

E. G. GRESHAM,

(Pupil of the late Mr Alfred Boot).

SURGEON AND MECHANICAL DENTIST,

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**CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART,
TIMARU.**

THE ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR LADIES

Preached by the Rev. J. RONEY, S.J.,

Will begin on the Evening of MONDAY, January 9th, and end on
SATURDAY, 14th.

Ladies who wish to attend should apply as soon as possible to
the REVEREND MOTHER SUPERIOR.

DEATHS

BOWDEN.—On December 4th, at his parents' residence, Thorndon Quay, Wellington, after a short illness, Thomas Patrick, second and dearly loved son of Thomas and Julia Bowden, and brother of Rev. Father Bowden, of Palmerston North; aged 31 years.—R.I.P.

MAHON.—On the 18th December, 1904, at the Convent of Mercy, South Dunedin, Mother Mary Teresa Mahon; in the forty-fifth year of her age and the seventeenth of her religious profession.—R.I.P.



*To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the
ways of Truth and Peace.*

LEO. XIII. to the N.Z. TABLET

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1904

THOSE 'SPECIMEN LESSONS.'



THE Bible-in-schools Executive has just been playing the little comedy of the ancient Greek who strolled through the market-place of Athens exhibiting a brick as a sample of the house he wished to sell. They have published a small pamphlet containing three 'specimen lessons' from their proposed text-book—one for the junior grade, one for the intermediate, and one for the senior. By themselves the three 'specimen lessons' would give about the same idea of their text-book that three bricks would of three dwellings. When a conjuror wishes to mask a vital movement in an illusion he contrives to direct the attention of his audience elsewhere. This ruse seems to be well known to the prestidigitateurs of the Bible-in-schools Conference. In as catchy and tricksome a preface as we have ever read they make a great sing-song about the notes appended to their sample lessons. But the mischievous character of the contemptible bit of political conjuring which they are endeavoring to play upon the people of New Zealand appears really elsewhere, namely, in the 'list of contents' which is appended to the sample lessons. But the Bible-in-schools leaders ought to be aware that the average elector, and the casual reader generally, will at most glance lightly over the 'list' and will thus fail to detect the

real significance of the illusory scheme which they are trying to force upon the Colony. So far as the general public are concerned the little pamphlet published by the Bible-in-schools leaders will fail to effect its avowed purpose of supplying 'the demand for information' and will prove, instead, a delusion and a snare.

In the course of their trick-references to the footnotes, the clerical illusionists of the Wellington Conference take loquacious pride in the plea that they do not 'indulcate any theological or dogmatic belief.' In fact they solemnly asseverate their fixed determination to bolt and bar out all manner of 'religious teaching' from the public schools. The first of these two statements may be taken for what it may prove to be worth. The second must be taken in a Pickwickian—we had almost said Pecksniffian—sense. By the very nature of the case 'religious' and dogmatic teaching, express or implied, runs through and through the whole of the proposed text-book. The text-book itself is, in brief, a reprint of the compilation drawn up four years ago by the (exclusively Protestant) 'Commission on Religious Instruction in State Schools.' Their express duty, as set forth in their title and mandate, was to draw up a scheme of 'religious instruction' for the public schools of Victoria. Our Bible-in-schools agitators reprint their programme of lessons in its entirety, and yet have the hardihood to serenely declare that 'religious instruction in State schools' is the last thing in their thoughts and wholly foreign to their intentions!

But the most discreditable thing about the proposed text-book is the wholesale chicanery with which—under protests of fair-play and honor-bright—it is sought to make it subserve sectarian interests in public schools that are frequented by children of all manner of creedal convictions. (1) From beginning to end the Scripture lessons are taken from the Protestant Authorised Version of the Bible—with all its errors of omission, addition, and mistranslation upon its head. (2) The Protestant division of the Ten Commandments is used, and the Protestant form of the Lord's Prayer, despite its rejection by the whole voice of Protestant scholarship, is set down for the daily use of pupils. (3) The Wellington Conference has, with open eyes, shared the shame of their Victorian confreres in outlawing the basic truth of Christianity—that of the Incarnation and Virgin-Birth of the Saviour of the World—from the sacred narrative. Though twice challenged, they have failed, thus far, to furnish any explanation or excuse for so wanton an outrage against religion and against the integrity of New Testament history. 'Men are at liberty,' said the prominent Presbyterian divine, Dr. Rantoul, 'as individual men, to take whatever view they choose of this or that historical period. They take that liberty abundantly. But a Commission of representatives of the Victorian Churches called upon to approach in honest good faith the New Testament narrative, and setting itself to tell our children the story of our Lord's birth and infancy, has no right to act thus. It is a wanton and a deadly wrong to the bonafides of the story and to the central faith of the Protestant Churches themselves. It is, I need scarcely say, a direct blow to all that is most sacred and most reverently cherished in the faith and the religion of Catholics.'

(4) But that is not all. In the proposed text-book Protestant teaching is suggested throughout in a persistent and manifestly deliberate way. Here are some of the unworthy ruses to which our Bible-in-schools party have resorted in their attempt to sectarianise the public schools: (a) Emphasising obscure texts which have been twisted into a Protestant controversial meaning, and passing over clearer and explanatory texts which tell in a Catholic sense; (b) garbling the sacred teaching or narrative in a wholesale way in the sectarian interest—suppressing, for instance, a great part