

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, July 20th, 1879.—Christian Love.—1 Cor. xiii. 1-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 4-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 1 Cor. xii. Tuesday, 1 Cor. xiii. Wednesday, 1 Cor. xiv. Thursday, John xiii. 1-17. Friday, 1 John iii. 11-24. Saturday, 1 John iv. Sunday, Psalm cxxxiii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Worthless substitutes. Vss. 1-3. II. Attributes. Vss. 4-7. III. Eternal duration. Vss. 8-12. IV. The chief of Christian graces. Vss. 13.

QUESTIONS.—What does Paul say is the highest gift? Why is "charity," as commonly used, no equivalent for Paul's idea? How is love distinguished from almsgiving?

I. Vss. 1-3.—With what different gifts was the Corinthian church endowed? 1 Cor. xii. 28-30. Which of them were held in highest honor?

II. Vss. 4-7.—Will you state the fifteen traits of love?

III. Vss. 8-12.—How are prophesying, tongues, and knowledge short-lived? Why is true scholarship usually modest?

IV. Vss. 13.—What gifts perish? What abide? How is charity greatest of all? Col. iii. 14.

After his departure from Athens, A.D., 54, Paul went to Corinth, forty-five miles away, on the isthmus, the great commercial city of Greece, and there was greatly blessed with Gentile and Jewish converts, chiefly, though not exclusively, from the former classes, tainted with gross immoralities and intellectual pride. He remained here a year and a half. (See Acts xviii. 11).

The Epistle to the Corinthians was probably written in Ephesus in the early part of the year A.D. 57, in reply to a letter from the church asking the solution of disputed social and factious questions. The present lesson shows Christian love to be the corrective of all these evils, the best of all gifts, the highest of all virtues.

The word "charity," in the English version, is not a translation from the Greek, but a transference from the Latin Vulgate of the Roman Catholic Church. Tyndale's and Cranmer's translations, and the Geneva Bible—all made at the Reformation—properly use "love" here, in consistency with the same word used by John in saying, "God is love." Moreover, the word "charity" has come to mean almsgiving. But this is only a part of the grace of which Paul speaks, a ray only of the sun.

EXPOSITION.—I. "Gifts" Without Love. Verses 1-3.

See for the connection of this entire chapter xii. 31, where the desire for the best gifts is commended, but the caution added that there is something better than these. What that better thing is, and how much better, it is here shown.

Verse 1.—Though [if] I speak, etc.—This refers to the miraculous gift of speech in other languages than one's own, as the connection clearly shows. xii. 10, 30; xiv. 1-27. On the nature of this gift, see also Acts ii. 6-13. Angels must have some means of intelligible converse with each other, and so Paul makes a bold climax, and supposes himself, beyond all example, to be able to speak even in their language also, as well as in that of [all] men. And have not love. Whether or not the Christian gifts named were in fact ever separate from the Christian graces, including Christian love, which is Christian life, they could be separated in thought, and coveted separately, and even exclusively. This is the very point of the apostle's admonition. See ix. 27; Num. xxiv. 3, and context; John xi. 50. I am become, etc. "Sounding brass" may be either brass instruments of music in general; that is, trumpets, etc., or simply the metal. Clanging cymbals, rather than "tinkling," as they were plates of brass held, one, or two, in each hand, and struck together. Such cymbals were fit symbols of a loveless, lifeless speaking.

Verse 2.—And though I have, etc.—By prophecy direct, authoritative communications from God were made; by knowledge, God's revelations thus

made were understood. The "mysteries" are here God's purposes of redemption, iv. 1; Eph. i. 9; iii. 3, 4, 9. Paul imagines himself to know what all these are, and what they all mean. And though I have all faith, etc. Not here "the faith that works by love;" that is, "evangelical faith," which is the root of the life (vs. 13), but that which is special and specially related to the performance of miracles. Acts iii. 16; xiv. 9. See Matt. xvii. 20, from which Paul quotes, though the words to "remove mountains," sound like a proverbial phrase. I am nothing. Mark the words. We may have much, may do much, yet be nothing. Holy love is our eternal life, and without eternal life, harmony with God, who is love, we are nothing that it is worth our while to be; and so whatever we have, or do, blesses not us.

