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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 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, MARCH 11, 1925.

### SECONDARY EDUCATION

NEW ZEALAND Catholics have made so many heroic sacrifices in the cause of Christian education that one hesitates to ask them to do even better in the future than they have done in the past. Although we view with admiration the splendid achievements which stand to their credit, nevertheless we must remind them that those who, though they have done much, might have done still more, have not yet done enough. There is no need to remind Catholic parents of their duty to give their children a Christian education. Their zeal in this respect is manifested by the schools which they have erected throughout the country. There is need, however, to urge them to complete their work as guardians, and give their children a chance in the Catholic secondary schools.

Catholics should never forget that their religion is God's remedy for the woes of the world. Hence, it is not exclusively their own, but it is intended to permeate all ranks, high and low; to save the world of to-morrow, just as it saved the world in the days when faith was young. Every state of society, be it good, bad, or indifferent, is dominated by ideas. The ills which afflict modern society are merely manifestations of the ideas by which modern society is ruled. The ills cannot be removed if the ideas from which they spring are permitted to remain. The masses of the people, however, do not live according to their own ideas; they live according to the ideas of others; and those others are the product of the secondary schools and universities which, under modern influences, are dominated by materialism, cynicism, and intellectualism unrestrained. In these quarters religion is discouraged as a restraint upon the intellect. It is said to prevent men from thinking, when it prevents them only from thinking wrongly about

certain things. Without the restraining influence of religion the intellect soon leaves the realm of sound reason and floats away into the clouds of pitiable sophistry. Now, this kind of thing will not be counteracted by the "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." It can be met only by the fixed determination of Catholics to train their children in the higher branches of education, and thus place them in positions in which they may exercise an influence in the world of ideas. The theology of the Catholic laborer may be quite as sound and complete as that of the Catholic doctor, barrister, or journalist; but it certainly will not have as much influence on those who direct the thinking of others. To make Catholic education as fruitful as it ought to be, Catholic parents must take an active interest in their children's education from the moment the little one toddles off to learn its letters until the school doors close behind it for ever. They must carry on in the home the traditions and discipline of the school, remembering always that the school training is not intended for school hours only. The fact that so many bright Catholic boys drift into the ranks of unskilled labor is due in no small measure to the laxity of parents in the home. They often neglect to make the children study at home. Sometimes the child is kept engaged at household tasks and is thus denied the necessary leisure to enable him to do the home work set by the teacher. For this reason such a child cannot hope to acquire the application for study necessary to gain success in school. Moreover, the boy may be punished by the teacher for the parent's fault or neglect, and smarting under the sense of injustice, he conceives a dislike for the school and all connected with it. Again, it happens not infrequently that parents capitulate to wayward children, and for peace sake permit the child to develop habits of sloth which will keep it at a perpetual disadvantage. Other parents do not insist upon their children attending school punctually and regularly, and these are usually the first to take offence when the teacher sends in an unsatisfactory report. All these negligences on the part of parents conspire to keep the Catholic population from exercising the influence upon the community which the importance of that influence warrants. They have the effect of closing the doors of the Catholic secondary school against the mass of the Catholic population of to-morrow. To see a boy eager to leave school when he ought to be thinking of entering a secondary school is to witness a tragedy. His home training has made him impatient of the restraint of the school, and he rushes into the world of industry confident that here he will find liberty at last. He finds instead a taskmaster who will tolerate no nonsense from him; and as he has not been restrained at home during his impressionable years, the new discipline will appear as an odious tyranny. In after life that boy will reproach his parents for their neglect, and he will lay all his subsequent troubles at their door.

We have the greatest of sympathy with those families who, compelled to live in straitened circumstances, welcome the day

when the boy at school will be able to help the household by earning a few shillings a week for running errands; but even these we would urge to make an effort to give the boy a chance in the higher branches of education. What he earns will be very little indeed, and in a very short time he will drift into the same position as his parents; and when he is charged with the duty of rearing a family he will have to undertake the same sacrifices to educate them as his parents had undertaken in his behalf. By making a supreme effort it might be possible for the parents to place him in a position in which he could assist them materially and at the same time assist religion in the sphere of life which he entered through the secondary school. He would be able to give his children the advantage of higher education; and if many Catholic parents did that the day would not be long in coming when public ideas regarding the Catholic Church would undergo a radical change.

### AGAINST THE STREAM

Some people think that because religion contains so many things which the world finds irksome religion is opposed to reason. They point to the world's tragedies as evidence of the failure of religion; whereas the world's tragedies are merely evidence of the world's failure to do without religion. Ever since Adam fell and his whole House, there has raged a conflict between Heaven and hell for the souls of men. The world, with its pomps and vanities, is the devil's weapon; religion, with its command to the soul of man to subdue the body, is God's weapon. The devil might win, but God can never be defeated. He has given free will to every human creature. Therefore, hell's victories are not God's failures; they are man's defeats. The devil wins so often because man finds it easier to float into hell on the stream of iniquity than to turn his boat about and resolutely pull up stream to the gates of Heaven. We always think of hell as a place below because it requires no effort to get there. We can fall into it. But Heaven is always above, signifying that resolution is needed to win the summit. This idea of above and below is well illustrated in the history of nations. The Church leads men slowly up the hill to Heaven. It is a tortuous journey, and centuries find the way still long. Then the devil comes and tempts the toiling travellers; and as they pause to listen to the voice of the tempter, they lose their foothold, and in a flash they have rolled down the hill of centuries into the pit again. This is what Materialists term the swift progress of a world unfettered by religion. It was the toilsome journey up the hill that brought humanity to that state of social and economic excellence which earned for the Medieval period the title of the Golden Age: But it was a sixteenth-century stumble that caused humanity to fall heels over head into the valley of chaos in which the Church originally found it. Those who look upon the world's follies as religion's failures are well answered by Mr. Chesterton when he says: "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried."

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