

RUTH.

Mrs. A. P. Hathaway.

Because of the famine in Bethlehem—Judah, many, many years ago, a certain man, Elimelech by name, with his wife, Naomi, and their sons, Mahlon and Chilion, went into the country of Moab and sojourned there. As time went on, Elimelech died. Then the sons married, Orpah and Ruth being the names of their wives. Then Mahlon and Chilion died. Thus these three widows are left to mourn their loss together. Naomi's heart would naturally turn to her native country, and, too, she hears that "the Lord has visited his people in giving them bread." Spiritual and temporal prosperity were closely linked in those days, and God's people acknowledged His hand in all their earthly blessings. So Naomi goes forth in her loneliness to her former home, her heart sad within her because of her bereavement. In loving sympathy, her two daughters-in-law accompany her, for can they not understand, by their own sorrow, a part, at least of hers?

They have come now on their journey, to a place where decision is necessary. They must either go with Naomi or return to Moab,

So there comes to us each a decisive moment, SOMETIME in our lives, when tremendous results hinge upon seemingly slight actions. But He who reads our hearts, sees deeper than human eyes, and is weighing our motives and waiting to see if we will go forward or back. Orpah "kissed" Naomi; Ruth "clave" unto her. Here we have a perfect representation of two classes in the religious world, an illustration of "good" and "stong ground" hearers. Naomi urges them both to return to their home. God always puts us to the test, in some way, to prove us, whether we will walk with Jesus or not. I was once in a tent meeting where the preacher, instead of urging people to come to the altar, said, "Don't you DARE come unless you mean business." Jesus made very plain the scorn with which one would be regarded who made a large beginning in natural things and failed. Both Ruth and Orpah STARTED with Naomi. "And there went great multitudes with him; and he turned, and said unto them, if any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish." How many "start" as we say, to follow the Lord, but after a while turn back into the world, and are lost sight of, as Orpah was. We never hear of her again. A great many people may tell you "I cannot remember when I did not love the Lord," but their religion, like Orpah's affection, seems to consist mostly in sentiment. But we turn with delight to Ruth, and the picture of her sweet, strong love, though our hearts ache for Orpah, and all whom she represents: who have no conception of what their loss is, in turning back to their gods. Naomi, we know, must have been a staunch follower of her God, else Ruth would not have been attached to the Jewish religion; for while she loved her mother-in-law for her own sake, yet there was something stronger than personal affection, merely, "Thy people shall be my people and THY GOD MY GOD."

"When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her." There comes a time, after God has tested us, and sees that we choose His will in all things, that He sends the glory down into our souls, and we have the witness that we are completely abandoned to Him. Praise His Name!

Ruth did not go back to Moab to visit. Oh, how many have lost the keenest and sweetest of their experience by toning down in some way, to please some dear relative or friend! It takes the very grace of God in our souls to say and to mean "Thy people shall be my people." There is a union of souls among God's separated people that exceeds the fondest natural love. There are many misunderstood to-day, by their own kin; even accused of insanity, as Jesus was by his brethren, because the "wisdom of this world" cannot comprehend the action of the Spirit in a consecrated soul. Let us have a steadfast mind to go with Jesus. Keep clear of worldliness in every form. Return not to the company of your former sinful associates, unless there in the will of God to help them up. KEEP AWAY FROM MOAB

It is wonderful to note the blessed results of Ruth's choice. She and Naomi evidently had not an abundance of means, and Ruth, in her filial devotion, asks that she may go to a harvest field to glean after the reapers. She is led by the Spirit to the right place, a part of the field which belonged to Boaz, a wealthy kinsman of her father-in-law....As he comes to the reapers and sees Ruth among his maidens, he inquires who she is, and, on being told, shows her great kindness. She is filled with wonderment, and bowing before him, asks the reason for her finding grace in his eyes. Dear, simple-hearted Ruth! So absorbed in doing her duty, so free from selfishness, she does not dream of deserving any special notice. But Boaz said "it hath been fully showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast 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."

