

## FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE.

Leader—New Year, p. 33. Notes, p. 34. Topics, pp. 22-23. N.Z. Monument at Gallipoli, pp. 15-17. The Church in N.Z., p. 19. Our Colleges and Schools, p. 25. Sunday Afternoon Readings, p. 51.

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

*Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.*

LEO XIII, P.M.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

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.

## The New Zealand Tablet

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1924.

### THE NEW YEAR

THE dying hours of the old year are dropping swiftly into eternity, and the first flush of the new appears upon the horizon. Good wishes for holiness and happiness, for health and prosperity, in the coming year are being exchanged even now between members of families scattered throughout the world, between friends of long standing, and between those whose friendship has just begun. And at midnight, when the bells ring out their message that the old year is no more, hands will be clasped, and the spirit of charity, speaking with the tongues of men, will express the wish of a happy new year for all. Let us add our voice to the rest, and pray that the coming year will bring the blessing of God upon old and young; let us wish them all many happy new years and Paradise at the end of their days.

In truth we all have much to pray for in the coming year. Our chief resolution, however, should be to put God in the forefront of all things, our chief prayer that His holy will should determine all our actions and control all our thoughts. The expiring gaze of the old year beholds a world stretched upon a sick bed because it will not submit to the treatment of the Divine Physician. "Without Me you can do nothing," said Christ, but human society shouts defiance at Him, and bids Him begone. There is no seat of honor provided for Him at the family hearth of modern pagans; His presence is not desired at the marriages of people to whom the Registry Office is but an ante-room of the Divorce Court; His love for the little ones makes no appeal to those who sacrifice the lives of children upon the altar of their own selfish pleasures; His command that the children be sent to Him is not only neglected but positively disobeyed by those who prevent Him from coming to the children. The secular system of education, re-

sponsible for so much sin and sorrow, slams its doors in the face of Christ and warns Him off as an intruder. Turning to Governments, we find that here again the doors are locked and barred against Him. Statesmen pretend to work for peace without God; they endeavor to reconcile the thousand clashing interests and ambitions of various populations by the application of political science divorced from God; they place their trust upon the mastery of the sea and air, upon tanks and machine guns, upon submarines and poison gas. Ever since the Reformation the world has been drifting farther and still farther away from God. The warring sects that rose out of the great rebellion are each year finding it more difficult to retain the obedience of those who were born within their walls. Unbelief and materialism in the homes are soon reflected in the Councils of State, the result being that the affairs of society are directed from a purely utilitarian standpoint. Prior to the Great War this utilitarianism was manifested in international scheming, by which the Great Powers sought to outwit one another in struggles for territory and trade. The end of it was six years of hideous slaughter on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world, an orgy of blood and destruction in which even the proudest and most powerful nations fell exhausted to their knees. But little was learned from the lesson. The governments of the world are still striving for the same ends by the same means. God has no place in their deliberations; justice and charity are not written into their programmes. Their talk of peace is mostly so much self deception, for the absence of God gives free rein to greed and arrogance and turns unbelievers into worshippers of Mammon and Moloch—Wealth and War. The Church established by Christ is the one bright spot in a gloomy world. She knows that no magic formula can be found by which the masses of the people can be peaceful and prosperous and pagan at the same time. The way to peace is not determined by the speeches of the Prime Minister or by the intrigues of his diplomatic agents. It is determined in the school that trains the child, shapes its ideals, keeps before its eyes the picture of Nazareth and all its associations as the ideal home, and the cruel cross of Calvary as the pledge of heaven.

What the world needs to-day is not so much wishes as prayers. We cannot do better than pray for the intention of the Pope, which he announced in proclaiming the Holy Year of Jubilee, 1925. The intention of the Holy Father is Peace, "not so much the Peace written in treaties as that impressed on souls, that which must be restored amongst the peoples." Elsewhere in his Bull he insists that, "never can this habit of brotherly love amongst the peoples be restored, never can there be lasting peace, unless charity—too long extinguished, indeed entirely forgotten as a result of the last war—be once more taken to heart by the peoples and welcomed as an inspiration by Governments." Let not our new year wishes, therefore, begin and end this year by uttering a few insincere or careless phrases to casual acquaintances who pay us back in our own coin; but let us

resolve to pray and strive throughout the year for those fundamental virtues of justice and charity upon which so much depend. When justice and charity are spoken of as necessary to the health of the world, many of us agree, but we sit down and wait for Heaven to send an angel to scatter the virtues over the earth like a shower of rain. But charity begins at home and if it lives in many homes it will crowd into the streets, into the factories, and business houses, and ultimately it will reach the House of Parliament and dictate the correspondence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In conclusion, we hope that all those who receive our expressions of goodwill to-day will be hale and hearty spiritually and temporally when the year has grown old.

### DIVORCE IN THE FREE STATE

Some time ago we referred to the protest voiced by the Bishop of Cork against the attempt to introduce divorce legislation into the Free State. Since then the Rev. Peter Finlay, S.J., has devoted considerable attention to the matter, and judging by his able contribution to *Studies*, the learned Jesuit had no difficulty in putting the politicians "on side." He points out that if it were proposed to introduce a Bill into the Free State Legislature legalising Mormonism—the simultaneous polygamy which even the United States public law proscribes, and which all public opinion in Ireland condemns—they should have no doubt whatever about the attitude of Irish Catholics. No Ministry would assent to or favor such a proposal; no deputy would support it; no elector would vote for a candidate who was known to countenance it. Ministry and deputies and electors would, of course, justify their attitude by excellent reasons drawn from the natural law and from social and economic considerations; but their chief and fundamental argument would be that legalised polygamy is legalised adultery, forbidden by God Himself through Christ; and they can have no part in legislation which encourages adultery, and purports to repeal the law of God. Divorce, with subsequent remarriage, is only Mormonism under another name; there is no dissolution of the marriage bond; the wife remains a true wife in the sight of God and of His Church; and remarriage, like Mormonism, only adds another so-called wife to the one who has been put away. No Catholic, therefore, could conscientiously further divorce legislation. He may not support such legislation in Dail or Senate; he may not approve of Standing Orders which may facilitate its introduction; he may take no positive part in abrogating the Divine command. It could not be justly said that any citizen was dispossessed of any of his rights by the refusal of the Free State to legalise divorce. No one domiciled in the Free State had ever had a right to absolute divorce. There could be no right to what was sinful and immoral; and neither custom nor statute law could create the right. No action of the British or Irish Parliament could make polygamy other than what it was—a violation of natural and Divine law.

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