Verse 3.—And though I bestow [distribute], etc.—Even if thus moved, this movement is not the true life, nor is the reputation the true blessedness. Hence in the end it profiteth one nothing.

II. Love. Photographed. Verses 4-7.

Verse 4.—Charity [love] suffereth [beareth] long, and is kind.—It persists not in requiting evil for evil, not in simply abstaining from such requital, but in positive kindness and beneficence, to the evil doer. Envieth not. Because love desires the best good of its object, and so is not grieved, but glad when that object prospers, and the more, the more it prospers. Vaunteth. Brags, or boasts. Puffed up. Putting on haughty airs of domineering or contemptuous superiority. Surely Paul must have seen men very much like many of our day.

Verse 5.—Unseemly.—In an unbecoming way, with no delicate regard to others, and no consequent keen sense of proprieties. The soul of all truest courtesy is Christian love. Seeketh not her own. In disregard of others. See Phil. ii. 5-8. Thinketh no evil. More exactly, imputeth not the evil; that is, is ready to forgive "the evil" of which its object is guilty.

Verse 6.—Rejoiceth not in iniquity.—Christian love is holy love, the holy God its supreme object; his holy will its supreme law; the conformity of all men to that holy law its supreme desire. But rejoiceth in the truth. More exactly, rejoiceth with the truth—with the gospel, the opposite of "iniquity."

Verse 7.—Beareth all things.—See ix. 12 ["suffer all things"]. Some prefer here "covereth all things;" but "beareth," meaning, takes on every needful burden, best fits the connection. Believeth all things. Not in fond blindness to adverse facts and grounds. Hopeth all things. First from God, and then from God's own. Endureth. In faith and hope "beareth" to the very end.

III. The Perpetuity of Love. Verses 8-13.

Verse 8.—Love never faileth.—This word "never" may be taken without any limit. Eternal life is love eternal. But whether, etc. These "gifts" were instrumental, for a temporary need, serving a transient want, ministering to the introduction and production of the Divine life, scaffolding.

Verses 9, 10.—For we know in part, etc.—The reason for the assertions of vs. 8. The word "perfect," here refers primarily to the full manifestation of the truth at Christ's second coming. The contrast with "abideth," vs. 13, is thus gained.

Verse 11.—This is an obvious and natural illustration of the preceding contrast, and needs no explanation.

Verse 12.—For now we see through a glass darkly.—"Glass" is here not a window glass, but a polished, metallic mirror, such as was then in use, and which gave a far less perfect image than do our glass mirrors. Hence "darkly;" literally, in an enigma; that is, imperfectly, not the very form and features. Now I know, etc. In the last two places the word "know" is from a strong original, meaning thoroughly know.

Verse 13.—Now. Emphatic—throughout this era, "faith, hope, love." The "root, flower, and fruit." Greatest. As shown before, the very life.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, July 27th, 1879.—Victory Over Death.—1 Cor. xv. 50-58.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—John xi. 25.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Was not God good to make the greatest thing something that even a little child may do? If you cannot use fine words, if you don't know much, if you have no money, you can love. You may never be rich, or great, or beautiful, or have gay clothes, but you can always LOVE. Then, too, you can't outgrow it. The older you grow, the stronger and stronger may grow Love.

Actions speak louder than words. Is it enough to say, "I love Jesus," and yet not obey his rules?

This lesson calls Love, Charity; but we call giving money charity. But all the money we can give is nothing, unless it is a love-gift.

Love is not glad to hear of the faults of others. "What a cross girl Nellie is. She spoils all our play." "Oh!" said May, "she is sick a great deal, and we who are well, don't understand. She went without a new dress, that her lame brother might have a chair. I think that was beautiful in her."

Charity don't speak evil of others. If you know any good things of others tell them, for "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity."

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 28.

- "THE BRANCH"—Zech. vi. 12.
1. Three taverns.....Acts xxviii. 15.
 2. Hur.....Exod. xvii. 10, 12.
 3. E dom.....Num. xx. 14, 21.
 4. B ooths.....Neh. viii. 16, 17.
 5. R od.....Num. xvii. 2-8.
 6. A bimelech.....Judges ix. 48, 49.
 7. N inety-and-nine.....Matt. xviii. 12.
 8. C uckow.....Lev. xi. 13, 16.
 9. H unger.....Psalm xxxiv. 10.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 29.

