

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

A PASTORAL EXPERIENCE.

BY VERDANT GREEN.

A pastor sat late in his old cushioned chair
And shaded his face with its sad look of care,
As turned from his books to the fire burning low
He vacantly gazed at its dull ruddy glow.
As judge he reviewed to give judgment at last,
The work of a Sabbath, the day that was past;
He thought of the Sanctuary service that morn—
Of those who were present, grave, glad, and forlorn,
He knew they were hungry, he served them with food,
Was pleased with himself, yes, the sermon was good—
Again in the evening, how free he had been
In pointing to Jesus the Saviour of men.
The people were moved as he spoke of His love,
His sufferings, His death, and His glory above,
And Pride, e'er the sermon was fairly begun,
Had whispered so softly, its honied "Well done."
But now as his conscience spoke loudly and stern
He lives o'er that Sabbath in gravest concern,
He judges his work, till he cries, "All is vain,
I never should preach in a pulpit again."
He grieves o'er the pride that has lost him a day,
And fancies the Master will cast him away.

With tears coursing down his pale saddened face
He pleads at the throne for pardon and grace,
And the Master receives with a smile late that night
A soul that had wandered away from the light;
Not in vain was that Sabbath, a heart was at rest,
The pastor was one that was humbled and blest.

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THE FAMILY BIBLE.

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

A beautiful act, that is so common and so frequent on our American continent as to be called a custom, is the giving to the newly married couple a Family Bible. It is usually a handsome volume, large, of clear print, finely illustrated, with concordance and a mass of papers by the foremost biblical scholars that leave little to be desired beyond them, for the ordinary reading and study of the sacred Book. It is an exceedingly appropriate gift for such a memorable occasion. And no doubt, it is prized as a book, however it is regarded as a revelation. It is kept carefully as an ornament, whatever may be thought of it as a Guide and Counsellor for life. It is invested with a sacredness because it was a present from loved parents, whether its true sacredness as a discoverer of the Divine Love in its unspeakable tenderness and grace is seen or not. It is often shown to visitors with a great degree of becoming pride as, "my father's gift," or, "my mother's present," and among the kind remembrances that loving friends and well-wishers send to the newly-wed, none expresses or clearly speaks forth more than the large Family Bible. Intelligently given, it is a declaration of far-reaching affection, of a love that looks through the mists of time into the bright light of a blessed eternity. It is a grand symbolic prayer for their highest welfare here, and hereafter.

I have in my possession an old Family Bible, "imprinted at London, by Robert Barker, Printer to the King's most excellent Majesty, 1610." It has on its margin "brief summaries and expositions upon the hard places," and in the midst of the text illustrative engravings of the tabernacle in the wilderness and its ark, candlestick, etc., and the Royal Throne of Solomon, and also the "argument" of each book set right in its front so that no one need read in darkness. It has, too a chapter preceding the New Testament, entitled, "The printer to the diligent reader," explaining the marks in the margin and their use. It has inscribed in old English chirography on the fly-leaf, these words, which are again written in modern English, "I will keep it as long as I live, and when I am dead ring out the bell, take this book and use it well." Then follows the name of the owner. Was it used well by the first owner and the second? Was it a lamp through the stormy days through which they lived? Was it a shield and buckler to them in their spiritual conflicts? Was it a voice of love, drawing them to Him who is Love? Was it to them a channel of divine quickening and grace? Did it comfort them, speak peace to them, cheer them and bless them? Did the old grandmother read it often, and lay her spectacles upon its outstretched pages, while she pondered and prayed over the truth she had just received? Did the children gather round her knees while she read its thrilling stories? Did the young men and young women learn its heavenly wisdom? How much this old book could tell, could it speak! Going on four hundred years old, it is still, in greater part, as clear and beautiful and well-preserved as at the beginning of its service.

The Family Bible is put to a use which is often of great moment—it is a family record, the names of the parents and children with their respective ages, and places of birth, and interesting facts connected with them are set down in order in the heart of the book; on the clean leaf in the heart of the book. Would that the Bible itself were put in the hearts of the parents and children in every home! That is its highest and noblest use: "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart."

The Family Bible represents the worship of the household, it is the symbol of prayer, of obedience, of subjection to divine authority, of the rule of God in the House, and how mightily influential it is for good!

