

## 'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

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

### A CATHOLIC POET'S VISION.

A poet is generally thought to be a visionary, a dreamer of idle dreams, and his writings are often passed by because they are not of the world and are out of touch with the realities of life. Yet time and time again the sleeper's dreams and visions get nearer to the heart of things than the abstruse speculations of the philosopher and the superficial labels of the scientist.

Some Catholic papers have recently drawn attention to a striking instance of a poet's foreseeing. In a poem published after his death, Francis Thompson dwells with prophetic insight on these our troubled days, and pictures the place therein occupied by the 'Lily of the King'—that is, the Catholic Church.

'O Lily of the King! low lies thy silver wing,  
And long has been the hour of thine unqueening;  
And thy scent of Paradise on the night-wind spills its sighs,  
Nor any take the secrets of its meaning.  
O Lily of the King! I speak a heavy thing,  
O patience, most sorrowful of daughters!  
Lo, the hour is at hand for the troubling of the land,  
And red shall be the breaking of the waters.

'Sit fast upon thy stalk, when the blast shall with thee talk,  
With the mercies of the King for thine awning;  
And the just understand that thine hour is at hand,  
Thine hour at hand with power in the dawning.  
When the nations lie in blood, and their kings a broken brood,  
Look up, O most sorrowful of daughters!  
Lift up thy head and hark what sounds are in the dark,  
For His feet are coming to thee on the waters!

'O Lily of the King! I shall not see, that sing,  
I shall not see the hour of thy queening!  
But my song shall see, and wake like a flower that dawn-winds shake,  
And sigh with joy the odors of its meaning.  
O Lily of the King, remember then the thing  
That this dead mouth sang: and thy daughters,  
As they dance before His way, sing there on the Day  
What I sang when the Night was on the waters!'

It is always tempting to quote from a poet like Thompson, with his thorough grasp of Catholic faith and his wonderful expression of Catholic instincts, and some readers to whom sad loss is bringing home the cruelties of war may be glad to read these verses on 'The Passion of Mary':—

'Thy Son went up the angels' ways,  
His Passion ended; but, ah me!  
Thou found'st the road of further days  
A longer way of Calvary.  
  
'On the hard cross of hope deferred  
Thou hung'st in loving agony,  
Until the mortal-dreaded word  
Which chills our mirth, spake mirth to thee.  
  
'The Angel Death from this cold tomb  
Of life did roll the stone away;  
And He thou barest in thy womb  
Caught thee at last into the day.  
Before the living throne of Whom  
The Lights of Heaven burning pray.'

Then follows the application:—

'O thou who dwellest in the day!  
Behold, I pace amidst the gloom:  
Darkness is ever round my way  
With little space for sunbeam-room.

'Yet Christian sadness is divine,  
Even as *thy* patient sadness was:  
The salt tears in our life's dark wine  
Fell in it from the saving cross.

'Bitter the bread of our repast:  
Yet doth a sweet the bitter leaven:  
Our sorrow is the shadow cast  
Around it by the light of heaven.'

O light in Light, shine down from Heaven!

## THE PRIEST ON THE BATTLEFIELD

### THE APOSTOLATE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

(Continued.)

#### The Call of the Priest.

They were filled with an ideal that is the highest point of heroism that man may reach—namely, the close following and imitation of the Hero of Heroes, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With the manly and fearless St. Paul, they called to the world, 'We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness, but unto all that are called, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.'

Fundamentally, each priest has in him the making of a hero. His is no light call. It is a soldier call, that means in tender years a severance from the strong ties of blood. 'Follow Me' means renunciation of much that is naturally dear to the human heart, and he who responds must be made of fine metal. As he steps into the ranks, the command of the Leader sounds in his ear, 'Deny thyself, take up thy cross.' Year after year passes in the school of self-denial, purifying and strengthening the strong foundation of natural force of character that is his. His call is for God, and he realises this. His character, strong enough primarily to resist the call of the world, has, by long and steady training, all its faculties and powers fully and scientifically developed. He must first conquer himself, the most difficult of all conquests, for 'he who conquers himself is greater than he who takes a city.'

#### The Office of the Priest.

At the end of his training he is raised to an office that places him between God and man as an *Alter Christus*. The priest spends his life, heedless of himself, in directing souls to the waiting Saviour of the world. He is the guardian of the life of the world. As the dispenser of the Sacraments, he is the centre of God's work on earth. By the priest is continued the distribution of the Bread of Life, the Body and Blood that was first placed on the table of the Last Supper. As one of a regal priesthood, he receives the soul at birth, guards and directs it through life, and at death sends it with certainty and in safety on its journey back to the Master Who created it.

What heroism the fulfilment of this office entails is shown by that glory of the Church—her unending, undying line of martyrs.

#### Priest-Heroes Everywhere.

The priests in the trenches are only doing what their brothers have been doing through the centuries, and have shown that, like them, they are possessed of a

# Dr. J. J. GRESHAM

PAINLESS DENTISTRY

☎

☎

MAIN STREET, GORE.

Present this Coupon and get  
5 per cent. discount.

: N.Z. TABLET

☎