

Pastor and People.

NOT LOST.

The star is not extinguished when it sets
Upon the dull horizon; it but goes
To shine in other skies, then re-appear
In ours, as fresh as when it first arose.

The river is not lost when o'er the rock
It pours its flood into the abyss below;
Its scattered force re-gathering from the shock,
It hastens onward, with yet fuller flow.

The bright sun dies not when the shadowing orb
Of the eclipsing moon obscures its ray;
It still is shining on, and soon to us
Will burst undimmed into the joy of day.

The lily dies not when both flower and leaf
Fade, and are strewn upon the chill sad ground;
Gone down for shelter to its mother earth,
'Twill rise, re-bloom, and shed its fragrance round.

Thus nothing dies, or only dies to live;
Star, stream, sun, flower, the dew-drop, and the gold;
Each goodly thing, instinct with buoyant hope,
Hastes to put on its purer, finer mould.

Thus in the quiet joy of kindly trust,
We bid each parting saint a brief farewell,
Weeping, yet smiling, we commit their dust
To the safe keeping of the silent cell.

—Horatius Bonar.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE POCKET BIBLE.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

The Pocket Bible! Whoever possesses it knows that around it gather many of the most sacred associations. It has a history, which in most cases is the record of the life from the time that it was made a companion. And through all the changes of life there is no companion like it. It is always true, always faithful, always gracious, always helpful. It is a friend above all others in its thorough honesty of dealing, and in its matchless wisdom, and in its eternal unalterableness. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke xvi. 17.)

How did the pocket Bible come into the hands of those who have it? Sometimes it is a Sunday school reward, marking diligence in the preparation of lessons, or regularity of attendance, or good behaviour in the class. Sometimes it is bought with a little sum of money, saved with self-denial, through months of service in little duties. Sometimes it is the gift of a friend, sometimes a birthday present, sometimes a parting memorial. And all these invest the book with a living and human interest. The human is the silken band that binds the heart and the life to the Divine. This is full of tender pathos. But it is most frequently a mother's or a father's gift, and has, therefore, added to its own intrinsic worth a peculiar preciousness. It is a love token. It is the best thing the world offers as a transportable and enduring memento of an unspeakable affection. When the parents give it, what do they mean? Ah! who can read the meaning truly and fully? They mean more than tongue can tell. Anyway, this lies on the very surface; they would have the life of their child entrusted to One who is all-wise and all-gracious and true; they would have the life and love revealed in the Book enter into and take possession of the heart of their child, that it may be kept from all evil and conducted to the fountain of all good; that their power is limited, but the power of the Highest is over all, and can reveal itself to their child anywhere and everywhere; that nothing short of the highest blessing would they seek for their dear one. All this is meant, and unspeakably more. It is a gift taken out of the very heart of the mother or the father, and represents their truest, deepest, most ineffable love. It is God's Book given in God's spirit of yearning affection. Would that the history of the pocket Bible could be written! It would be a genuine revelation of the soul. Oliver Goldsmith in his "Vicar of Wakefield," a book of genuine Irish humour and incisive wit, tells us that the Vicar's wife, for the honour of the family, always let her daughters have a guinea each to keep in their pockets, but with strict injunctions never to change it. That possession was golden; but used, it took wings and flew away. This gift is of no value unless it be used, and when it is used it multiplies itself in sweet thoughts, in pure affections, in holy resolves and noble purposes in the heart, and in a generous, self-sacrificing life of righteous activities. Its worth is in being changed into the spiritual out of the literal, in being transmuted into principle to form the life and create the character. Hence it is more precious than gold; yea, than much fine gold. It is a better bit in the pocket than the brightest guinea that ever was given.

One of the most touching facts in the life of the famous Temperance orator, now gone to his rest, John B. Gough, is this, that when he was starting for

America his mother put in among his scanty clothing the most precious thing in her possession—a little Bible. These lines were pinned on a shirt, doubtless to direct attention to the token of her true affection—the Bible—even though there is no direct reference to it:

Forget me not when death shall close
These eyelids in their last repose;
And when the murmuring breezes wave
The grass upon your mother's grave,
O then, whate'er thy age or lot
May be, my child, forget me not.

Nothing can keep the mother's love so tenderly fresh in the heart, nor so graciously powerful over the life, as the divine energy that flows out of the pocket Bible. Solomon speaks of it in this way: "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Gough was only twelve years old when he left home. Who can tell how often that book in his bundle or his small chest influenced him? It was there a power holding him by invisible bands.

When the present President of the United States was inaugurated, the Bible that was used was a small morocco-covered, gilt-edged Bible that his mother gave him when he left home as a young man. It must be very dear to Grover Cleveland, since he desired upon it to take the oaths of office. That little book has an interest attaching to it now, not only for Grover Cleveland, but for the world. What honour he paid the piety and faithfulness of his mother in this act! What has his mother's treasured gift been to him? Has it formed him to righteousness and truth? We believe it has. All his course as a public man and as a private citizen bespeaks this.

Newman Hall tells us in a brief biographical sketch of Theodore L. Cuyler, of Brooklyn, that the first gift from his mother was a pocket Bible. These are only a few instances out of a multitude.

Is not this the usual gift of a considerate, loving parent? The gift above all others chosen by the parent and prized by the child. For a time it may only be a book with a nobler name than other books, but in time it becomes a voice crying in the wilderness; and although it represents a living personal presence, which commands with imperial sway all the issues of the life, it takes upon it the character of a counsellor, a guide and a friend. No voice speaks home so directly, no power touches the springs of action so efficaciously, and no presence is so overshadowing as that of God in the Bible. Listen! "I have lived a lonely life," said the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, "and have often had little to eat, but my Bible has been meat, drink and company to me, I do not know what I should have done if I had not had the promises of the Bible for my stay and comfort." Hewitson, the saintly pastor of Dirleton, in Scotland, when nearing the house of many mansions, had a friend reading to him portions of Scripture. This friend was selecting passages setting forth God's faithfulness. "Texts like these," said Hewitson, "do not give me so much comfort as—'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' or—'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'" Plain doctrinal statements, exhibiting the heart of God, are more sustaining to me than mere promises.

