

— THE — Sunday School Lesson

A. D. Cann

March 17th, 1946

THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF A PEOPLE

Lesson: Ruth 1:8-17

Golden Text: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Scriptures preceding our lesson today tell how a man of Bethlehem named Elimelech, with his wife Naomi and two sons, left his home in the time of famine and journeyed in the land of Moab. There he died, and Naomi married her two sons to two Moabitish women—Ruth and Orpah. Ruth is the chief subject of the lesson today. Please take time to read all the book—it only consists of four chapters.

1. **TEST: 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law: Go, return each to her mother's house**—Naomi has heard good reports from Bethlehem, relative to their harvests and is lonely for her former home and associates. She feels that her daughters-in-law might be more contented in their own home than in a strange land. She recommends that they return to their mother's home, and commits them to the Lord who is in Moab as well as in Judah.

9. **The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband**—The blessing invoked upon them is twofold—spiritual rest and rest in a new home. The real test was whether they would go to Bethlehem, where there would be fellowship with the people of the true God, or return to Moab where the people worshipped idols.

10. **Surely we will return with thee unto thy people**—Their desire to return with Naomi speaks of their love for her.

II. **CHOICE: 11. And Naomi said, turn again my daughters**—Naomi was desirous that her daughters-in-law be responsible for their own choice. She refused to influence them in making a choice on the basis of sentiment only, for which afterward they might be sorry.

12. **Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband**—Naomi means that her lot is even more lamentable than theirs, and they would do themselves an injury to depend upon her for the future.—Higley's Commentary.

13. **Would ye tarry for them**—Naomi no doubt had in mind the law as recorded in Deut. 25:5-10, which required a man to marry the widow of his brother if he had left no son. The daughters-in-law would be foolish to wait for husbands under these circumstances.

14. **Orpah kissed her mother-in-law**—A farewell kiss. **Ruth clave unto her**—Her love for her mother-in-law was deeper than Orpah's.

15. **Unto her gods**—Chemosh was the national god of Moab.

11. **CONSECRATION: 16 Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God**—Ruth was not only glad to identify herself with God's people, but with God himself. Naomi doubtless was the human instrument through whom Ruth was won to the Lord.

17. **Where thou diest**—The Christian's place of death, regardless of where it is, is one of blessing as it is the gate of Heaven.

There are three great choices in life: (1) work, (2) love, (3) God. Ruth puts God first and in so doing it looks as though she would be the loser, but the opposite is the truth as subsequent Scriptures and all experiences prove.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what ways were Orpah and Ruth tested?

2. Shew the difference in character of the two daughters-in-law.

3. Doubtless Naomi was the means of leading Ruth to the Lord; shew the importance of noble Christian living in order to lead others to Christ.

4. What are three great decisions in life and shew which is most important and why?

March 10, 1946

A PEOPLE IN CONFUSION

Lesson: Judges 2:7—11:16-23

Golden Text: "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear." Hebrews 13:6.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The book of Judges mark a period of transition in the history and government of Israel. The Israelites had entered into Canaan, but the native inhabitants had not yet been driven out. Among these the Israelites settled, intermarried, imitated many of their idolatrous practices, and became more or less degenerate. They were thus an easy prey to the attacks of other nations and tribes. It was to meet these attacks that the "judges" were successively raised up.

1. **OBEDIENCE: Judges 2:7: And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua**—This shews the powerful influence exerted by a godly life. **All the great works of the LORD that he did for Israel**—Perhaps the greatest work of Joshua was leading Israel into the rest of the earthly Canaan. In this respect he was a type of Jesus who leads the Christian Israel into the rest of heart holiness.

II. **DISOBEDIENCE: Judges 2:11: And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim**—The children of Israel forgot God and consequently declined in faith and morals. "Baal-worship was grossly licentious and corrupted the morals of all who took part in such worship." Higley's Commentary.

III. **DELIVERANCE: Judges 2:16: The Lord raised up judges which delivered them**—The persons called judges were the heads or chiefs of the Israelites who governed the Hebrew republic from the days of Moses and Joshua till the time of Saul. They were lieutenants of the Supreme God and were always among the Israelites, chosen by him in a supernatural way. They had no power to make or change laws; they were only to execute them under the direction of the Most High God, therefore, was king in Israel: the government was theocracy; and the judges were His deputies. Condensed from Clarke's Commentary.

IV. **DISOBEDIENCE: 17: They would not hearken unto their judges**—Their religious experience was largely that of sinning and repenting.

18. **It repented the LORD because of their groaning**—Strictly speaking, God never repents. Because his attitude toward evil is always the same and men's attitude toward evil changes therefore God's attitude toward men must change.

19. **They ceased not from their own doings nor from their stubborn ways**—Stubbornness is one of the traits of carnality. Israel's rest was in proportion to her obedience. The rest of faith for Christian Israel is in proportion to obedience and consecration. If time, money, service, etc., be taken from the altar, soul rest is broken and can only be restored through repentance and restitution.

20. **The anger of the LORD was hot against Israel**—It would be injustice to those who obey, if God failed to correct or punish those who do not obey.

V. **CONFUSION: 21. "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died."** As a people, they never had personal courage, discipline, or hardihood, sufficient to stand

before their enemies: the advantages they gained were by the peculiar interference of God. This they had while obedient; when they ceased to obey, his strong arm was no longer stretched out in their behalf; therefore their enemies continued to possess the land which God purposed to give them as their inheritance for ever." Dr. Clarke.

22. **I may prove Israel**—This is a figure of speech taken from a father who mistrusts the obedience of his son and places him in such circumstances that by his good or evil conduct, he will justify his suspicions or give proof of his fidelity.

23. **Therefore the LORD left these nations without driving them out hastily**—If God had driven out the inhabitants at once it would have left much waste land which would have been inhabited by wild beasts. This reason together with those mentioned are reasons why God did not drive out the inhabitants all at once.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Of whom was Joshua a type?

2. Describe the government under the judges.

3. What happened to the children of Israel when they did not hearken to the judges?

4. Give reasons why the inhabitants of Canaan were not driven out of the land at once.

5. Discuss the extent in which history repeats itself in the evil and anti-religion of our day.

TRIUMPH IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

R. Barclay Warren

Suffering will always remain something of a problem. Paul was himself a great sufferer. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (II. Cor. 11). Greater than these perhaps was "that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?" But Paul was able to relate his sufferings to Christ and the Church in a way that enabled him to rejoice in them: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. 1:24). Even his thorn in the flesh was an opportunity for God's strength to be perfected in his weakness. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

We can't banish suffering. If we can increase in virtue under the strain, that is good. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5) But if we are servants of Christ and can view our sufferings as for His sake and for the sake of His Church, then with God's help we can rejoice in it. It isn't enough to grin and bear it. We must gain this higher level of triumph in the midst of suffering. Thus shall we know the fellowship of Christ's suffering.