

LESSON VIII—August 22nd, 1897.

The Excellence of Christian Love. I Cor. 13: 1-13.

(Commit to memory verses 4-7 Read chapter 13).

GOLDEN TEXT: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." I Cor. 13: 13.

PROVE THAT—We should love one another. I John 4: 11.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 89. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?* A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness, and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 142, 237, 224 232.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Excellence of christian love. I Cor. 13. *Tuesday.* Beauty of unity Psalm 133. *Wednesday.* The great commandment. Matt. 22: 34-40. *Thursday.* Sign of discipleship. John 13: 31-35. *Friday.* New commandment. I John 2: 8-17. *Saturday.* Christ's Command. John 15: 8-17. *Sabbath.* Love is of God. I John 4: 4-14. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. This chapter has been called "*The Psalm of Love*," and has been the admiration of the church in all ages. The church at Corinth had been rent by factions, and even at the Lord's Table their want of brotherly love had displayed itself. In the midst of his exhortations to them the apostle suddenly breaks forth into this magnificent poem which every scholar should learn by heart. The R. V. reads correctly, "love" for "charity" all through the chapter.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Greatest Thing in the World. vs. 1-3. II. Why it is the Greatest. vs. 4-7. III. Its Enduring Character. vs. 8-13.

1. Sounding brass—Not even musical; good for noise only. A clanging cymbal (R. V.)—Shril! and discordant, it has no music and no meaning by itself. 2. Prophecy.—This Paul himself valued more than any other gift (14: 5. Mysteries—Facts and truths which reason alone could not discover, but which are revealed by the Spirit of God, especially those relating to man's salvation. All knowledge. —The correct understanding of revealed truth; ability to expound the Scriptures and the whole range of christian doctrine. Remove mountains.—The power of working miracles the most wonderful (Matt. 17: 20; 21: 21). All endowments, even the most brilliant, are of no real value without love. These are but as the body, to which love is the soul. 3.—The most bountiful almsgiving, and the utmost self-sacrifice, have no virtue in them if love be not the motive that prompts to them (Matt. 6: 1, 2). 4. Suffereth long.—Is patient with the faults of others. Is kind.—both in word and action to everyone, but especially to the rude and unkind. Envieth not.—Is never jealous, but unselfishly pleased at the good fortune of others. Vaunteth not itself.—Is not boastful; does not "blow its own trumpet," or seek the applause of others. Puffed up.—Self-conceited. The desire for praise springs from self-esteem. Cultivate modesty, and win praise by deserving it. 5. Unseemly.—Rudely and impolitely. One who has a loving heart will never be rude. This is the secret of being a gentleman. Seeketh not her own.—Does not always "look out for number one," but is disinterested (ch. 10: 33). The opposite of a self-seeking spirit. Easily provoked —is not quick tempered, or ready to take offence at trifles. Thinketh no evil.—Does not impute bad motives to others or cherish the memory of injuries done to one's self by others. 6. Weeps over sin and its consequences, but rejoices when virtue and goodness are displayed. 7. Beareth.—R. V. margin, "covereth," conceals, or excuses the faults of others instead of disclosing them. Believeth —is not suspicious, but holds that there is often more good in a man than he gets credit for. Hopeth.—Never despairs of the worst men or grows discouraged in trying to do them good. Endureth—Bears meekly persecution and suffering for Christ's sake (2 Tim. 2: 10; Heb. 10: 32; 12: 2). 8. All things change and at last disappear "but love shall hold an endless reign." 9, 10. We shall one day realize better how partial and transitory all that belongs to this life is, but we shall never get beyond the sweet teaching of love. 11.—The heavenly life in the kingdom of love will be as much above and beyond the present as manhood is better than childhood. 12. We see in a mirror (R. V.)—The mirrors of that time were made of polished metal and gave but a dim and imperfect reflection. 13. When every thing on earth has perished these three graces remain imperishable and immortal.

LESSONS. 1. It is better to be loving than clever. 2. What we give is more than doubled when loving sympathy goes with it. 3. Always give credit for good motives if possible. 4. Heaven is the home of love.