

"When the perfect has come," then the transient, relative world of knowledge will pass away. So, then, the abiding eternal virtues are *faith, hope, love*, but the greatest of these is *love*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Eloquence is not a certain mark of a loving heart.
2. A rich vocabulary—a gift of language—is not a sure sign of a heart full of love.
3. It does not certainly follow that because a teacher unravels many mysterious problems that there is love in the heart for the scholars.
4. The worldling becomes bitter under affliction, but love suffers and is sweet and kind.
5. Reserve energy in physical culture is necessary for the next day's development. Love is the latent or hidden reserve energy for spiritual development.
6. All things change and pass away, but Love abides forever.

Prismatic Lights on the Lesson.

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD.

A thousand men have written about this chapter. No one of them has ever approximated the chapter itself. It is an echo of heaven's perfect music. It is an expansion of that marvelous condensation of the second commandment. It is an expression of the essence of God. The word occurs one hundred and fourteen times in the New Testament, and should always be translated "love."

When God's precepts were too vast for our comprehension of their words he embodied them in a life. When words would be cold and lifeless his son acted them out in a thousand kindly deeds. So this lesson presents the characteristics of love, as a diamond, by its many facets shows the prismatic hues of light.

Love surpasses human and angelic eloquence, foreknowledge, science, all-moving faith, almsgiving, voluntary sacrifice of self.

It is manifested in life by long-suffering, kindness, absence of envy, humility, politeness, surrender of its own, genial temper, freedom from suspicion, joy in the truth, protects all from harm, never despairs, is in perennial flower. The southern sky gleams with the galaxy of the Cross. Every human sky may glow with a far brighter galaxy of these stars, if love illumines the heart.

Life is so arranged as to train us in every one of these supernal excellencies. There is no day that does not give opportunity to develop and perfect these Godlike qualities. It leads up to the perfect manhood. It is the first quality

developed in the babe. It is the last surviving thing in the dying man.

In every other thing we are imperfect. The eye has to be assisted for telescopic or microscopic vision. The ear is susceptible to only a few vibrations in the unlimited gamut. One's personal equation varies with state of health. In every physical particular we are imperfect. In knowledge we are lamentably deficient, and in judgment often perverse. But we may be made perfect in love. Why? Because it is God's fresh creation. He makes a perfect heart. But can it remain so? Certainly, because it is ever kept so by the constantly shed abroad love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

No wonder it is the greatest thing in the world. It is God.

Here is ideal manhood. Have we attained it?

Thoughts for Young People.

PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF LOVE.

1. *Paul is here writing about love*, plain, simple love, such as we are all familiar with. The Greek word appears one hundred and fourteen times, and ninety-six times it is rendered love. It is so rendered each time that it is used by the Saviour and by John. It is so rendered here in the Revised Version. All sorts of love—paternal, filial, brotherly, social—are outgrowths of this great possessing principle. They are the leaves, the buds, the twigs, the branches, of the "love that is of God."

2. *It is the greatest thing in the world*. Oratory was very powerful among Greeks, especially so at Corinth, but even an angel orator without love would be a clatterer. Prophecies were nothing; faith was a failure; charity (giving one's goods to the poor) was good for nothing; not even martyrdom by burning would count. The perfection of morality is a failure. But love is the fulfilling of the law.

3. *Love is perfection*. It is unselfish, does not envy, or boast, or pretend, or grasp. It is graceful, does not behave itself unseemly. It is loyal to truth. It knows how to suffer long and be kind. It is confiding. It is permanent.

4. *We may all possess this love*. Old tradition says that Joseph, when garnering the grain of Egypt, scattered husks and chaff at fountains, on streams, and before winds, that the famine-stricken everywhere might know that grain awaited them. We attain here only the hint of pure exhaustless grain. Abundance awaits all, and in perfection. All may begin and grasp and hold this heavenly, Godlike love. Faith enlightens, hope buoys, but love is the goal and abideth greatest over all.