Richard Knill, the zealous missionary, never saw family worship at home, and when under peculiar circumstances he beheld it in the home of a Mr. Evans, it had a wonderful effect upon his soul. This is his own account of the matter, "I had

never been present at family prayer in my life. The first night I was in this good man's house, about nine o'clock he rang the bell, and his shopmen and servants all came into the parlour and sat down. I looked with surprise and wondered what was coming next. When all were seated he opened the Bible and read a portion, and thus let God speak to his household. They then arose and fell upon their knees. The sight overpowered me. I trembled; I almost fainted. At last I kneeled down too. I thought of my past life; I thought of my present position; I thought, Can such a guilty sinner be saved? I heard but little of my kind friend's prayer. All my soul seemed turned in upon myself. My conscience said: 'This is how true Christians live; but how have I lived? God has not been in all my thoughts; but now I will begin to seek mercy.'

This conviction of sin led to his conversion and consecration to God's service. Philip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry, the famous commentator, was very zealous in his use of the family Bible. Indeed, it is to that habit of his, faithfully maintained, that we owe one of the best commentaries the world possesses. He held that "family worship is family duty. He would say sometimes, 'If the worship of God be not in the house' write 'Lord have mercy upon us,' on the door; for there is a plague, a curse in it. He that makes his house a little church, shall find that God will make it a little sanctuary." Matthew Henry, who writes the life of his father, tells us how exemplary he was in this duty, beginning with a short prayer, followed by a psalm, then the portion of Scripture that came next in order. When he read, he always expounded. He puts his children, while they were with him, to write these expositions from their own recollections of them, and when they were gone from him, the strangers that sojourned with him did the same.

"What collections his children had, though but broken and imperfect hints, yet were of good use to them and their families, when afterwards they were dispersed in the world. Some expositions of this nature that were plain and practical, and helping to raise the affections and guide the conversation by the Word, he often wished were published by some good hand for the benefit of families; but such was his great modesty and and self diffidence, that he would never be persuaded to attempt anything of that kind himself, though few were more able for it." No doubt the suggestion lies here which Matthew Henry carried out in after years.

Burns portrays with the power of genius, the typical Scotch home in his "Cottar's Saturday Night," wherein the "Big Ha' Bible" plays such a charming part. And John Howie in his "Scots Worthies," speaking of the good Regent Moray says: "His home was like a holy temple; after meals he caused a chapter of the Bible to be read, and asked the opinions of such learned men as were present upon it, not out of vain curiosity, but from a desire to learn, and reduce to practice what it contained."

Oh, what unspeakable delights are found in the study of the sacred oracles! Dr. James Hamilton tells us that he was "once told of a cottage patriarch, who was born in those days when Scotland had a Church in almost every house. There was one in his father's dwelling; and when he pitched a tent for himself, he builded an altar. Round that altar a goodly number of olive plants grew up, but, one by one they were either planted out in families of their own, or God took them, till he, and his old partner found themselves, just as at their first outset in life, alone. But their family worship continued as of old. At last his fellow traveller left him. Still he carried on the family worship by himself. So sweet was the memory of it in his father's house, and so pleasant had he found it in his own, that he could not give it up. But as he sat in his pleasant habitation, morning and evening, his quivering voice was overheard singing the old psalm tune, reading aloud the chapter and praying, as if others still worshipped by his side." Oh blessed Book enshrined in memories most sacred! The sheet anchor of the home; the sweetener of its life; the brightener of its hope; the enlarger of its heart; the source of its virtue, its excellence and its strength. Happy is the household that honours thee, and reverences the God of all grace that thou revealest. And dark is the home in which thy heavenly light is not permitted to shine. What can come to the hearts that beat there but earthly joys, and short lived peace, and long lived misery. Shall we not see this clearly, and believe this fully—the Bible is the best builder of home. It sanctifies it and saves it. Let then, the family Bible speak, and rule, that all may rejoice.

DOING GOD'S WILL.

What is the end of life? The end of life is not to do good, although many of us think so. It is not to win souls, although I once thought so. The end of life is to do the will of God. That may be in the line of doing good, or it may not. For the individual, the answer to the question, "What is the end of life?" is: To do the will of God, whatever that may be.

Spurgeon replied to an invitation to preach to an exceptionally large audience, "I have no ambition to preach to ten thousand people, but to do the will of God," and he declined. If we could have no ambition past the will of God, our lives would be successful. If we could say, "I have no ambition to go to the heathen; I have no ambition to win souls; my ambition is, to do the will of God, whatever that may be," that would make our lives all equally great, or, equally small, because the only great thing in a life is, what of God's will there is in it.

