



LESSON.—SUNDAY, AUGUST 29, 1909.

**Paul on Christian Love.**

I. Cor. xiii., 1-13. Memory verse 8.

**Golden Text.**

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.—I. Cor. xiii., 13.

**Home Readings.**

- Monday, August 23.—I. Cor. xiii., 1-13.
- Tuesday, August 24.—Jas. ii., 1-9.
- Wednesday, August 25.—Psalm cxxxiii.
- Thursday, August 26.—Matt. xxii., 34-40.
- Friday, August 27.—John xv., 10-17.
- Saturday, August 28.—Luke x., 25-37.
- Sunday, August 29.—I. John iv., 7-21.

**FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.**

A little while ago we studied part of a letter that Paul wrote to some friends of his whom he loved very dearly, and to-day we are to study something that he wrote in another letter. In this letter he was writing to some people who had been quarrelling a bit and in consequence were quite unhappy, and he tells them about something that will be able to keep them happy all the time; something that is worth more than anything else they could have; something that the more they used it, the brighter and stronger and better it would grow; something that will last for ever and ever, and never get old or worn out. Does that sound like a fairy story? You know, a good many years ago, a great many men used to spend their whole lives looking for a wonderful stone that they thought was somewhere in the world, a stone that would turn anything that it touched into gold. Do you think that would be worth finding? I don't know, but I'm afraid not. We'd get very fired of having too much gold I think. If you can get hold of it anywhere, you read the story of 'King Midas and the Golden Touch' and see how sad his power of turning things to gold made him. However, a great many people thought such a power would be a great thing to have and didn't mind spending all their lives looking for it. Well, suppose we are all too sensible to want everything turned to gold, is there anyone here who would like to have bright sunny weather all the time? I'm afraid I didn't give you time to think or you never would have said yes. Why, if we had no rain all the flowers would die and the streams would dry up and soon we would all die, too. No, we need the rain, so we must all be willing to see it coming down, even if it does stop us from going out as we had planned. But suppose anyone told us about something that would make every day happy whether it was sunny or dark with clouds, something that would make everybody happy whether they were rich or poor, do you think that would be worth having? Yes, indeed, and it is about this very thing that Paul tells us in our lesson to-day. Does anyone know what it is called? It is a little word of just four letters, a little word that you have all heard and know something about, and we call it love. If we love God, and the people about us, and the beautiful world in which God has put us, we shall be happy, so don't you think it is well worth while to get and to keep this wonderful thing called love? But you must understand that you can't have this wonderful power of making yourself and other people happy just by 'wanting' to have it; you have got to 'do' something to get it. You know those men who looked for the wonderful stone that was to make everything gold, searched and worked and dug for it, often going hungry so as to spend all their money on hunting

for the stone, and a gardener, if he plants a flower in the garden that he wants to grow, waters it, digs away the weeds, keeps the worms and caterpillars from harming it, and really works hard to have it grow. Do you think it is very easy to just say 'I'm going to love everybody' and then do it? Why, no; anything that is worth having costs you something to get, and so does love. Let us see what Paul tells us we will have to do, and what we will have not to do, if we are really going to have the right kind of love.

**FOR THE SENIORS.**

The difficulty with this lesson will be rather where to stop than anything else. It is one of the finest pieces of all Paul's writings, and coming in where it does seems all the more beautiful. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is rather unique in that it was distinctly a letter of reproof. He had heard of their dissensions, their wrong doing, their contempt of some Christian powers to the undue exaltation of others, their disorderly church services, their arrogant assumption of authority and the state of affairs cried out to him for reproof. Although he is not slow to put their wrongdoing plainly before them (I. Cor. iii., 1-3; iv., 18-21; v., 1, 2, 6; vi., 5-8; viii., 2, 12; xi., 17, 18, 21, 22, 30; xiv., 36, 40; xv., 33, 34), and to reprove them sharply, he constantly pleads his love for them, such love as that of an earnest father, and in the midst of his letter rises to such exaltation in the strength of his feeling that we have left to us this exquisite little psalm of love. It would be profitable to study in connection with this the other prominent Bible references to love, such as may be found especially in John's writings, but are thickly scattered all through the Bible: the love of God to man, the duty of love to our neighbors, and the desire that God has for the love of man. Biblical examples of Paul's statements regarding love might be given, for instance, Joseph's treatment of his brethren would illustrate the love that suffers long and is kind; John the Baptist's generous reception of the news of the increasing popularity of Christ (John iii., 27-30) shows the love that 'envieth not'; Jonathan's willingness to be second to David instead of king himself, the love that 'vaunteth not itself'; and David's love for Absalom, the love that 'beareth, . . . hopeth, . . . endureth all things.' Paul states eight things positively of love, and eight things also that love will not do. He declares the transitory nature of three Christian powers about which there was much dissension in the Corinthian church (verse 8) and places against these the three abiding Christian virtues or graces which were the most worthy of cultivation. Faith, in the sense of conscious communion with the eternal, hope, in the sense of confidence in the glories yet to be, will abide for ever, but love is the all-including, all-enveloping power which is greatest of all, for love is the very nature of God Himself.

