

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

MAY, 1884.

NOTE.—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [53] at the side.

A.D. 57.]

LESSON V.—CHRISTIAN LOVE.

[May 4.

1 Corinthians 13. 1-13.

THESE



THREE.

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not a charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

a Rom. 14; 1 Tim. 1. 5.

2 And though I have the gift *b* of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, *c* so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

b Matt. 7. 22.—c Luke 17. 6.

3 And *d* though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

d Matt. 6. 1, 2.

4 Charity *e* suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity *a* vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up,

e 1 Peter 4. 8.—a Or, is not rash.

5 Doth not behave itself *f* unseemly, seeketh *g* not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

f Phil. 4. 8.—g Phil. 2. 4.

6 Rejoiceth *h* not in iniquity, *i* but rejoiceth *b* in the truth;

h Psal. 10. 3; Rom. 1. 32.—i 2 John 4.—b Or, with the truth.

7 Beareth *j* all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

j Gal. 6. 2.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For *k* we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

k Chap. 8. 2.

10 But *l* when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

l Isa. 60. 19; Jer. 31. 34.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

c Or, reasoned.

12 For *m* now we see through a glass, *d* darkly; but then *n* face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

m 2 Cor. 3. 18; 5. 7; Phil. 3. 12.—d In a riddle. n Matt. 18. 10; 1 John 3. 2.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but *o* the greatest of these is charity.

o Matt. 22. 38.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The Church at Corinth was rent with parties, and vexed with ambitious members, each eager for influence, and coveting the most important positions. To such a degree did the strife of different elements rise that the graces of Christian character were in danger of being forgotten. The apostle received word of the condition of the Church, and wrote at once earnestly rebuking the sins which disgraced it, and giving instruction in the principles of knowledge which it required. Among other topics arose that of the comparative value of the various gifts of the Spirit. There were those who coveted, as that attracting most attention, the gift of tongues, or a power of speaking unknown languages. Others regarded prophecy, or the power to speak by inspiration, as the most valuable; and still others prized and prided themselves upon miracle-working and healing. The apostle shows in chapter xii. that all gifts come from one Spirit, and that it is useless to extol one at the expense of another; and then, kindling with his theme, he speaks in praise of the grace which lies at the foundation of all spiritual endowment—Christian Love; that Spirit which brings us into fellowship with God, and makes us share in the divine character. Without seeming to censure the Corinthians, he shows the glory of Christian love in contrast with their own self-seeking conduct. He presents the worth of love in comparison with the gifts which they were coveting; he shows the traits which love displays in dealing with men; he shows that when all other gifts pass away, love abides, and is eternal.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Though I speak. Paul has been referring to the gift of tongues, which was held in the highest estimation at Corinth. With the tongues. There was in the early Church a peculiar power imparted by apostolic laying on of hands, of speaking in unknown languages; not preaching the Gospel, but probably uttering ascriptions of praise. Of men and of angels. The widest view of such a gift is here presented by the apostle, to make the contrast with charity all the more marked. Corresponding to this ancient miraculous power is the gift of eloquent address at present. Have not charity. Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "love." The Greek word here