

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

GETHESEMANE.

BY H. K. COCKIN.

A garden in an Eastern vale,
Where silver'd moonbeams break and pale
In crystal waves of light, that gleam
On Kedron's brook, o'er Siloam's stream,
Where flow'rets bloom perennially
The garden of Gethsemane.

In silence, as the fading light
Sinks slowly in the shades of night,
A form appears upon the scene
Whose suffering heart, and heavy mien
Proclaim, with silent majesty,
The Lord of fair Gethsemane.

Behold! 'Tis He. The Lord of Life
Wrestling in agonizing strife;
In strife whose victory breaks the spell
That binds mankind to death and hell;
In strife whose cup and agony
Immortalize Gethsemane.

"Father! If 'tis Thy will, this day
"Take, take My cup of woe away;
"Yet, Father, pray, Thine only Son
"Not My will, Lord, but Thine be done."
A soft the night wind, piteously,
Wails sadly o'er Gethsemane.

Ye shaded groves of leafy palm
Enshrin'd in twilight; happy calm!
What mortal heart can e'er regret
His agony and bloody sweat
When angels laud, adoringly,
That hour in sad Gethsemane.

And in the dark and lonely hour,
When clouds of bitter sorrow lower,
The mem'ry of that emptied cup
Shall bear the burden'd spirit up
To Him who gained the victory
Within thy walls, Gethsemane!

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE CHILDREN OF THE COVENANT.

BY REV. W. I. M MULLEN, WOODSTOCK.

The relation in which the young people of the Church, who have not as yet professed faith in the Saviour at His table, stand to the covenant and to the Church, is, it is to be feared, being largely lost sight of at the present day. Forms of expression are becoming quite common which imply that the baptized children of God's people are not members of the Church, nor in visible covenant with God in Christ. Our Confession of Faith declares that they are members of the Church, that they are Christians, and that until they prove the opposite, they are to be presumed to be in real covenant with God, and partakers of His saving grace. We repudiate baptismal regeneration; but we at the same time hold that the children of God's people are federally holy (1 Cor. vii. 14), and heirs by birthright of the covenant and its blessings. But some objector may ask: "Are they in such a state that their inheriting heaven is infallibly certain?" To this we reply that all heirs of earthly estates do not infallibly enter on possession of them. Men who might have been princes have gambled away their prospective inheritance. But that it is possible for an heir to do this is no disparagement of the heirship itself, nor of the value of the inheritance. Even so, it is possible for an heir of the covenant to act the part of the profane Esau and sell his birthright. The term *profane* indicates that it was not a mere temporal advantage that Esau parted with, but something sacred. But the rule is that heirs of earthly estates do enter on possession, and the rule also is that the children of God's people prove to be possessors of the saving grace of the covenant, the sign and seal of which was put upon them in baptism. The child does not require to become a man in order that the work of the Holy Spirit may commence within him. The child is not more helpless than the man in the matter of salvation. If any difference whatever is to be alleged, who will deny that the advantages are all on the side of the child? Those who hold what is known as "believers' baptism" would not substitute for it "believers' salvation" as their motto, for they hold as heartily as we do that the latter phrase would not cover all the ends or objects of the covenant.

That the child of God's covenant people may forfeit his covenant position has already been admitted; but who can undertake to define the point at which such forfeiture takes place? He may err from the truth and may need that one convert him (James v. 19). But even those whom Peter charged with being guilty of having crucified the Saviour were addressed by him in terms different from those which he would have employed in addressing a heathen audience, for says he (Acts iii. 25): "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant," etc. The Holy Spirit

honoured the argument by which Peter sought to touch their hearts and move them to repentance; for many of them believed. Are we in these days using this argument sufficiently? Are we reminding our young people that they are not simply the children of God's covenant people, but "children of the covenant," and if children, then heirs?

The view for which I contend, is of course, liable to be greatly abused, but the same may be said of any one of the doctrines of grace. And if there are dangers in the one direction, are there not also fearful perils in the other? If going to the Lord's table as a matter of course, when young persons have come to a certain age, is to be watchfully guarded against, should not equal diligence be exercised to deliver them from the impression that before they can scripturally apply for admission, they must be able to give some account of the time or circumstances of their conversion? Is it not an evil to leave the children of the covenant to look upon themselves as "those that are without," aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise? If they love the Saviour and desire to follow and obey Him, their inability to point to the time when they began to do this, makes them the greater debtors to sovereign grace, and all the more unmistakably eligible for admission to the full fellowship of the Church. The God of the covenant in working out His eternal purposes in time, has fulfilled in them what was signified and sealed in their baptism. And should not those children of the covenant who are delaying to subscribe with their hand to the Lord be warned of the danger of drawing back unto perdition? Should they not be apprized that they are the very persons who are capable of sinning in the fearful sense defined by the Apostle in Hebrews x. 29: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?"

BIBLE IN SCHOOLS.

