, and in all his work afterwards he never said, 'We will decide next week,' but rather 'We must decide now that thy God shall be my God.'

There are two elements that go to the composition of friendship, each so sovereign that I can detect no superiority in either, no reason why either should be first named. One is truth. A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud. . . . The other element of friendship is tenderness. When a man becomes dear to me I have reached the goal of fortune. The end of friendship is a commerce the most strict and homely that can be joined. It is for aid and comfort through all the relations and passages of life and death. It is fit for serene days and graceful gifts and country rambles, but also for rough roads and hard fare, poverty and persecution.—Emerson.

It is only the great-hearted who can be true friends; the mean and cowardly can never know what true friendship means.—Charles Kingsley.

The truest wisdom is a resolute determination.—Bonaparte.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

Ruth's passionate burst of tenderness is immortal. It has put into fitting words for all generations the deepest thoughts of loving hearts, and comes to us over all the centuries between as warm and living as when it welled up from that pure, heroic soul. The two strongest emotions of our nature are blended in it, and each gives a portion of its fervor—love and religion.

That torrent of love swept away all opposition. I daresay that they said little more as they toiled along, two weary women, on the hot road to Bethlehem. Ruth would be silent because she poured her heart out, and Naomi, because she was drinking in Ruth's spoken love, and both, because they were at rest and had no need to talk.

There is no need of love for so heroic a type, nor of protestations so vehement, in the ordinary family life of most of us. But how the prose of it would be lifted up, and the essential sweetness of it increased, if our family love was a little less tongue-tied! It is far more often too reticent than too voluble.

Feeling may be talked away, but it may also be killed by never being allowed to come to words, and there are more households in America and England robbed of their greatest blessing, recognized family love, by reserve than by gush. If Ruth teaches us the preciousness and nobleness of family affection, that will be the best lesson from her story.—Maclaren, in the 'Sunday School Times.'

'Here we have the eternal appreciation of every-day virtue and service in the midst of little, ordinary things, and the Divine recognition of these as powers in making the world what God wants it to be. It is meant to teach that in the timid breast of timid woman there may reside an energy which affects human life and the destinies of ages more even than clattering arms and clashing armies. . . . And Ruth, bringing into Judah only a woman's heart filled with a wonderful love, was able to do more for the land of her exile than its soldiers spending themselves in battle all along its frontiers.'

BIBLE REFERENCES.

Heb. xi., 25, 26; Psa. lxxxiv., 10; Rom. xiv., 5; Josh. xxiii., 8; Rom. xii., 10; Prov. xxxi., 30; I. Cor. xv., 58; Prov. xlviii., 14; Rom. viii., 38, 39.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, December 8.—Topic—Lessons from an old love story. The book of Ruth. Read in the meeting Ruth ii., 10-20.

C. E. Topic.

OUR WORK.

Monday, December 2.—The work of our hands. Ps. xc., 17.

Tuesday, December 3.—The work of the Lord. I. Cor. xv., 58.

Wednesday, December 4.—A mind to work. Neh. iv., 6.

Thursday, December 5.—How Hezekiah worked. II. Chron. xxxi., 20, 21.

Friday, December 6.—How Ezra worked. Ez. vii., 10.

Saturday, Dec. 7.—How we should work. Eph. vi., 6, 7.

Sunday, December 8.—Topic—Working for God. Hag. i., 7, 8; ii., 4.

What the Sunday-School Teachers Ought to be.

The qualifications of a Sunday-school teacher, to which I would call attention, are in addition to a consistent Christian life, without which all natural and acquired ability will be in vain. Let it be taken for granted, once for all, that men and women that can do good work in our Sunday schools must be devoted Christians. Everything in connection with the teachers' work is subordinate to the religious idea. Hence his preparation must be pre-eminently spiritual.—Selected.

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