

conceit and in our selfishness, but that in the great multitude of mercies we may recognize that hidden hand which is the source of all power.—Henry Ward Beecher.

How much there is to be thankful for! One blessing taken, how many are left. One sorrow entering a corner of the heart, how many blessings it has to crowd before it can find room. The true Christian is always a thankful Christian.

If gratitude is due from children to their earthly parents, how much more is the gratitude of the great family of man due to our Father in heaven!—Hosea Ballou.

He that preaches gratitude pleads the cause both of God and man; for without it we can neither be sociable nor religious.—Seneca.

Many a man feels his heart dilating over his roasted turkey at the family Thanksgiving feast, who is guilty of no little growling and grumbling under God's providences during the rest of the twelve-month. His gratitude is very much like the devotion of those who worship God on Sunday, and quite forget Him during the week; or like the spasmodic piety of some Christians who are fervent for the conversion of sinners during the "Week of Prayer," but seldom attend any prayer-meetings after the sacred week has passed. Periodical religion is about on a par with periodical honesty, or periodical temper.—Dr. Cuyler.

#### QUESTIONS.

What memory have we for our blessings?

How may we express our gratitude? Is every day a thanksgiving day for us?

Name some reasons why Canada should be grateful.

Why should the church be thankful?

#### HINTS FOR THE LEADER.

Prepare a programme similar to the one suggested for the last topic. Do not be satisfied with simply having a paper read by some member of the League, but aim at having as many as possible take part. Turn the meeting into a testimony service before closing, and ask everybody who has anything to be thankful for to tell about it. This ought to be a most inspiring meeting.

### DEC. 8.—LESSONS FROM AN OLD LOVE STORY: THE BOOK OF RUTH

#### READ IN THE MEETING.

Ruth 2, 10-30.

#### HOME READINGS.

- Mon., Dec. 2.—A mother's misfortune. Ruth 1, 1-5.  
Tues., Dec. 3.—A mother's sacrifice. Ruth 1, 6-13.  
Wed., Dec. 4.—A daughter's unselfishness. Ruth 1, 14-22.  
Thur., Dec. 5.—A daughter's toil. Ruth 2, 1-9.  
Fri., Dec. 6.—Grandmother of David. Ruth 4, 16-22.  
Sat., Dec. 7.—An ancestor of Christ. Matt. 1, 1-16.

#### FOREWORD.

The Bible is full of fine love stories. The love of Jonathan for David and of David for Jonathan. The love of Paul for his people Israel. The love of Christ for all men, and so on. But neither in the Bible nor anywhere else that I know of is there another such story of love told as the love of Ruth for Naomi. It is as pure as gold and as strong as death.

Many waters cannot quench Ruth's love. And her confession is the most beautiful confession of love in all the world.

When Benjamin Franklin was United States Minister at the Court of France, on one occasion he was passing an evening with a company of literary ladies and gentlemen, and the conversation, turning on Oriental life, he read to them the story of Ruth. Charmed with its beautiful simplicity, with enthusiastic expressions of delight they eagerly desired to know in what volume the exquisite pastoral was written. It was not a little to the surprise and chagrin of these French ladies and gentlemen to learn that it was a portion of Scripture that had elicited their admiration.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF RUTH'S LOVE.

1. It was steadfast. Orpah goes "back to her people and her gods." She loves Naomi in a kind of way, but her affection was not of the enduring kind. She conducted herself with kindness and tenderness toward her mother-in-law, but her love could not stand the test to which it was subjected. Her resolution failed, and she went back. Not so with Ruth. Her devotion to Naomi was perhaps less impulsive, but more steadfast, and grew out of careful reflection. It was a deep, undying attachment. "She was steadfastly minded to go with her."

2. It was a self-denying love, which involved sacrifice. To start out with Naomi meant not pleasantness, but bitterness. As far as she could see there was nothing before her but loneliness, homelessness and perpetual widowhood. Yet she was ready for work, ready to beg, ready to die for the one she loved.