**SELECTIONS.**

'Love is a compound thing. Paul tells us. It is like light. As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so Paul passes this thing, love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of love, the analysis of love. Will you observe what its elements are? Will you notice that they have common names; that they are virtues which we hear about every day; that they are things which can be practised by every man in every place in life; and how by a multitude of small things and ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the 'summum bonum,' is made up?

'As every lovely hue is light,  
So every grace is love.'

The spectrum of love has nine ingredients:

- Patience—"Love suffereth long."
- Kindness—"And is kind."
- Generosity—"Love envieth not."

- Humility—"Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."
- Courtesy—"Doth not behave itself unseemly."
- Unselfishness—"Seeketh not her own."
- Good Temper—"Is not easily provoked."
- Guilelessness—"Thinketh no evil."
- Sincerity—"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

These make up the supreme gift, the stature of the perfect man.—Professor Drummond.

But note that as light 'is a something more than the sum of its ingredients—a glowing, dazzling, tremulous ether, so love is something more than all its elements—a palpitating, quivering, sensitive, living thing. By synthesis of all the colors, men can make whiteness, they cannot make light. By synthesis of all the virtues, men can make virtue, they cannot make love.'

'Is not easily provoked.' The revised version omits 'easily,' as giving a false coloring. It does not lose its temper. 'We are inclined to look upon bad temper,' says Professor Drummond, 'as a very harmless weakness. We speak of it as a mere infirmity of nature, a family failing, a matter of temperament, not a thing to take into very serious account in estimating a man's character. The peculiarity of ill temper is that it is the vice of the virtuous. It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character. No form of vice is more base; not worldliness, not greed of gold, not drunkenness itself, does more to un-Christianize society than evil temper. For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking the bloom off childhood, in short, for sheer gratuitous misery-producing power, this influence stands alone.'

'Analyze as a study in temper the thundercloud itself as it gathers upon the Elder Brother's brow, in the parable of the Prodigal Son. What is it made of? Jealousy, anger, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness, doggedness, sullenness—these are the ingredients of this dark and loveless soul. In varying proportions, also, these are the ingredients of an ill temper. There is really no place in heaven for a disposition like this. A man with such a mood could only make heaven miserable for all the people in it.'

But this must be distinguished from the temper which can blaze in fiery indignation against wrongs against man. Love can flame like a volcano, and ought to on occasion.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, August 29.—Topic—Doth God care for oxen? I. Cor. ix., 9. (Band-of-Mercy meeting.)

**C. E. Topic.**

Monday, August 23.—Our invitation to the world. Isa. lviii., 6-9.

Tuesday, August 24.—Justice for all. Deut. i., 15-18.

Wednesday, August 25.—Kindness to all. Deut. xxiv., 17-22.

Thursday, August 26.—Christ for all. Tit. ii., 11-15.

Friday, August 27.—All for Christ. I. John ii., 1, 2.

Saturday, August 28.—The Bible our bulwark. Deut. iv., 5-9.

Sunday, August 29.—Topic—Home missions: Our cosmopolitan population. Luke xiii., 22-30.

**Sunday School Offer.**

Any school in Canada that does not take the 'Messenger' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.

**BOYS**

If you would like a nice rubber pad, with your own name and address, also a self-inking pad—all for a little work, drop us a card and we will tell you about it. Splendid for marking your books, etc. Address, John Dougall & Son, 'Witness' Office, Montreal.