

Love

Memorial Day, 2011

I am not "religious," but I have a small Bible that is inscribed to Walter Stett from "a friend in the Lord," Margaret Foster, New York, September, 1863. A dried flower from that time is pressed into the pages of I Corinthians 13, the Love Chapter ("Love is patient, love is kind ...") I don't know for sure, but I believe Walter was given this Bible by a young lady who would have never presumed to offer a gift to a man in those times, except that he was on his way off to War. Whether he returned is unknown, but his Bible somehow made it back.

I found the testament in an antique store down on the river in the Rondout section of Kingston, NY thirty years ago. I didn't need another Bible; a few are more than enough for me. It cost ten dollars that I would have rather spent on

something else, but I couldn't just leave it there. A woman's love deserves a place of honor, whether romantic or simply sisterly caring. So I brought it home and it sits with other small books on my desk.

Memorial Day reminds me that so many who meant so much to us are gone and more will leave us before finally we're gone too. When I open the little Bible to the pages holding the dried flower, I'm reminded that "these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. And love never fails."

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