How his kindness and courtesy comforted the heart of the little Moabitish damsel, and how happy must she have been that God had raised up so true a friend for her, in her new home! And now there is to be ample provision for their temporal needs, for Boaz has not only told her to stay in his field and reap, but has secretly charged the reapers to purposely let fall some handfuls of grain for her. What an illustration of Matt. 6:33—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"! Also of this word, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The God who has saved us through His Son, and thus given us the spiritual Bread and Water of Life, will not fail to "supply all our need" in temporal things. How blessed then to "trust in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy"! And then, afterward, came to Ruth the glorious honor of being in the ancestry of Jesus. This is the earthly climax of her wonderful life story. A true woman, a faithful daughter, and Israelite in heart, if not in nationality, and behold her reward. She little knew that day when she turned her back on Moab, what a blessed life was before her! Neither can we know the joy that awaits us in Christ until we have let God sever the last tie and break the last fetter that binds us to the world, and have let go all else, to "cleave" unto Him. Our Father commands us to "come out," "be separate," "touch not the unclean thing" which is SIN, and we shall be His sons and daughters. And Jesus' word is eternally true—whosoever will leave all to follow Him, shall have "fathers and mothers and houses and lands, with persecution."

While Ruth was in the earthly ancestry of Jesus, she also possessed a higher honor which "whosoever will" may share. "Then came his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother."

THE SIN OF WORRYING.

But all this worrying is in vain, for it does not feed or clothe our bodies, or comfort us in our troubles, or atone for our past sins, or prepare us for our future duties, or promote our growth in grace, or secure our final salvation. Our Lord teaches us that we cannot by taking thought add one cubit to our stature and that therefore it is in vain for us to harass our minds about any of these questions of food and clothing and life and growth.

And further, our Lord teaches us that this anxious care is finding fault with God and is a questioning of his providence. It is presuming upon our part to take out of God's hands and into our own that which he has kept for himself and has not entrusted to us, because he is able to care for us and we are not able to care for ourselves. When we worry about these things we act as if we thought that God did not know about them. Our Father who feeds the ravens and clothes the grass of the field feeds and clothes us. But if we worry about these things we say practically that God does not take care of us and we must take care of ourselves. Our troubles are sent to us in love and our worrying about them is a questioning of God's love. Our worrying over our sins if they have been repented of and forgiven is a discrediting of the work of the sin-bearer. Our times are in God's hands; worrying about the future is an attempt to take them out of God's hands and into our own. Our salvation is in God's hands and all the steps which we take in our journey heavenward are to be taken according to God's ordering and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And worry discredits God's providence and does despite to the spirit of his grace.

Worry is also a sin against ourselves. Anxious care breaks down our health, and this unfits us for making provision for our daily needs, for bearing our burdens, and for discharging our duties. Worry is responsible for far more sickness, suffering, and death, than is work. How many times has it brought on indigestion, nervous prostration, insanity, and death. Worry breaks down our health and ill-health reacts upon its mental condition, and we worry more and more until we are unfitted for the enjoyment of life's pleasures, the meeting of its responsibilities, and the bearing of its burdens. Worry is also injurious to the spiritual life. Oftentimes the Word of God is choked out of our hearts by the cares of this life. Oftentimes our hearts are so full of worries about the things of this life that we have no time to think about the things of the life which is to come. The soul and body are intimately connected and the care and worry which produce ill-health in the body produce also disease in the soul. Languor of body produces languor of spirit, and physical dyspepsia results in spiritual discouragement, and a torpid liver is often responsible for doubts about the salvation of the soul. Worry is a sin against our spiritual life, because it substitutes doubt for faith, slothfulness for fervor in spirit, self-reliance for trust in God, conscience for Christ, and reliance upon our own wisdom for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.—The Presbyterian.

TEMPERANCE

THE MAINE LAW.

The State of Maine is facing a grave responsibility—a vote on the Prohibitory Law. September 10th is voting day. The temperance forces are marshalled for the struggle and are carrying on a vigorous campaign. The liquor traffic forces, also, are organized and are leaving nothing undone which they think will deliver the state into their hands. The issue is one which is of interest far beyond the State of Maine. Wherever, whether in America or Europe, or any part of the world, there is an endeavor to secure freedom from the legalized drink traffic the people are looking with interest and anxiety towards Maine, and are hoping for the triumph of righteousness by the retention of constitutional prohibition. And in every part of the world the men of the liquor traffic and their friends are eagerly hoping for the defeat of prohibition in its birth place.