"I LIKE TO GET INTO CONTACT WITH THE LIVING PERSON."

Let the young man never forget the precious book, let him not slight it by any neglect. Let him rather read it daily and meditate upon its heavenly counsels that he may become wise unto salvation, and grow up into Christ in all things. Hear these words of Dr. Samuel Johnson uttered when near the end of his busy, observant and thoughtful life. "Young man, attend to the voice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world, and who will shortly appear before his Maker; read the Bible every day of your life."

As you read your Bible, mark its striking passages. This shall not destroy it, but will make it all the more precious and attractive and interesting. It will be a record of insight and spiritual growth. It will show how the soul has put forth its power. It is grand to have the Bible as a trellis to which it clings, and as a medium through which it manifests itself. Dr. G. F. Pentecost, in that priceless book of his, entitled "In the Volume of the Book"—which should be read carefully by every young person—tells us how he marked his Bible: "I have taken a camel's-hair brush, and, dipping it into blue ink, I have passed lightly over all those passages of the Word of God that speak of His love to man; such, for example, as John iii. 16, etc., and with red ink, and the brush, I have covered those passages that speak of the blood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament; for example, 1 Pet. i. 19, 1 John i. 7, and the blood of atonement in the Old Testament. It is surprising how blue and red your Bible will be thus marked. And, then, suppose you take some purple ink and cover all these passages that are closely related to and are based on love and atonement, you will still further have your Bible interpreted to your

eye at a glance. And, then, for contrast, take your pen and run a deep line of black around those passages that expose and lay bare the depravity and sinfulness of the human heart, and the fact of the righteous judgment of God to come, and the perdition of ungodly men; such, for example, as Gen. vi. 5, Isa. i. 5, Matt. xv. 19, Rom. vi. 6, 9. But I forbear further suggestion in this line, being sure that a hint to the wise is sufficient." Let your Bible be your chief counsellor. Trust entirely to its directions. It is God's finger pointing out the way. He guided and governed by it. No one ever was disappointed in any confidence placed in the Word of God. Let your mother's thought be fulfilled in your experience of divine blessing through the sacred oracles.

What a comment are these lines of Sir Walter Scott in "The Monastery," on that declaration of his, a few days before his death, to his son-in-law, who asked him, on being requested to read to him, "From what book shall I read?" Sir Walter said:

"THERE IS BUT ONE."

Within that awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries!
Happiest they of human race
To whom God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born
Who read to doubt or read to scorn.

CHRIST THE BREAD FOR THE WORLD.

"I am the Bread of Life." There is a triple statement by our Lord upon this subject in the remaining portion of the chapter John vi. Three things. He says, "I am the Bread of Life." My personality is that which not only sustains life when it is given, but gives life to them that feed upon it. But more than that, "the bread which I will give," pointing to some future "giving" beyond the present moment, and therefore something more than His life and example, "is My flesh, which" in some as yet unexplained way "I give for the life of the world." And that there may be no misunderstanding, a third, deeper, more mysterious statement still, "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Repulsive and paradoxical! But in this very offensiveness and paradox proclaiming that it covers a mighty truth, and the truth, brother, is this, the one food that gives life to will, affections, conscience, understanding, to the whole spirit of a man, is that great Sacrifice of the Incarnate Lord who gave upon the cross His flesh, and on the cross shed His blood for the life of the world that was dead in trespasses and sins. Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, and we feed on the sacrifice. Let your conscience, your heart, your desires, your anticipations, your understanding, your will, your whole being, feed on Him. He will be cleansing, He will be love, He will be fruition, He will be hope, He will be truth, He will be righteousness, He will be all. Feed upon Him by that faith which is the true eating of the true Bread, and your souls shall live.

And notice here, the result of this miracle as transferred to the region of symbol. "They did all eat and were filled," men, women, children, both sexes, all ages, all classes, found the food that they needed in the bread that came from Christ's hands. If any man wants dainties that will tickle the palates of Epicureans, let him go somewhere else. But if he wants bread, to keep the life in and to stay his hunger, let him go to this Christ, who is "human nature's daily food."

The world has scoffed for eighteen centuries at the barley bread that the Gospel provides; coarse by the side of its confectionery, but it is enough to give life to all who eat it. It goes straight to the primal necessities of human nature. It does not coddle a class, or pander to unwholesome, diseased, or fastidious appetites. It is the food of the world, and not of a section. All men can relish it, all men need it. It is offered to them all.

And more than that; notice the abundance. "They did all eat, and were filled." And then they took up—not "of the fragments," as our Bible gives it, conveying the idea of the crumbs that littered the grass after the repast was over, but of the "broken pieces"—the portions that came from Christ's hands—twelve basketfuls, an immensely greater quantity than they had to start with. "The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis received." Other goods and other possessions perish with the using, but this increases with use. The more one eats, the more there is for him to eat. And all the world may live upon it for ever, and there will be more at the end than there was at the beginning.

Brethren! Why do ye "spend your money for that which is not bread?" There is no answer worthy of a rational soul, no answer that will stand either the light of conscience or the clearer light of the Day of Judgment. I come to you to-night, and although my poor words may be but like the barley bread and the two fishes, nothing amongst all this gathered audience, I come with Christ in my hands, and I say to you: "Eat, and your souls shall live." He will spread a table for you in the wilderness and take you to sit at last at His table in His Kingdom.—Alexander MacLaren, D.D.