3. It was a courageous love. What a severe trial it must have been to Ruth's constancy when she saw her sister-in-law, who had probably been the friend of her early widowhood, turning back again to Moab and leaving her alone with Naomi! We are greatly influenced by sympathy and numbers. Notwithstanding all these influences she faces the future with courage and hopefulness.

#### WHAT RUTH CHOSE.

1. She chose the true God.—"Thy God shall be my God."

2. She chose the religious path.—"Where thou goest I will go."

3. She chose a religious habitation.—"Where thou lodgest, I will lodge."

4. She chose religious associations.—"Thy people shall be my people."

5. She chose the good woman's death and burial.—"Where thou diest, I will die."

Show how necessary it is for those who desire to be Christians to-day to follow the example of this young woman.

#### THE REWARD OF VIRTUE.

1. Boaz praises her fidelity (chap. 2, v. 11). "It hath been shewed unto me," etc. Ruth now begins to reap the abundant harvest which is growing for her in the Divine purposes of mercy, a harvest of which Boaz's fields were only a part. She had been faithful in that which appeared to be the least, and now she was to be rewarded in that which seemed to be much.

2. A Divine recompense (chap. 2, v. 12). "The Lord recompense thy work." Though she was a stranger in a strange land she was under the wings of Israel's God. "Under whose wings thou art come to trust" (v. 12). The wings of God are strong wings, broad wings, mighty to save.

#### THE CHOICE OF RUTH.

1. It was a humble choice. She had nothing to offer but herself. She does not propose to bring anything that can make her of any worth. She pleads only for permission to be to Naomi in her future life all that affection and fidelity can make her.

2. It was an affectionate choice. Her heart was with Naomi. It was just such a choice as our Saviour would have us all make when he says, "My son, give me thine heart."

3. Ruth's choice was an entire one. There was no hesitation about the decision she should make. There was no lingering desire to carry some of Moab with her. She made the transfer of herself freely and unreservedly. When the choice of the Saviour is thus entire, how completely it opens the way for future duty! How it settles all future discussions and difficulties with a single decision!

4. It was a determined choice. Lovely and gentle as she appears, there was great dignity and firmness in Ruth's stand. Jesus requires from His followers the same determined and unshrinking choice.

5. Ruth's decision was an instant choice. She asked for no time for consideration. Her mind was made up. Her decision was settled. Why should we ever hesitate a moment over our acceptance of the Saviour's offers!

#### SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS.

An impulsive religion is not always of great value. It is better to be quiet and unobtrusive like Ruth, and to have the root of the matter in us, than to be impulsive and demonstrative like Orpah, and in the hour of trial to fall.

Those who are half-hearted in their consecration to God expose themselves to a legion of tempters. Linger on the borderland, they keep within the arrow-marks of Satan.

When it becomes clearly seen that our heart is fixed, the world gives up in despair, and leaves off speaking unto us. If a man is seen to be decided in his stand for Christ, antagonists will leave him alone. So long as he is wavering they will bring all their batteries to bear upon him.

It is heart power and not any other force that is most impressive and most enduring, even in this unappreciative world.

Blessed are the humble Ruths who will glean in any field of duty; who if they cannot preach a sermon or write a book, or deliver an eloquent address, will cheerfully read to a blind grandfather, take a flower to a sick child, or a loaf of bread to a suffering family.—Dr. C. H. Payne.

#### QUESTIONS.

What lessons are there in this story for daughters?

What of our example and influence? Does my life include any self-sacrifice? Do I trust the leadings of God's providence? Is my life such as God can bless greatly?

#### HINTS FOR THE LEADER.

This is a fine character study, which ought to be very interesting. Do not be satisfied to have a little formal paper. It is a crying shame that so many Leagues continue this practice of reading papers when it is so easy to prepare an attractive programme. Get at least a dozen persons taking an active part in this meeting, and others answering questions, and joining in the discussions. Do not read a paper. Please do not do it.