

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the N.Z. TABLET by GHIMEL.)

I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH.

'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin and in my flesh I shall see my God, Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom.' (Job xix., 25-27.)

The author of these remarkable words, written some centuries before the Redeemer came, had felt the iron of suffering pass deeply into his soul and had been driven by the reproaches of well-meaning friends into something like despair. The sorrows of life had accumulated to such an extent that death seemed the only way out. But as he looked again into its depths, the place of the dead appeared to him in grim reality

'a land of darkness and murk
A land of thick darkness and chaos,
Where the light itself is like pitch.'

Nor could he ever return to see on earth his character vindicated. If death were the end, then (and this thought for a Jew was intolerable) he must go down to posterity as a godless man.

In the hour of midnight gloom the first gleam of hope appears. Job is mourning over man's short and troubled life, and swift, untimely end. The tree of the garden is cut down, but there is always hope that it will sprout again. The roots may be rotten with age, yet at the scent of water life comes back and buds are put forth.

'But man dieth, and is laid in the dust;
He yieldeth his breath, and is gone.
As the waters fail from the sea,
And the river dries up and is vanished,
Till the heavens be no more, he shall not awake,
Nor be roused out of his sleep.'

For all that the hope of the tree suggests to the despairing soul a possible hope for man. If man after death may live again, if God would only hide him in the place of the dead until His wrath is past, and then 'appoint him a set time and remember him'—if there were anything in this hope, it would be easy for him to wait patiently and wear life's crown of thorns, till death came to bring happy release; and when at last God called him to the fair blue hills of the Land of Promise, he would answer joyfully and forget the sorrow of the past in the joy of his new life with God.

This hope, however, seems too fair—what is he but a 'phantom, watching from a phantom shore?' The doors of Night are shut tighter than ever.

'The waters wear the stones,
The floods wash off the dust;
So Thou destroyest man's hope—
He sleepeth, and riseth no more.
Thou prevailest against him for ever;
Thou changest his face, and dost banish him.'

Once more Job thinks of the lot of the dead in the place of death, and it appears utterly miserable. They can know nothing of what happens on earth.

'His sons are honored, but he knoweth it not;
They are brought low, but he marketh it not.'
Even the sleep of death is not unbroken rest, for

'His own flesh hath pain,
And his own soul mourneth.'

Finding no comfort in the thought of death, the sufferer turns back to the living. His friends perhaps may be moved to pity him—but he finds them cold and unsympathetic. If he could only write his defence in a book, or engrave it on the rock, men in days to come would read it and he would be vindicated, but the record on the rocks is impossible.

This God-fearing man, however, had not served and lived in prayerful communion with his Maker for nothing, and light now shines in the darkness. Past experience had taught him something of the sympathy of God, and now he feels that he can claim and trust it. Job himself may die, but his cause is just and cannot die. His Redeemer will stand upon his dust and vindicate his life. Nay, anticipating the fuller light of Christian revelation, he looks forward to the better world in which he shall even see his Redeemer.

'But I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And that He shall stand up at the last upon the earth:
And after my skin hath been thus destroyed,
Yet from my flesh shall I see God:
Whom I shall see for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold, and not another.
This my hope is laid up in my bosom.'

POLAND'S CRY OF DISTRESS**THE RAVAGES OF WAR.**

A cable message states that unemployment and starvation are increasing daily in Poland. The misery exceeds the official methods of relief. Five thousand five hundred villages have been devastated and pillaged and 1000 utterly destroyed. Five hundred towns have been partially or entirely destroyed. Agriculturists have lost heavily, the losses of small farmers amounting to £6,800,000 and those of the larger proprietors to £2,300,000. The total agrarian loss is estimated at £462,250,000.

Regarding the state of affairs in the eastern theatre of the war a writer in the *Catholic Times* says:—During the war the people of these islands have heard a great deal of the sufferings of Catholic Belgium, and it is well that it has been so, for in the course of the conflict no sentiment has contributed more effectively to the defence of the cause of justice than sympathy with the brave and afflicted Belgian people. But little has been heard of the sufferings of the Catholic Poles, though in many respects they are as trying as those of the Belgians. The Poles are more distant from us; the names of persons and places are not so well known; and news concerning the sufferers excites less interest amongst the readers of the newspapers. Yet in Poland the ravages of the war have been terribly destructive. In Belgium the Germans have held the ground pretty well since they first occupied it. In Poland the tide of war has been ebbing and flowing, and some of the Russian, Austrian, and Prussian Poles have had to endure again and again the bitterest results of warfare. It would seem as if the unfortunate race were doomed to misfortune. History records nothing

More Iniquitous than the Partition of Poland.

The nation was robbed of 82,000 square miles of its finest provinces. Later its territory was further reduced. When under Kosciusko the Poles rose to defend their rights and liberties they fought bravely, but were overpowered. In numbers and discipline the enemy was superior to them. Their country was laid waste with fire and sword. Their heroic leader, Kosciusko, was defeated and captured. Courland was annexed to Russia, and their King, Stanislaus II., was compelled to resign his crown and conveyed as a prisoner to St. Petersburg. Russia, Austria, and Prussia entered into a pact, in accordance with which the name of Poland was erased from the list of independent States. When the areas of the appropriated territories were defined after the Congress of Vienna, it was found that Russia had 220,500 English square miles; Austria, 35,000; and Prussia, 26,000.

The Poles have never given up the idea of regaining their national unity and freedom. Like the Irish, with whom they have often been compared, they have persistently upheld the cause of faith and fatherland. What they have had to bear with in their struggles words would fail to describe. The severity of their

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