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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiæ causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.

Current Topics

What Teachers May Expect

Little Red Riding Hood, of the nursery tale, thought for a time that the wolf was really her grandmother. It had donned the old grandam's clothes and lay in seeming helplessness upon her bed. But the old dame's trappings could not cover the long ears and the fierce eyes and the great mouth. These betrayed the creature's real nature. In the same way the Bible-in-schools League try to conceal the tyranny of their ultimate purpose with the tawdry frippery of a sham 'democracy.' But, despite their best efforts, fang and paw and pointed nose obtrude through the ill-fitting disguise which they have hastily donned in order to get their teeth into the flesh of the nation. And the Little Red Riding Hood, New Zealand, young as she is, has already seen enough to learn a lesson of caution from the League's proposal to decide questions of conscience by a count of noses, to start a new State creed, to make enforced levies of tithes for the endowment of an Establishment on Unitarian lines, and to inaugurate an era of religious tests in public appointments.

Some reverend members of the League, whose words we have quoted in previous issues, have plainly intimated the sort of mercy that public school teachers may expect if they dare to fall back upon the mock 'protection' of the 'conscience clause.' And last week, in the columns of the 'Otago Daily Times,' another of the controversialists of the sectarianising party, Mr. J. Neil, after having stated what he conceived to be the demands of the League, added these significant words: 'If the teacher has such a phenomenal conscience as to object to do this, then there will be found plenty who will do it.' Even under a supposedly 'secular' system Catholic teachers in Otago and Southland and in at least one place on the West Coast, have occasionally had, on account of their religious convictions, sufficient difficulty in securing or retaining the positions that their attainments merited. Our readers will readily recall the case of the Moa Flat school and the series of disgusting outrages—culminating in the burning of the school and the teacher's effects—which drove Miss Annett from Rongahere. 'If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?' The open boycott of Catholic teachers, which is now only an occasional incident of local educational poli-

tics, would then become a matter of settled policy, as we have proved it to be in the decadent States of the American Union where the sectarian scheme favored by our Bible-in-schools League is in full and malignant operation.

'Injustice and Imposture'

The Southern provincial champions of the school-sectarianising party usually shin up a tree when the Rev. P. B. Fraser (Presbyterian), of Lovell's Flat, Otago, takes up his gun and follows up their spoor. Mr. Fraser is a man of acknowledged ability and a keen and skilled debater. He is likewise a hard hitter, and has full many a time riddled the shifting fallacies of that noisy organisation which, calling itself the Bible-in-schools Referendum League, resolutely sets its Malaprop head against both the Bible-in-schools and the referendum.

The paid political agitator of the League recently applied for the use of the Rev. Mr. Fraser's church in order to expound therein 'the present objective' of his employers. Mr. Fraser replied that he 'never gave the church for political purposes,' and that the school was available for the object set forth by the 'official organiser.' In last Monday's 'Otago Daily Times' Mr. Fraser invited the political agent of the League to meet him on the platform 'at Milton and Kaitiāngata, at Oamaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill, and, if possible, at Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland' to discuss the organisation's scheme and 'argue it out as sich.' 'I shall undertake to show,' says the Rev. Mr. Fraser, 'that the League's programme is a policy of injustice and imposture—of injustice, because a sect seeks to establish and endow sectarian teaching in the national schools, to the exclusion of the rights of all minorities; of imposture, because its text-book claims an authority from the Churches it never sought or obtained, and that, instead of being a bona-fide selection of Scripture suitable for the young, it is a garbled mutilation of the Scriptures and its teaching, practically identical with Unitarianism.'

Mr. Fraser suggests 'that candidates for Parliament be asked to pledge themselves never to submit any religious proposals to a referendum of the people until first Parliament itself has agreed, in both Houses, to such proposals as right and equitable; and that the present modus vivendi, the present system of so-called secular education, be maintained for another term, till such happy day when our ecclesiastical leaders agree on a

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