

Picture the scene described in vs. 8-13. Naomi was elderly, poor, bereaved and homeless. Although Orpah and Ruth belonged to a foreign and heathen nation, she had learned to love them dearly and had won their love. Now the time had come to say farewell and Naomi's unselfish love is shown in her expressions of gratitude to them, her wishes that happiness and prosperity might come to them, and her refusal to accept their offer to forsake their own people and return with her to Bethlehem.

How did they act when she urged them to return? V. 14. What is the meaning of "clave"? Why is "again" used? Orpah's offer to accompany her mother-in-law had been honest. She really loved her, but not with the unselfish, self-sacrificing love that Ruth bore toward her. The moment described in v. 15, when she saw Orpah walking away from them toward their former home, and Naomi reminded her of all she was giving up, was the hardest test of Ruth's devotion. Have her final decision (vs. 16, 17) read in unison, and be sure that these verses are thoroughly understood. Ask how

Ruth had come to know the God of Israel, and dwell on the influence of Naomi's life. Ruth would rather face poverty and loneliness where Naomi's God was worshiped, than return to comfort and prosperity in a land where he was unknown.

Try to make your pupils see Naomi and Ruth walking along the hot, uneven country and have their arrival at Bethlehem (vs. 19-22) described. The two strange women coming unexpectedly into the little town would excite curiosity, but when it was discovered that one was Naomi, so sadly altered, pity as well as curiosity was aroused. Question on the meaning, Naomi and Mara. Ask if Naomi had anything to be thankful for and emphasize God's great kindness in giving her such a daughter as Ruth.

Questioning to find out what else the pupils know about Bethlehem will connect the birth of Jesus and the home of David with that city. Tell the story of Ruth's efforts to provide for herself and Naomi, of her marriage to Boaz and of their son Obed being the grandfather of David, and one of the ancestors of Jesus.

FOR TEACHERS IN THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

Teachers in the Primary Department should study carefully the scholars' materials in the PRIMARY QUARTERLY.

INTRODUCTION. When you know that this story really began and ended in Bethlehem of Judea, perhaps you will think it is the Christmas story, but it is not. It is about a gentle, loving young woman named Ruth, who long years afterward became the great-grandmother of King David.

One time there was a famine in Judea, that is, there was not grain or food enough for the people to eat, so some of them went away to places where there was plenty. Among the Israelites who went were a man and his wife and two sons who went to the land of Moab across the river. But when the famine was over they still stayed on in the land of Moab, and the sons grew to be men and married young women of that heathen land, one named Ruth and one named Orpah. Then a sad thing happened. First the father died, and then the two sons, and the sad mother, Naomi, was left in that

strange land with the two young widows of her sons.

THE STORY. Back in Bethlehem were Naomi's old friends, so she decided that that was where she wanted to go. Ruth and Orpah both loved her very dearly, and they walked part way with her when she started on her long, sad, lonely journey. She would walk all the way, perhaps carrying her few clothes and a little food in a bundle. When the time really came to say good-by, they both cried bitterly and said they would go all the way with her, but Naomi urged them to go back and finally Orpah did.

Ruth loved her hold home and her own land as much as Orpah did, but lonely Naomi, her husband's mother, was her mother, too, and had no one to care for her, so Ruth said that she was going back to Judea with her. Naomi talked to her and told of the hard long journey and of the new home where they would be poor and where it would all be