

Christ in the Garden.

BY REV. J. CARSWELL.

The life of Christ upon earth is now near a close. He has pertaken of the Paschal feast for the last time with his disciples, and established the ordinance of the supper in commemoration of that death which He is about to die. The time when He is to be nailed to the accursed tree is near at hand; and as a preparation for those terrible sufferings through which He is to pass, He retires for communion with His Father in Heaven. He did this before all the great events of His life—before His baptism, before His temptation, before sending out the Apostles, and before His transfiguration. He spent certain seasons often indeed whole nights in prayer. Three of the little company that now surrounds the table are to go along with Him; Peter, James and John are to be his only companions on that fearful night, and even they are to remain at a little distance from Him; He is to be alone with His God.

Leaving that supper room they went their way to Gethsemane's garden. It is now midnight, and all the weary inhabitants of Jerusalem have retired to rest. Yes, the guilty citizens of a guilty city can repose upon their couch of lace, but there is no repose for the guileless Nazarine. The sinful sons of men can sleep upon their downy pillows, but the sinless son of God must spend the night prostrated upon the cold damp ground, with His locks wet with the dew of Heaven, and his eyes dim with the tears of suffering and sorrow. He has to die for a sin-cursed world on the morrow, so there is no time for Him to slumber.

As they move along everything seems to have assumed a deathlike stillness. Not a footstep is heard save their own treading the lonely street. All is dark and dismal except here and there the glimmering of some expiring lamp bursts upon their view. And now they have reached the sacred spot. It was a place well fitted for such a solemn spectacle. Far removed from the slumbering city, and so thickly studded with trees that the rays of the Paschal moon, though shining, could scarce penetrate through the branches thereof—it was well fitted for being the scene of such intense sufferings. But there was another reason which made it all the more suitable. It was a place to which Jesus had often resorted for prayer—a place where He had experienced the pleasure of a Father's Communion, and enjoyed the light of a Father's countenance; but now a cloud was about to obscure that loving smile, and Christ the meek and lowly was about to endure the wrath of an angry God; for though his whole life may be said to have been one continual scene of suffering yet it was not till His death that He drank the bitter cup to the dregs. The nearer He drew to that dreadful period, his sense of suffering became the more intense, and now that only one day intervenes, they seem to have burst upon His view in all the r immensity. He beheld the fearful load of woe He has to bear, and ah how heavy. He tastes the bitter cup. He has to drink and ah how bitter. He fain would shrink from it, but no it must be endured. It was then in the full realization of all the sufferings through which He must pass, in the contemplation of all the pangs that must rend His spotless soul, that "He being in an agony prayed more earnestly, and

his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

The account given by the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, of that Gethsemane scene not only shows how the Saviour's agony increased, but the terrible severity with which it was characterized. From the combined statement we have the following connected description of this mysterious event. "Leaving nine of the disciples behind, Christ and the other three repair as we have seen, to the garden. No sooner have they arrived there than He begins to be sore amazed, sorrowful and very heavy, and exclaims: 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. I feel as if nature would give way beneath the load and death would snatch me before its time. Tarry ye here and watch with me.' In their presence He seeks to restrain his anguish as well as possible, but it soon becomes too intense to be restrained, so He withdraws from them about a stone's cast and kneeling down prayed: 'Father if it be possible, let this cup,—the cup of my approaching death, pass from me; but if not, Thy will be done. Having a short respite from suffering He returns to the three disciples and finding them asleep, He upbraids them for their sloth, and tells them to 'watch and pray lest they enter into temptation.' He again retires from them and prostrating himself on the ground, He repeats the same prayer with this variation, 'O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it Thy will be done.' Again having a moments relief—for it would seem that the storm came upon Him in gusts—He goes back to the disciples, and finding them still sleeping for sorrow He repeats the same warning as before, but joins unto it this feeling appendage, 'The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.' Once more He retires to the thick covert, and now the storm of Divine wrath beats upon Him with awful fury. Higher and higher the surges rise, and just when they seem like to overwhelm Him a Heavenly visitant comes to His aid. He comes, however, not to remove the burden but to sustain Him under it. He comes to prepare Him for a hotter and fiercer contest. He comes to strengthen his sinking nature, and prepare Him for the coming struggle. And now He is in a wrything agony and prays more earnestly. His whole soul is convulsed and his body so affected thereby that sweat oozes out from every pore in thick drops of blood, falling down to the ground. Shuddering nature and indomitable will struggle together in fierce combat. But soon the conflict is over and the victory won. Thy will be done, oh Father, again bursts from his lips. Thy will is my will. I will endure it all, is his fixed resolve. Then might the cry, 'It is finished,' which was uttered on the cross, have echoed and re-echoed throughout dark Gethsemane. Then might a ransomed world have raised the song of salvation; for what has now been enacted on the theatre of invincible will shall assuredly be accomplished on the morrow upon the cross.

It is a fact on which the country may well be congratulated, remarks the "Presbyterian Witness," that when the results of a General Election are known all citizens cheerfully "accept the situation." In the Dominion of Canada we have no "irreconcilables," French, Irish, Scotch, English, native Canadians, of all sects, are loyal to the "old flag."

Reminiscences of Septuagenarian.

1854—Then and Now—1900.

TAKING POSSESSION.

The main portion of my field of labor was in Dalhousie township; but some families were situated in the township of Lanark.

My first resting place was in the quiet, neat little home of George Blair, who, with Mrs. Blair, were the sole occupants. After tea on the evening of my arrival, we betook ourselves to the garden which gave evidence of care and arrangement and skill that would have done credit to a professional.

I was struck with the particular care with which he bedecked himself with a gauze head gear that covered the neck and face. I wondered if he was so particularly careful about his complexion that he took such pains to shelter his skin from the rays of the beautiful setting sun.

In such cases I always made it a point to wait developments, and not to expose my ignorance, or get on to delicate ground, by speedily or thoughtlessly asking explanations. I had not witnessed his operation of transplanting cabbages for many minutes till I began to feel that I was assailed by numerous unseen foes, which, unlike the North Gower mosquitoes, failed to announce themselves by martial strains heralding their approach. I could see nothing and had to vacate my position without dealing a retaliating blow.

My host took in at a glance my restlessness and retreat and explained the presence and operations of the black fly, which torments the human, and destroys part of the vegetable creation mercilessly in certain localities.

After the day's work had been finished Mr. Blair gave me a vivid and interesting description of his toilsome travel to his present home, and the hardships and suffering endured, intermingled with many pleasures in clearing a home in the forest; and how, with patient, continuous and persistent labor and thrift (along with surrounding settlers) they had cleared the forests, constructed roads and bridges, and attained to such comfortable possessions and surroundings.

As an example he told me that, arriving at what is now the town of Perth, he came on foot, following the blaze on the trees, and carrying on his back a "wooden kist" the peculiar treasure of his mother, trudging along like a huge mud turtle, an astonishment to the deer and oxen and birds attracted by the unusual spectacle, especially when encountering a fallen tree he with his burden rolled over it and fell on the other side. When night came his burden became a blessing in the form of a bedstead, on which he slept the sleep of the weary—and refreshed thereby resumed his toilsome way.

I was "mum" about my journey to North Gower. To be cured of our complaining let us listen to the deeper sorrows and sorer trials of others.

From him I learned the history of the mission as carried on by Rev Mr. Finlay and by students thereafter—Duncan McDiarmid and James Tait. Of those he and others spoke in loving, reverential terms.

Quietly I ascertained that they had no liking for a "paper man." So all day Saturday and Sabbath morning I was nervously and feverishly committing pages of large letter paper.