A brief statement of the history of the Prohibitory Law in Maine will be of interest, we think. A prohibitory law was first enacted in 1851. It was repealed in 1856. After another short experience of license the prohibitory law was re-enacted, and then ratified by a vote of the electorate, the majority for it being 22,952. The law came into operation in 1858, and since that time, a period of fifty-three years, the liquor traffic in the state has been legalized. Attempts to repeal the law have been made; but on every occasion of its reference to the people they have declared their approval of it with increased emphasis. In 1884, after having had statutory prohibition for 26 years, the people were asked to vote on the question of making prohibition constitutional. The vote polled on this question was the largest ever given there on a constitutional amendment, the majority being 47,075. Several times the resubmission of the constitutional amendment has been proposed, but without success. The present legislature, however, resolved to refer the question again to the electorate. Everywhere the liquor traffic people have hailed resubmission as a victory for them. It is certainly a step towards victory, for it gives them an opportunity to strike a blow at the prohibitory movement. On the other hand, the prohibitory forces of the state have an opportunity, by the retention of prohibition in the constitution, to give a great impetus to the world-wide movement for the delegatization of the deadly traffic.

No law has been more misrepresented than the Maine law; and concerning the effects of no law have there been more falsehoods circulated. The statements that regularly go the rounds of the press concerning arrests for drunkenness in Maine towns are designedly misleading. So persistent are they, and so apparently mere news items, that it is not surprising that some people who have no sympathy whatever with the liquor traffic are deceived into the belief that prohibitory laws are wholly ineffective.

A few years ago this writer made a careful investigation of the workings and effects of the law in Maine. The preponderance of testimony, both of officials and others was strongly favorable to the law; and even those who, for one reason or another, thought a system of license would be preferable in large cities, did not desire the repeal of the law as applied to the state at large. Nobody, not even the strongest friend of prohibition, denies that liquor is sold in Maine; but the sales and resultant evils are but a fraction of what they would be under license. Despite defects and infractions, the law has greatly diminished the consumption of intoxicants; has completely banished drink shops from fully three-fourths of the state; has so

degraded the traffic that no person with any pretention to respectability, thinks of engaging in it; has restricted illicit liquor selling more effectually than any other system has ever done; has reduced crime and enlarged savings bank deposits. The fact that it is hated by the liquor traffic people, and that the present attempt to break it down is under their leadership, is proof enough that it is a good law and should be retained.

Since the enactment of the Maine law the movement to legally prohibit the liquor traffic has become almost world-wide. Every year witnesses the widening of the area under some form of prohibitory enactment. All the time Maine has been an object lesson to other states and countries. Because this is so the liquor traffic everywhere is concentrating its wicked strength for the smiting of Maine. If Maine prohibitionists had only to fight the remnant of the traffic in that state, or even in the New England States, they would have no cause for uneasiness. But there is not a brewer or distiller or liquor dealer of any kind, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who is not concerned in this fight, and each one doing his most and worst. Unlimited money, unlimited lying, unlimited everything that is unscrupulous will be used by them.

The one danger, we think, is overconfidence on the part of the temperance voters of the State. We venture to entreat the Maine voters whom this may reach to let nothing prevent them polling every possible vote against the attempt of the organized and desperate liquor traffic of the United States to impose a legalized iniquity upon the State which has the high honour of being the pioneer in prohibitory legislation and which far more than half a century has given cheer to temperance workers everywhere. And we suggest, also, that those in Canada and elsewhere who are interested in the work of God will strengthen and give victory to the forces that make for righteousness.—Maritime Baptist.

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

The real life of faith begins after the soul has been entirely sanctified and the tendencies to doubt have been removed. Before this epoch it is a good deal of the time "the fight of faith," when sometimes it seems hard to hold the ground. Now it has become a habit of faith—a life.

The soul has come to the place where it receives everything good or apparently evil as coming either directly from the hand of God or permitted by him. It no longer believes "all things work together for good, and he can love God." But it cries with Paul, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The believer questions nothing that comes. He knows his Father is at the helm and he can make all things work together for good, and he can "make the wrath of man to praise him."

He accepts all the losses and crosses, the desertion of friends and the attacks of enemies as a part of his heritage. He repines and frets at nothing. Snubbed, or set aside, ostracized or banished is all the same on him. He is looking for nothing man can give. He finds his heritage and satisfaction in God.

With the indwelling Comforter, he neither depends on what man can do for him, nor is he craving it. Trials and sorrows are accepted without mur-

"The one who said, 'I will have my way or die,' did not change any by dying. Death changes no man's way."

"Special callings of Christ ask for special sacrifice, for which he promises special rewards."