The maximum achievement of any man's life after it is all over is to have done the will of God. No man or woman can have done any more with a life; no Luther, no Spurgeon, no

Wesley, no Melancthon, can have done any more with their lives; and a dairy-maid, or a scavenger can do as much. Therefore, the supreme principle upon which we have to run our lives is to adhere, through good report and ill, through temptation and prosperity and adversity to the will of God, wherever that may lead us. It may take you away to China, or you, who are going to Africa, may have to stay where you are; you, who are going to be an evangelist, may have to go into business; and you, who are going into business, may have to become an evangelist. But there is no happiness or success in any life till that principle is taken possession of.

How can you build up a life on that principle? Let me give you an outline of a little Bible reading. The definition of an ideal life: "A man after Mine own heart, who will fulfil all My law." The object of life: "I come to do Thy will, O God."

The first thing you need after life is food. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." The next thing you need after food is society: "He that doeth the will of My Father in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." You want education: "Teach me to do Thy will, O God." You want pleasure: "I delight to do Thy will, O God." A whole life can be built up on that one vertebral column, and then all is over: "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."—Prof. Drummond.

HEAVY LADEN.

Our Saviour's invitation was to the labouring and the heavy laden. How many of them are scattered through this weary world; laden with sin, with grief, with cares, with woes, with sorrows; pressed down by poverty, suffering beneath the hand of disease; tried, troubled and afflicted.

The Saviour bid the heavy-laden come to Him and rest. Will you not come, O weary, heavy-laden soul? Life is brief, time is short, earth is a scene of trouble, toil and conflict; yet there is rest to come. But we need not wait for that rest. There is rest even now to those who take Christ's easy yoke, and learn of Him; for He has said: "I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

"Rest for my soul I long to find;
Saviour of all, if mine Thou art,
Give me Thy meek and lowly mind,
And stamp Thy image on my heart;
Break off the yoke of inbred sin,
And fully set my spirit free;
I cannot rest till pure within,
Till I am wholly lost in Thee."

TRUE TERMS OF COMMUNION.

How much is it to be lamented that the Christian world should be so violently agitated by disputes, and divided into factions on points which, it is allowed, in whatever way they are decided, do not enter into the essentials of Christianity! When will the time arrive when the disciples of Christ shall cordially join hand and heart with all who hold the Head, and no other terms of communion be insisted upon in any church, but what are necessary to constitute a true Christian? The departure from a principle so directly resulting from the genius of Christianity, and so evidently inculcated and implied in the Sacred Scriptures, has in my apprehension been productive of infinite mischief; nor is there room to anticipate the period of the universal diffusion and triumph of the Christian religion, but in consequence of its being completely renounced and abandoned.—Robert Hall, D.D.

A SUCCESSFUL PRESCRIPTION.

A Christian worker relates: "A doctor in a country district was one very stormy night quietly sitting by his room fire, and hoping, as he listened to the wind and rain without, that he would not be called out. A minute or two later a servant entered with a note. Looking at it, the doctor said, 'Seven miles' ride: I suppose I must go.' Silently he rode for the first six miles without meeting any one; then he noticed a cart drawn by a half-starved looking horse. He looked for a driver, but found none. On he went for another mile, when he noticed a dark object staggering along in the middle of the road. As the doctor came up, the owner of the horse stammered out: 'I say, doctor, is that you? I want you to give me a prescription; they say you are real good to the poor, perhaps you will give it to me for nothing.' 'Well, my friend, what is it that ails you?' said the doctor. 'I want a prescription for keeping my legs from turning into the saloon.' 'I cannot give you it, my man, but there is a great Physician, a friend of mine, will give you what you want.' 'Oh, tell me where he lives, that I may go to him, for I am in danger of losing both body and soul.' Days passed, and again the doctor saw the same figure on the road, but not intoxicated this time. He came up, caught the doctor by the hands, and with tears rolling down his face, he said, 'God bless you!' That was all, but the doctor understood that the great Physician had dealt with him, and had effected a cure of both body and soul. For Him no case is too desperate. He can save unto the uttermost."—Christian Herald.

WORTHY OF NOTICE.

It is worthy of notice that most of the writers and speakers who are dinging at the churches for alleged inefficiency, and proposing this and the other improvement in preaching and Christian work, are not frequenters of houses of worship, rarely listen to the Gospel and hardly know anything of what pious hearts and liberal hands are doing for the alleviation of human suffering, the instruction of the ignorant and making known the glad news of salvation. It would be more consistent for those who are indulging with so much complacency in exhibiting the shortcomings of the churches to make some application of the Gospel to themselves.