

Disastrous Fire.

A sad disaster occurred at Napier in the destruction by fire of the Maori Girls' School building at Hukarere on the morning of October 21st. The alarm was first given a few minutes before 6 a.m., but the fire had already taken a great hold on the cloak room, which was situated on the ground floor, in the middle of the south end of the building. The girls were immediately got out, and the prompt and orderly way in which this was accomplished was a remarkable testimony to the influence exercised by the Misses Bulstrode, and their assistants, over those who were under their charge. Those who occupied the dormitory, immediately over the seat of the fire, escaped quietly by a drawbridge from the window to the high bank of the excavation behind, and the rest, without the least confusion, down the stairs at the other end of the building. The progress of the fire was so rapid that very little in the way of clothing was saved, except some of the blankets and sheets, which were hurriedly snatched off the beds, the majority having nothing but what they had been sleeping in.

The members of the Fire Brigade were promptly on the scene, and did their utmost with the means at their disposal, but it was quite impossible to save any portion of the School building. Their efforts were however successful in preventing the spread of the fire to other houses, those of Messrs McCarthy and F. W. Williams having been in imminent danger.

The disaster is not easily accounted for. No fire had been kept up in the building after breakfast on the previous morning. The cloak room, in which the fire originated, had been locked the night before by one of the senior girls, who went to it for this purpose without a light, and observed nothing unusual in it.

Through the kindness of many sympathising friends the girls were soon provided with clothing, and arrangements were at once made for sending them to their respective homes.

We have great reason to thank God that no life was lost, and that, of the 70 occupants of the building no one sustained the slightest bodily injury.

He Aitua.

He nui te aitua i pono ki Nepia i te 21 o nga ra o Oketopa, ko te whare o te Kura Kotiro Maori i Hukarere i wera i te ahi. No te 6 o nga haora i te ata ka kitea e tetahi o nga kotiro te

ahi e ka ana i tetahi puma iringa kakahu, kahore nei he tangata i roto; kua kaha ano te ka o te ahi. Hohoro tonu te whakaputa i nga tamariki ki waho, he mea ata tohutohu marire e nga kai-whakaako, kahore rawa hoki he raruraru; otira kihai i taea te mau kakahu, he tere rawa no te ka o te ahi. Heoi ano o te nuinga, ko nga kakahu moenga anake. I tere ano te tae ake o te Ropu Tinei Ahi (Fire Brigade), me te whakaputa i te nuaa ki ta ratou mahi; otira kihai rawa i taea te tinei i te ahi, a pau noa te whare: ko etahi ano ia o nga whare e tata ana i whakaorangia; wahi iti ano kua wera i te ahi.

Kahore rawa i kitea te putake o tenei ahi. Kahore he ahi e ka ana i nga tumere mai o te mutunga o te parakuhi i te 20 o nga ra. Ko te ruma, i timata nei ki reira te ka o te ahi, kei te mau te tatau i te raka, he mea ki e tetahi o nga kotiro ahua pakeke i te ahiahi; kahore he rama i mauria e ia, kahore hoki he tohu ahi i kitea.

He tokomaha nga wahine pakeha o te taone i hohoro te whakaputa i te aroha ki nga kotiro, i whakawhiwhi i a ratou ki te kakahu. Ko nga kotiro kua takihokihoki ki nga kainga o ratou matua.

Kia nui te whakawhetai ki te Atua mo te oranga mai o te whitu tekau i roto i tenei aitua; kahore hoki he mate i pa ki te tinana o tetahi o ratou.

Why am I a Christian?

(Sermon preached by the Bishop of Waiapu, at St. Augustine's, Napier.)

"God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto Himself."—II. COR., v., 19.

It is sometimes wise to look to your foundations, especially in an age where everything is cast indiscriminately into the crucible of criticism.

Thank God, we are not afraid of criticism, not afraid of digging beneath the surface, not afraid of Time's decaying hand, not afraid of twentieth century knowledge or scientific discovery. We welcome light from every quarter which can cast its bright beams upon the foundations on which the great superstructure of the Church is built up.

1. *What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?* Is it possible that the great building of the Christian Church could after all rest on an insecure foundation? Is it possible that the power of Christ, which has been

the most potent force in the world for so many centuries is after all only the result of the highest human manifestation of Godlikeness which men have hitherto seen or known?

Is it possible that Christ could have done what He has done, inspired men as He has done, helped and consoled men as He has done, if He Himself had been but man?

Is it possible that the world is waiting for a still higher manifestation of the Eternal God? that God may speak to the world as a Being who will supersede the Christ, and lead men still nearer to Himself?

Is it possible that Jesus of Nazareth is only one out of many reflections of the Infinite, and that Christianity's little day may pass and a more highly developed religion take its place?

Is it possible that God was only in Christ as He may be said to be in His Saints and Prophets? Did Christ reveal the mind and purpose and attitude of the Eternal Father? and did God speak to the world through Him as He has never spoken before or since?

Was Christ only the chief of the Saints, or was he unique, differing in being and essence from men? Was He Divine?

Is man an undeveloped Christ and capable of being what Christ was? However much we may exalt man, can we ever picture him sitting on Christ's throne?

How did Christ come to know so much of the Eternal God? If the forces of heredity and environment and education are impossible to account for it, is there any other possible cause?

2. *Are we afraid of facing* these and similar questions which are constantly brought before us? Are we afraid of searching the very foundations on which our faith and hope are built? No—a thousand times—no. One thing alone is sufficient to answer all our questions, and that is: *His sinlessness*—one challenge alone stamps Him as unique, and that is: "Which of you convicteth me of sin." Study the lives of all the Saints in or out of the Calendar and you will find that the greater the degree of saintliness the greater the consciousness of sin. The nearer a man gets to God and holiness, the more he realizes his unworthiness, the more he is inclined to cry out: "God be merciful to me a sinner," "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O God." Was there