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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

Teachers for South Africa.

On Thursday last an advertisement appeared in the daily papers signed by the Secretary of Education, Wellington, intimating that at the request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies twenty female teachers for refugee camps in South Africa would be selected in this Colony, and inviting applications from those qualified to fill the position. The engagement is to be for a year, and the salary will be £100 for the year, with free rations and accommodation in the camps and with the prospect of further employment for those teachers who may decide to remain in South Africa. The applications are to be sent, in the first instance, to the secretaries of the local Education Boards, by whom they will be forwarded to the Secretary of Education at Wellington, where a first general selection of perhaps eighty candidates will be made. All who are lucky enough to be included in this selection will get a free passage to Wellington, where they will have a personal interview with the Secretary of Education and with the medical officer, after which the final selection of the needed twenty will be made. The successful applicants will then receive a free passage to South Africa and have all expenses paid till they reach their destination. It is also understood, though this was not stated in the advertisement, that any of those selected who are at present employed in the public schools will have their position kept open for them during the term of their engagement in South Africa.

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In spite of these inducements it was generally thought that there would be but little response to the appeal, at least from the regular, duly qualified members of the profession. Most people imagined that the fear of the dreaded fever, the hardships of life under military law, and the misery of going a stranger to a strange land, would be enough to keep most girls from giving one serious thought to the proposal. It is usually the unexpected however that happens, especially where lovely woman is concerned, and in this case, so far as Otago at least is concerned, it is already evident that the public have quite underestimated the adventurous spirit of our girls. The very next day after the advertisement appeared the office of the Otago Education Board was besieged by a regular regiment of fair applicants and some forty names were then and there enrolled. The next day—Saturday—brought in a contingent from the country and the record of the previous day was doubled, so that within two days after the advertisement appeared a hundred applications were received. If this is the case in Otago where the teachers have always been so much better paid than in other parts of the Colony it is probable that the applications in other provinces will be still more numerous. The motives underlying this readiness to 'trek' on the part of our lady teachers are somewhat mixed. The salary is certainly not the sole inducement, for more than one of the Otago applicants are at present in positions worth £150 a year. The truth is our girls can see as far through a ladder as most people, and they know a good thing when they see it. They realise that at the rate at which the men are now being sent out of the Colony this is no place for them. The prospect of a free trip to South Africa, the

unique experience at the end of it, and a well-paid billet with easy work and little responsibility—these appeal to both the practical and the romantic sides of their nature, and they rush to be enrolled. Perhaps when they have had time to think calmly over it their enthusiasm will cool a little, but in the meantime there is every indication that the twenty vacancies will be very easily filled.

Leo XIII. and the Bible.

The detractors of the Church are fond of flinging at her the reproach that Rome has never done anything for Biblical studies. The charge, as might easily be shown, was never true, but there never was a time when it was less true than the present. Eight years ago the Pope issued the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, treating of the reading and study of Sacred Scripture, and this produced a marked movement in the Church in favor of increased attention to technical Biblical studies. The Holy Father has now followed up his Encyclical and given shape to this movement by the appointment of an important Commission for the special consideration of the many modern questions concerning Holy Writ. The names of the leading members of the Commission have already appeared in the columns of the N.Z. TABLET. Cardinal Parocchi, the president, is described as having 'strong sympathies with the movement for advanced Scriptural exegesis,' whilst the two other assessors, Cardinal Vives y Tuto and Cardinal Segna, are recognised authorities in the fields of theological and patristic learning. The other 'consultors' who compose the Commission are Father David Fleming, head of the Order of Friars Minor, secretary; Very Revs. Professor Van Hoonacker, University of Louvain; Professor Grannan, Washington University; Professor Francassini, Seminary of Perugia; Professor Jorio, Seminary of Valencia, Spain; Secretary Esser, Sacred Congregation of the Index; Professor Vigouroux, Paris Institute; Father De Hummelauer, St. Ignatius's College, Holland; Father Gismondi, Professor Gregorian University, Rome; Dom Abrose Amelli, Prior of Monte Cassino; Dr. Robert Clarke, Priest, Archdiocese of Westminster; and Dr. D. A. Poels, Diocese of Rouremonde, Holland.

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It will be thus seen that the Commission is a comprehensive one, the members being drawn from many different countries, and representing all the various schools and currents of thought. The scope of the inquiry, as stated by the Rome correspondent of the London *Tablet*, is 'to ascertain the limits of the freedom which is allowed to the Catholic exegetist in the Biblical questions of the day, to point out definitely the conclusions that must be maintained in the interests of orthodoxy; others that must be rejected as incompatible with or dangerous to divine faith, as well as the debatable ground between the two, where each one is free to hold his own view.' The President will convene the meetings which will be held whenever there is sufficient matter in hand to make a discussion or decision desirable. The 'consultors' who live at a great distance from Rome will make their contributions in writing, but on very special occasions a meeting of the whole body will be held. Already a series of questions have been formulated for study and discussion, but for the present these are not to be made public. All that is known is that modern difficulties are to be fairly and squarely faced, that each 'consultor' will be