

## CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART TIMARU.

The ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT for Ladies, will begin at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 2, 1912, and end on Saturday, January 6, at noon.

By applying to the Rev. Mother Superior, ladies wishing to make the Retreat can board at the Convent during the week.

WANTED a Kind Catholic Family to adopt Baby Boy (four weeks).—'Mother,' George Street P.O., Dunedin.

[A CARD.]

**WOODLEY A. PROWSE**  
DENTAL SURGEON  
VICTORIA AVENUE,  
(OPP. PAUL & C's.),  
WANGANUI.

TELEPHONES—Surgeries 192, Private Residence 109.  
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[A Card.]

**J. H. EGAN**

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Over Robbin's, Chemist; opp. City Market,  
330 QUEEN STREET, AUCKLAND.

### 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.*

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.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER, 23, 1911.

## THE PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLY



HE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand for 1911 will not go down to history as in any way memorable. Whether it was because there was no great burning question agitating the minds of the brethren, or because there was in all the gathering no outstanding personality, such as the Dr. Burns, Dr. Stuart, or Dr. Macgregor of a by-gone day, or because the agenda paper was congested with wearisome detail, we are unable to say; but the fact remains that, from first to last, the proceedings were tame and uneventful to a degree. In addition to their regular reporters, each of the daily newspapers had a special contributor 'writing up' the Assembly from day to day, but these contributions reached, if possible, a lower depth of dulness than even the official reports.

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We have often had occasion of late to comment on the growing ignorance of the rising Protestant generation in regard to the Scriptures; and some striking evidence on this point was furnished at one session of the Assembly. In the course of the Bible-in-Schools discussion, the Rev. A. Whyte gave details of the result of an examination held recently by an Anglican and a

Presbyterian clergyman, with the assistance of the head master of the school, which is in the Otago district. Out of 700 answers, 539 showed ignorance and 173 knowledge. Some of the papers would not have got 5 per cent., and one boy (attending a high school and aged 17) got nothing. In answering the question, 'Mention any one incident in the life of St. Paul?' 41 showed ignorance, 7 knowledge. 'Who was Joseph's father?' was another question, and 44 did not know, while only 4 did. Again, 35 children knew something about the commandments, but 13 knew nothing. Only one child knew the names of Noah's sons, 47 knew nothing about them. 'If adults,' commented the speaker, 'knew as little as the children, much of the preaching was lost, inasmuch as Scriptural allusions would not be understood.' This examination took place in a district high school in Otago, and in one of the oldest towns in Otago.

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That is bad enough; but a worse feature even than mere insufficiency of instruction was disclosed in connection with the working of the young people's Bible classes. From the utterance of one of the oldest members of the Assembly, it appears that not only are many of the grown-ups tainted with the (so-called) Higher Criticism, but even the tender minds of the children are now being indoctrinated with the poison. The Rev. W. Douglas, commenting on the decrease of 600 in the numbers attending Bible class, said that, personally, he knew of a class in which the teaching had been such that pupils had gone home and asked of their parents: 'Is the Bible true?' and when they received the reply that it was, they said: 'It can't be, if what we are taught is right.' It is told of the pioneer Presbyterian minister of Otago that he used to often relate to his congregation an incident that happened in the early days. A neighbor's house had caught fire; and for a time there was intense excitement. After a while the man came running up to the minister, and cried in tones of relief, 'It doesn't matter now; the last child's out.' And the minister never used to tell his congregation the story without adding solemnly: 'Is your last child out of the fire?' Nowadays—in some quarters, at least—it would seem that, instead of it being a first care to rescue the children, they are being actually put in the way of danger.

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A fairly constant and by no means edifying feature of the Assembly gatherings was the frequent display of bad taste, roughness of speech, and what the reporters described as 'heat,' on the part of that great no-Popery apostle, the Rev. Dr. Gibb. Speaking on Monday, for example, regarding the baptism of children whose parents had been imperfectly instructed in the meaning of the ordinance, he declared that it was reducing the sacrament to a farce, and added: 'You might as well sprinkle water in a dog's face.' It is to the credit of the Assembly that this was greeted by 'a chorus of indignant denials.' Here is another sample, extracted from the *Daily Times* report of Wednesday's proceedings (15th inst.): 'Dr. Gibb rose, and with considerable warmth declared: "I have to intimate I can do no more about it. Most of those 70 (who voted against him) had not a ghost of a notion what they were doing."—(Loud cries of "Oh, oh! Order! No, no!") Dr. Erwin: "Dr. Gibb has no right to make such an accusation."—"Hear, hear," and applause). Considerable interruption and dissent were aroused . . . and Dr. Irwin was heard pointing out that the house had already decided, and asking if Dr. Gibb had a right to "jockey" the house. It became impossible for Dr. Gibb to proceed. The interruption still continued, when the Moderator rose, and Dr. Gibb heatedly demanded if the Moderator was to be howled down, too.—("No, no!") When order was restored the Moderator remarked to Dr. Gibb: "When you withdraw the reference you made to the house, I think the house will be willing to listen to you." Dr. Gibb: "What reference did I make?" The Moderator: "You made a reference that was anything but parliamentary."—(Applause.) "It is not necessary that I should repeat it." Dr. Gibb then withdrew.' The