

Editorial Notices.

The Clergy and Laity are invited to forward to the Editor, Archdeacon D. Ruddock, Napier, articles and communications for insertion in the "Gazette." Such should deal with matters of general interest, should be brief and logical, and legibly written upon one side only of the paper. No guarantee is given that unused matter will be returned.

It is hoped that Churchmen will promptly send their subscriptions, which need not necessarily be limited to the actual cost (2/6 posted). With increased income it will be possible to further extend the usefulness of the paper.

Parochial news and all other matter for insertion in a particular issue must be received by The Editor "Waiapu Church Gazette," Napier, not later than the 21st of the preceding month.

Subscriptions (2/6 per annum, post free) are payable in advance. They may be paid to the Local Clergy or sent direct to Mr. J. B. Fielder, Diocesan Treasurer, Tennyson St., Napier, to whom cheques and postal notes should be made payable.

Waiapu Church Gazette.

APRIL, 1916.

Jesus Risen.

Sermon by the Bishop of London.

(Preached at St. Paul's Cathedral)

"But God raised Him from the dead."—Acts. xiii. 30.

It was only the day before yesterday that I stood and knelt and prayed in this pulpit for three hours, and, with a great multitude of reverent and silent people, watched our Lord die. I defended that phrase at the time, and I defend it now. If Christ was, as the Scripture saith, "slain from the foundation of the world," then the Crucifixion is an eternal fact, and He is in the same sense crucified to the end of the world. What happened on a certain spot on the world's surface, and in a certain moment of the world's history, affects us to-day in as living a way as it did the people of two thousand years ago. But though only a few hours elapsed between the first Good Friday and the first Easter Day, what an extraordinary change happened during

those hours in the outlook of the world! It looked very black on Good Friday evening: the sweetest, purest soul that ever breathed had been hounded to death. All the forces of jealousy and envy reigned triumphant. There had been a promise made upon the Cross about a Paradise to come, but nothing had happened to prove that that promise consisted of anything but empty words. No wonder that disheartened disciples were wending their way sadly back to their villages! Farewell our glorious dream; farewell our dream of a world redeemed, and of a fount opened full of victorious grace, and of a life beyond the grave; farewell the vision of a living brotherhood, and a Church which should gather in the world, and a certain hope of some day destroying the works of the devil; farewell the hope of a world in which every pure girl could walk ennobled as a queen, and the boy could grow up in the traditions of a pure and healthy manhood; farewell the vision of the sweating-den and the gambling-hell, and the gin-palace becoming things of the past. It was, indeed, a Black Friday when Jesus Christ died. And then something happened—something so simple, so obvious, so inevitable, as we see it to be now, but which turned the disciples delirious with surprise—"God raised Him from the dead." This actual expression occurs sixteen times in the New Testament, and let us be quite clear what it means and what it does not mean. It does not mean merely that God enabled Him to appear after death as a disembodied spirit, for even the Jews of the day believed that men and women survived death. Martha said: "I know that He shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day!" The questioners of our Lord on the subject of the woman who had married seven husbands asked: "In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?"

No! it meant one thing, and one thing especially—that as our Lord Himself had raised Lazarus from the tomb, body, as well as soul and spirit, so His own sacred Body was not left to moulder either in the tomb or out of it, but was raised from the dead.

That this is the meaning is shown by the constant connection in the New Testament between His

being buried and then rising again—the two are always put together (see Rom. vi. 4; I Cor. xv. 4)—and also in so many words. S. Peter (Acts ii. 31) interprets "the resurrection of the Christ" as meaning "neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption"; and S. Paul (Acts xiii. 37) says also: "David saw corruption, but He Whom God raised up saw no corruption."

Let no doubts, then, of men who are losing their sense of the power of God, and who, however conscientiously, in their desire to make the faith easier for themselves and others, are whittling away the clear outlines of the Christian Faith, induce you to give up the full truth of Easter.

The whole future of the world was changed by the glorious fact that "God raised Him from the dead," and He stands Himself on Easter Day and cries: "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of hell and of death."

I know that it is sometimes said and thought that historical facts do not matter; that so long as you believe that Jesus Christ is victoriously alive to-day, it does not matter whether the tomb was empty or not; but with all due respect to such believing mystics, I would point out three things:

(1) That though we might continue to believe that Jesus Christ is alive in us to-day because we have arrived at that belief across the bridge of a dogmatic faith in which we were brought up, yet the next generation have yet to arrive at that belief, and once let them get accustomed to the thought of a non-miraculous Christ, and they will never reach to any belief about Him except that He was a very good man.

(2) And, in the second place, if you are to believe the story of the New Testament, you must take the whole story. The story of the New Testament as it stands is, though wonderful, consistent with itself, and to those who believe in the power and love of God, believable; but once seek to explain it or narrate it in terms which exclude miracles from the New Testament, and the whole story is shattered into a mass of unconnected atoms.