A Public School Head Master writes in *The Educational Monthly* as follows:

That the Bible ought to be in the school I always believed and so have always practised. Although my practice has varied considerably, my custom has been to open the school with singing and prayer; the closing exercises, reading the Scriptures, singing and prayer. I have always made the Bible lesson the last of the day. I am not discussing whether that be the best time or not, but simply recording my own practice. I form the school into one class for Scripture reading, and let each read in turn or select by name those whom I wish to read. I let the very youngest read, and have always pursued this plan, even with regard to those who are not able to read very well, the opportunity of reading along with the whole school tends to interest them in the lesson. For many years the reading was confined to the New Testament, the Gospels and Epistles, making but few remarks and asking but few questions. But I was often struck with the ignorance of the historical parts of the Old Testament manifested by those who were in regular attendance at the Sabbath school and were receiving instruction on those very points. Any reference in the reading lesson to the narrative of the Old Testament, and sometimes to the New, seemed to be but dimly grasped, or there was an utter failure to give an intelligent explanation of what was referred to. I made up my mind to change the ground as well as my mode of procedure, took up the Old Testament and commenced to question on what was read. I began with the books of Moses, my object being to make them well acquainted with the letter of the historical parts of the Old Testament, bringing the light of the New Testament to bear on the Old, seeking to bring out the unity of the whole. I was moved to this course by another and a stronger reason, viz. The immense advantage I had personally received from a thorough grounding in the historical parts of the Old Testament when I first went to school. At that time, and for the first year and a-half or two years, the Bible was the only reading book we had, and during that period the daily reading of the Bible made me master of its history and stored my memory with the greater part of all those portions of God's Word which I can readily quote at the present hour, and thus every year I live I reap the advantages of that early sowing. I commenced with the intention of teaching and giving the sense as we went along, making a few explanatory remarks when I thought they were needed, and not only so; but it is my aim to drive home to the heart and conscience all the practical lessons with which that part of the Word of God abounds, abounds to an extent that careful study alone reveals. The dogmatic teaching of the New Testament, in the Old, finds its external embodiment in the biography of living men and women impartially recorded by the Spirit of God, with their lights and shadows, sins and shortcomings, and are thus brought nearer to ourselves and we into closer sympathy with them. It may be urged that this is outlining more than can be accomplished in the time at the disposal of the teacher

in the Public School. Fifteen minutes each day by one tolerably acquainted with God's Word will overtake all that I have sketched here, and do it too, without offending the peculiar views of any class in the community who believe the Bible to be the Word of God. The advantages arising from thus storing the youthful mind with Divine truth cannot well be over-estimated. I believe in the existence of conscience, in the old fashioned sense of the term, and I believe that conscience enlightened by the Word of God, is, on all "moral issues," always at one with the Word of God. Hence the mind stored with Divine truth when brought face to face with temptation to wrong-doing will be stronger to resist, from the very fact that when evil is presented the conscience yet untainted will utter its protest, and memory will recall the sanctions of God's Word, thus form a double barrier against yielding to sin, thus exercise a restraining as well as a preserving influence on the whole life of the individual, making it much more difficult for that individual to plunge into any course of evil, or to continue in it when once entered upon. This alone is a great boon to any human being. But, should the Spirit of God renew any such soul thus stored with God's truth, from what a high vantage ground that individual starts on her or his course. I hope that the Minister will leave the whole Bible in the school. I mean the whole book. If need be, let the Department say what portions are to be read. But I hope that there will be no attempt to publish any particular portions of the Bible by themselves as a separate volume or manual of religious instruction. The Bible is in most of the schools already. Let it remain there entire. To do otherwise would to my mind be to do a "costly wrong."

DEMOLISHING THE BIBLE.

The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this book; and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other, and when you have upset it, it is right side up still. Every little while somebody blows up the Bible; but when it comes down it always lights on its feet, and runs faster than ever through the world. They overthrew the Bible a century ago, in Voltaire's time—entirely demolished the whole thing. "In less than a hundred years," said Voltaire, "Christianity will have been swept from existence, and will have passed into history." Infidelity ran riot through France, red-handed and impious. A century has passed away. Voltaire has "passed into history," and not respectable history either; but his old printing press, it is said, has been used to print the Word of God; and the very house where he lived is packed with Bibles, a depot for the Geneva Bible Society. Thomas Paine demolished the Bible, and finished it off finally; but after he had crawled despairingly into a drunkard's grave in 1809, the book took such a leap that since that date more than twenty times as many Bibles have been made and scattered through the world as ever were made before since the creation of man. Up to the year 1800, from four to six million copies of the Scriptures, in some thirty different languages, comprised all that had been produced since the world began. Eighty years later, in 1880, the statistics of eighty different Bible societies which are now in existence with their unnumbered agencies and auxiliaries, report more than 165,000,000 Bibles, Testaments, and portions of Scripture with two hundred and six new translations distributed by Bible societies alone since 1804; to say nothing of the unknown millions of Bibles and Testaments which have been issued and circulated by private publishers throughout the world. For a book that has been exploded so many times it still shows signs of considerable life. I have heard of a man travelling around the country exploding this book, and showing up "the mistakes of Moses," at fifty shillings a-night. It is easy work to abuse Moses at fifty shillings a-night, especially as Moses is dead and cannot talk back. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on "the mistakes of Moses," to hear Moses on "the mistakes of the infidel." When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it, and met with poor success. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and, it is said, found a grave in the Red Sea. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back. But now Moses is dead, and it is easy to abuse him. It does not take a very brave beast to kick a dead lion.—*Hastings.*

THE French are reported to be fortifying certain positions they have occupied on the north-west and north-east of Madagascar, but it is more than ever evident that they are failing to make any appreciable impression on the natives. Of war, properly so called, there is none; nothing but out-post affairs here and there on the coast. Consequently, our mission work is being carried on with vigour. Several long itinerating journeys have lately been taken.