Scorn'd! Wast Thou scorn'd, Thou gentle One, whose heart Yearn'd to the humblest soul that stood apart.

Uncared for? Was that kindly face of Thine Smitten indeed? O patience all divine, That took the buffeting, and bore the jeers, And look'd right onward through the coming years, And saw the glory of Thy Father's throne, And myriad souls—redeemed by love alone—Rais'd through Thy death to immortality, And through Thy lowliness to dignity, And by contempt, and mocking, and dispraise, To honour infinite, through endless days.

1. 'Twas thou, high priest, who in a young King's reign Didst bring the written law to light again.

2. This eldest born, alas! has lost his due; The gift whose hidden worth he never knew.

3. These did a kind son send to bring again The father, who as yet believ'd him slain.

4. Fierce warrior tribe with Israel's God at war Thou shalt be blotted out for ever—more!

5. Hence, crafty Horonite! thy threatening word Cannot dismay the servant of the Lord.

6. "A message for thee, King!" the warrior saith; This weapon's glitter tells the message—death?

7. This shakes the ground as though the Lord passed by; And massive prison doors wide open fly.

8. Like thee, fair gem of heaven's own glorious blue, Was the bright throne that met the prophet's view.

9. Beneath this tree there dwelt a prophetess, And judged the people in their deep distress.

10. Behold yon pictur'd room, O Seer, for there These scented clouds go up in heaven prayer.

11. Awful and dark this spectre form appears, The monarch cowers, and e'en the sorcerer fears.

12. Here Israel dwelt in bondage; here, again, Their remnant fled for refuge, but in vain.

13. As this is lost in air at dawn of day, So Israel's short-lived virtue fades away.

Where the peace is that Christ gives, all the trouble and disgust of the world can not disturb it. All outward distress to such a mind is but as the rattling of hail upon the roof of him who sits with in the house at a sumptuous banquet.

Youths' Department.

The Corn and the Lilies.

BY EMILY A. BRADDOCK.

Said the Corn to the Lilies: "Press not near my feet. You are only idlers, Neither Corn nor Wheat. Does one earn a living Just by being sweet?"

Naught answered the Lilies, Neither yea nor nay, Only they grew sweeter All the living day. And at last the Teacher Chanced to come that way.

While His tired disciples Rested at His feet, And the proud Corn rustled Bidding them to eat, "Children," said the Teacher, "The life is more than meat."

"Consider the Lilies, How beautiful they grow! Never king had such glory, Yet no toil they know," O happy were the Lilies That He loved them so.

Sunday Afternoon.

A little Boy's Sermon.

"Eddie," said Harry, "I'll be a minister, and preach you a sermon."

"Well," said Eddie, "and I'll be the peoples."

Harry began: "My text is a short and easy one,—Be kind. There are some little texts in the Bible on purpose for little children, and this is one of them. These are the heads of my sermon:

First: Be kind to papa, and don't make a noise when he has a headache. I don't believe you know what a headache is; but I do. I had one once, and I did not want to hear any one speak a word.

Second: Be kind to mamma, and do not make her tell you to do a thing more than once. It is very tiresome to say, 'It is time for you to go to bed,' half a dozen times over.

Third: Be kind to baby.—"You have left out, be kind to Harry," interrupted Eddie.

"Yes," said Harry, "I didn't mean to mention my own name in the sermon. I was saying, Be kind to little Minnie, and let her have your 'red soldier' to play with when she wants it."

Fourth: Be kind to Jane, and don't scream and kick when she washes and dresses you."

Here Eddie looked a little ashamed, and said, "But she pulled my hair with the comb."

"People mustn't talk in meeting," said Harry. Fifth: Be kind to kitty. Do what will make her purr, and don't do what will make her cry."

"Isn't the sermon most done?" asked Eddie; "I want to sing." And without waiting for Harry to finish his discourse or give out a hymn, he began to sing, and so Harry had to stop.—Children's Record.

Speak Short.

