

A GRAND COMPLIMENT

In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul has this to say: "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you." The idea is so daring that it most takes our breath as we read it. No need of preaching? About what? About love. In this later century we can hardly conceive of such a statement being made in sincerity.

As one reflects on that text the wonder of it as a compliment to Thessalonian church grows on one. It certainly was a grand compliment. We could believe that some one might be without need of a special message about certain sins, or about work for the church, or about certain doctrines, but we are poorly prepared for such a compliment as this. Love of the brethren is a very vital thing with Paul and with all of us for that matter, but Paul looked for this more than anything else as indicative of true faith. John declared, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren". To have learned that truth and so woven it into the fabric of our living as to make it needless for the minister to bring us special messages on that subject is indeed a high place to be and a very rare attainment, or obtainment.

One cannot think about that long without asking himself the question, "Am I where I need no message about brotherly love?" Does my life show so fully this glorious and vital principal of true Christianity that I need no primary preaching about it? Ah, yes! that indeed is a grand compliment.

As one reflects more about that text one discovers that Paul here displayed a bit of rare wisdom. Perhaps we would have gone on preaching the a, b, c's of this matter and wasting time and tiring the Thessalonian believers with a first grade lesson on love when they were in need of a bit of advanced work. Paul goes on to say, "Though I do not need to write you as touching brotherly love (as to the fact and nature of it), yet I beseech you, that you increase more and more." There is wisdom! Paul knew how, as many of us do not, to connect his message with what his readers or hearers already knew. Some of us preach the first reader to fifth grade pupils as well as to first grade pupils. We would have our hearers learning to say the alphabet all the days. Happy and wise is that minister who knows how to tie his message to the present state of his hearers and to give them advanced and advancing work.

As one reflects a bit longer on this passage before us we can only be pleased with the simple explanation of the compliment and the basis of Paul's actions in regard to their state. He writes: "I need not write to you as touching brotherly love for you are taught of God to love one another, and indeed ye practice it."

"Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another". Yes, yes, to be a disciple at all is to be a learner about love of the brethren. No sooner is one converted than the spirit of God will begin the instruction in loving. Some of us have not aided our divine Teacher by our copyright lessons in love. It is well to let the soul of the new convert learn this lesson from the divine Teacher. The soul who will not learn this inner lesson and practice it will leave the discipleship of Jesus Christ. We can see then why Paul did not write a great course of lessons about love to the believers at Thessalonica. They were already taught of God, as is every true convert to Jesus Christ.

But there was an additional reason for Paul's not writing to them about brotherly love. They not only were divinely taught, but they were practicing the love-life which was taught them. That settled it. We have learned the lesson when

we live it out in deeds. Our excuse from classes in the primary grades of love-schooling will come when we display Christian love in our practice.

"Ye need not that I write unto you," is indeed a grand compliment to the believers, and it showed a prudence in the apostle, and in his explanation of his actions and their state we see how we too may come to the same place.—Chr. Witness.

THE ESCAPE.

Mr. D. L. Moody, and others who were on the disabled steamer Spree, believed that the vessel was providentially saved in answer to prayer. In the midst of a severe storm on Nov. 27, 1892, the main shaft broke, and plunged through the bottom of the ship. The water-logged vessel rolled fearfully, and the decks were washed by the waves. The passengers became greatly alarmed, the indications being that the vessel would sink before help could reach it. On Sunday, at Mr. Moody's suggestion, a prayer service was organized. Every person on board attended, except the officers and crew, who could not leave their posts.

General O. O. Howard, who was one of the passengers, says: "It was the most impressive religious gathering any of us ever attended. Jews, Catholics and all others forgot differences in creeds and denominations. There was no room for them in such an hour. Mr. Moody read the ninety-first and one hundred and seventh Psalms, which one of the Germans translated verse by verse for his countrymen. Mr. Moody offered a most fervent prayer, and made a short address. God heard and answered us. I went to my stateroom to rest after meeting, and I was asleep when some one touched me. I awoke to find a sweet, fond little German girl, the daughter of one of the passengers, by my cot. She could not understand a word of English, but my daughter had drilled her to say four English words, which was the message she brought me, 'The steamer is coming,' and then she added her German 'Hallelujah!'"

Mr. Moody says of the rescue, "There never was a more urgent prayer to God than that of those seven hundred souls on that helpless, almost sinking ship in mid-ocean Sunday evening, Nov. 27, when we met in the saloon to implore God's help; and God answered us, as I knew He would. He sent us a rescuing ship, and He calmed the sea, and for a week it was as smooth as it is in this harbor, though there were storms all around us. It was the grandest test of prayer I ever knew. My son was with me. He was a student in Yale college, and the learned professors there have instilled in him some doubts about God's direct interference in answer to prayer. After we had prayed that Sunday night, I had reached a point where I cared not whether it was God's will that we should go up or down. I determined to go to rest as though we were sailing safely on our way. My boy couldn't rest. We were fast drifting out of the track of vessels, and our peril was extreme. About 2.15 o'clock he came and woke me, telling me to come on deck. There he pointed out to me that an occasional glimpse of a tiny light that showed over the waves as our ship rolled heavily from side to side. 'It is our Star of Bethlehem,' he cried, 'and our prayers are answered.' Before daylight the Huron, whose masthead light it was, had reached us, and the waves had stilled and the winds were hushed by Divine command, while we were drawn out of direct peril to this safe haven."

The Spree arrived in Queenstown Dec. 2 with

her stern thirty feet in the water, notwithstanding her pumps had been steadily worked from the moment of the disaster.—Selected.

GEORGE MUELLER ON KNOWING GOD'S WILL.

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I do so I make myself liable to great delusions.

I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

Next, I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright. Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability, and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly.—Holiness Era.

SENTENCE SERMONS.

Some people are never so happy as when they are stirring up a fuss.

Courtesy is a charming characteristic.

Hospitality is not overdone.

Self-sacrifice never waits on red tape.

"Petty jealousies" pave the way for hatred.

The church boss is usually a very little man.

Personal sorrow enlarges our lack of sympathy.

Love cannot be confined in a peck measure.

Doing your best is both a human and divine requirement.

Help stem the widening tide of impurity by consistency in dress and behavior yourself.

Painting the face does not improve character.

Doing a small job well will commend you for a larger task.

Courage to say "No" when temptation assails, is building on a rock foundation.

It is well to be commended by the—other fellow.

The man who "blows his own horn" quite often "toots" a solo.

A stingy, niggardly spirit is never Christlike.

To hear some men talk, one would think that they owned the world and had it done up in a shawl-strap.

Spiritual dignity is consistent with true holiness.—C. E. C. in Herald of Holiness.

Live as though Jesus was coming in a few minutes; work and study as though you were going to live forever.

Intemperance is a hydra with a hundred heads. She never stalks abroad unaccompanied with impurity, anger, and the most infamous profligacies.—Chrysostom.

Temperance is reason's girdle and passion's bridle, the strength of the soul, and the foundation of virtue.—Jeremy Taylor.