

**RUTH, A
POEM, PP. 4-48**

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Ruth, a poem, pp. 4-48 by J. D. Paul

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R U T H,

A POEM.

BY

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995.

And many a father to his first-born said,
Thrice happy he, whom Naomi shall wed.
To charms like these, was Elimelech cold?
A man not heartless, stoical, nor old;
He was of Judah's race, and fair repute,
Nor unsuccessful urg'd his am'rous suit;
Her gen'rous heart no coy resistance mov'd,
He woo'd, and won, the beauteous maid he lov'd.
Their marriage bed was blest, so happy they,
Years pass'd like days, and life was holy day;
Two sons she bare, and those she taught to know
From what pure source eternal blessings flow.
But Elimelech was of Esau's clay,
Firm for an hour, fickle for a day—
The Lord was not his portion, but the earth,
And earth-born pleasures, revelry, and mirth.
To him in vain the Levite early taught
What mighty deeds by faith the patriarchs wrought;
He spoke of Abraham's flesh like Jews profane,
As if it won what faith alone can gain.
He little priz'd the land to Abraham given,
Where God alone reveal'd the laws of heav'n;

But Elimelech, yielding, left his place,
And sought, in Moab, shelter for his race ;
His wife, sweet Naomi, the good, the fair,
Whose pride was all things with her lord to share,
Joy of his heart, and glory of his name,
With two young sons to Moab's vallies came ;
Moab was unaccursed still—the vine,
From clust'ring grapes produc'd the rosy wine.
In golden pride, upon the spreading plain,
Wav'd the rich produce of ungather'd grain ;
Mahlon and Chilion hail'd the blessed change,
These sons of Naomi, well pleas'd to range ;
Led the young flocks where winding streamlets flow,
And with the early husbandman would go ;
All seem'd to prosper—what they sought was found,
And plenty welcom'd them on Moab's ground.
But, oh, within ! like those from Ægypt led,
Who long'd for flesh, and loath'd the manna bread,
Upon their faithless hearts a leanness stole,
And holy thoughts and peace forsook their soul.
No Sabbaths there to curb their stubborn will,
No Levite there faith's precepts to instil ;

No more their fam'ly separate to God,
Now heathens freely o'er their threshold trod ;
To feast and dance th' uncircumcised came,
Till they were only Israelites in name.
Mahlon and Chilion, now to manhood grown,
Take their own way, adopt their parent tone,
Among the Moabitish women rove,
And worship idols to obtain their love.
Fair Naomi seem'd bless'd, and knew no joys
But in her husband's love, her hopeful boys ;
Her husband gentle, all affection they,
Love crown'd the night, and duty bless'd the day.
Oh, Elimelech, better had it been
To suffer famine for thy country's sin,
Better in Israel to pine and die,
Than live with Moab in prosperity !
One sunny day, o'er Elimelech's face
A deadly paleness left its livid trace ;
His soul seem'd wither'd, in his marble hall,
His wife and sons beheld him stagg'ring fall—
No word escap'd his lips, no word of pray'r,
But all were wrapp'd in helpless, mute despair.

Once, only once, he rais'd his clammy hand,
And seem'd to point where lay his native land ;
As if his soul, tho' dying, seem'd to turn,
And o'er his long-neglected country yearn—
Then sank in silence on his fond wife's breast,
Leaning on her to find his wonted rest.
With fev'rish lips and shorten'd breath he lies,
And on the bosom that he lov'd, he dies.

Alas, poor Naomi! When griefs assail,
Then Truth lifts up false friendship's specious veil.
Among her Moabitish heathen friends
No word of sympathy its hand extends ;
No priest was there to whisper, " Peace, be still,
" And bow beneath the all-commanding will ;"
No weeping kindred there to give relief,
And seem to share her unavailing grief.
Fain would she then have turn'd to Judah's land,
To seek some solace 'midst her kindred band :
But now her sons, self-will'd, beyond controul,
Saw unconcern'd the anguish of her soul—