An aged minister said to a young brother, "Speak short. The brethren will tell you if you don't speak long enough." The counsel is good, good for speakers and good for hearers, good for writers and good for readers. Length without breadth and thickness is very poor recommendation in a sermon, a prayer, or a newspaper article. The power of condensation, abridgment, and elimination of useless matter is greatly to be coveted. When a man has five minutes in which to speak, he will usually consume one or two of them in telling the people what he is going to say, or in informing them that he has "been thinking" of something which he proposes to relate. If men who have something to say would, say it, if those who have had thoughts would speak them, and those who had something to write would write it, omitting prefaces, introductions, and useless and unmeaning remarks, much time and space would be saved with no loss to any one. But how hard it is to be brief. It takes gallons of sap to make a single pound of sugar, but the sweetness pays for the condensing. A little word said and remembered is better than any amount of weary, casual talk, which men endure and gladly forget.—The Christian.

The darkest hour in the history of any young man is when he sits down to study how to get money without honestly earning it.

False Sentiment as to Work for Young Ladies.

A false sentiment has rendered it derogatory for a woman to be a business woman, for a girl to earn or appreciate dollars and cents, if she can possibly find a father, brother, or uncle to support her. The noble army of working women who of all women best demonstrate their *raison d'être* is in general a despised army; and while society applauds the woman who is an artist, an editor, an author, it does so by calling her a genius and setting her out of that grand corps where she legitimately belongs. Families with three, four or five daughters, whether there are sons or not, if the father can possibly support them, are brought up to do nothing but help mother a little! This helping is not generally learning housekeeping and seamstress work in all its varieties, but skimming the surface of things, making cake, dusting a room, trimming a gown, and leaving these weightier matters of the law, as shirt-making, ironing, bread-making and beef-cooking to some one else. Girls speak of it as a hardship, if they are obliged by stress of circumstances to earn a support. "Anna thinks it so hard; all her friends have their time to themselves, and she is forced to teach poor children!" The whole training of the girl is aside from knowing anything about business; she reads stories and fashion magazines, not newspapers, and works on science and architecture, and practical every-day life. She does not learn telegraphy or carving, or furniture decorating, or gardening, or book-keeping, nor does she go into her father's business and learn it as her brother would if she had one; bless you it would make her a working woman! Thus out of this army of working women are kept, so far as possible, all women of education, means, refinement, cultured taste. These organized into a society make no end of blunders in business, and regard them as creditable rather than otherwise, as a Chinese lady cherishes the deformity of a cramped foot. If they read common law and medicine so as to be as well informed on these points as ordinary men, bless you, they are very odd, at the least. These good ladies with the very best intentions undertake to handle the working-woman question; they are thrown into contact with the poor, and knowing absolutely nothing of what it is to earn a dollar, or what a dollar can be made to bring, they have only the most general and no particular sympathies; on the one hand, they will be deceived and kill by over kindness, on the other, they will misunderstand and kill by hardness. It needs working women to understand and help working women; then they know that being bread-winners does not forfeit for them their position as wives and mothers; that while they earn daily wages they have the affections of the hearth; that the poor mother, left a widow, wants to keep her children in a home, not to sow them broadcast in orphan asylums; that the poor couple who have passed their married fifty years, unhonored it is true by a golden wedding, do not want to be thrust one into an Old Men's Home, the other into an Old Women's Home, or put in the separate wards of an almshouse, or one go to one Blind Asylum and the other to another. There is a fine kind of charity in England, where endowments have been left so that decent old couples, or single people, can have a nice three-roomed cottage, with fuel, water and lights, and a certain number of shillings weekly on which to subsist; and they can take in an orphan grandchild, or feeble child, living as in their own home, subject only to certain regulations of sobriety, cleanliness, and good order.

The Toad Market.

Among the curious sights to be seen in Paris must be reckoned the toad market. Toads are there sold by the barrel. Think of it! Toads selling like potatoes. Who buys them? Vegetable gardeners. Why? For the reason that toads devour the insects and would otherwise devour the vegetables. Who devours the toads? Contrary to some ideas—not the French people. But toads are being sold now, not devoured, and it is with the selling we are interested. How do they vend them? The man in blouse bares his arm and thrusts his open hand into the slimy swim and brings up two, three or four gymnastic toads, wriggling and writhing. He points out their merits and delivers in a box by the dozen to the eager market gardener, who takes his choice and pays his price. The buying and selling is done expeditiously and quietly, and the profit to the vender is great.