

Editorial Notices.

Please address all Editorial matter to The Editor, "Church Gazette," Box 29, Waipawa.

Literary Matter should reach the Editor on or before the 15th of the month. News Items, including Parish Notes, on or before the 18th of the month.

All Business Communications must be sent to the Diocesan Secretary. All communications regarding subscriptions to the "Church Gazette," and all notices of alteration in number of copies required should be sent to the Diocesan Secretary, Box 227, Napier.

Waiapu Church Gazette.

Wednesday, August 1st, 1923.

Spiritual Healing Mission.

WONDERFUL RESULTS.

REMARKABLE STATEMENT BY BISHOP OF BATHURST.

The following impressive statement regarding Mr Hickson's spiritual healing mission at Bathurst, N.S.W., was written for the Sydney "Daily Telegraph" by the Bishop of Bathurst (Dr. Long):—

These notes are written from the point of view of one who is convinced that the power of God was working in the mission, and are written for those who accept the Christian faith that prayer is heard and answered, and that all things are possible with God.

My own acceptance of the claims for the revival of healing ministry in the Church has slowly passed in the past few years through the stages of resistance, doubt, and inquiry to frank and open recognition.

I have felt the full force of every objection that has been raised long before such were raised in our midst. Ultimately it was the cautious investigation over a period of years of the work and phenomena of Christian healing in all parts of the world that compelled me to revise and then recast my preconceptions and misconceptions.

But it is necessary for one to work right through the whole period of preparation in order to comprehend a healing mission. It is essentially one of those experiences that must be approached from the inside in order to be understood and assessed.

THE CALL TO PRAYER.

The first fact that impressed one was the manner in which the people rose to the call for prayer.

I have had ample experience of mis-

sions of various kinds, and of the long period of preliminary organising that is demanded.

In this case nothing of the kind was required. As soon as people understood what was asked of them, they flocked to prayer. Week by week our services of prayer in the Bathurst Cathedral grew until the people crowded out the Cathedral in every part. There were no "attractions." The service was of the simplest form. There were no "great addresses," no "stirring music." The people just wanted to get upon their knees and pray. A great deal of the praying was done in the silence of a great throng of a thousand people. It was almost incredible that so many people could keep such breathless silence.

The services of the mission have often been described. They are unaffectedly simple, and devoid of all that is spectacular. The missionary, Mr Hickson, has a great gift of quiet, simple speech readily understood by the plain folk. I was impressed by his steady poise, and his amazing capacity for work. He is quiet, confident, and controlled. He moves from task to task without haste, yet with bewildering rapidity. The least sign of emotionalism he crushes instantly. He will not have sensation or the working up of emotion.

AN AMAZING UPLIFT.

What of the results of the mission? It is readily understandable that sympathetic people should fear a great and crushing disappointment to fall upon many who have had no immediate manifestation of healing. The fear was natural, but experience in every part of the world has proved that it is groundless. This was once again demonstrated in our experience. The sick receive an amazing spiritual uplift. One demonstration of this was given, when a large party of them spontaneously broke into the singing of the Doxology upon their departure from Bathurst. Those who had not yet received evidence of physical healing sang it as joyfully and fervently as the others.

Everyone remarked upon the buoyancy and cheer of the patients after their participation in the mission. Apart from spiritual blessings, there was the wonderful joy to them of feeling the wide sympathy of everyone for their sufferings. For years these had been locked away in loneliness and secret depression; now they were brought out into the radiance and love of their fellow men. It was an unforgettable experience. The spectacle of the mass of suffering in most terrible forms was heart-rending. Nothing but a strong restraint of compassionate love could carry one on through the ministering

to them without an emotional breakdown.

SOME OF THE CASES.

What of physical healings?

Numbers of our patients came from long distances, and the pressure of numbers was so great that they had to be got away by the first trains, in order to make room for others. We were all much too busy to attempt to gather "results," even if we had desired to do so; but even in those crowded moments scores of patients came to tell and reveal their healings.

I cite now but a few such cases, and I write words of truth and soberness. After one has been through such great experiences one cites cases with much reluctance. We have seen the answers of God given to prayer in manifest and unmistakable ways, and these become a holy experience which one shrinks from appearing to parade or display. The tears of joy streaming down the faces of mothers as they clasp recovered children in their arms gives one memories sacred and unforgettable. We are sure of Him in Whom we have believed. We are sure of the things we have seen and heard, and that security sufficeth us. Those who have prayed, and those who have received healings, have a divine experience in common. God and the spirit world have come very near to them.

But I have been asked to write of these things, and, perhaps, it should be done. I have looked into the eyes that were badly crossed of a lad, and so weak in sight, that he could scarcely see by the aid of thick lenses. I have seen that boy two hours later with eyes perfectly straight, and discarding glasses. As someone asks him can he really see now, he breaks out joyfully, "Oh, there's mummy!" as he sees his mother coming to him across the Cathedral lawn.

In two other cases I know of children's eyes becoming straight and normal.

I have seen a child that has not walked for eight years walk quite steadily along the Cathedral path to its father and mother.

The last person upon whom we laid hands on Wednesday morning was blind in the left eye, and as she passed through the vestry the sight returned in full.

On Tuesday morning the first man upon whom we laid hands looked to be at the door of death. He was so weak the night before that it was impossible to take him to the private house to which he had been assigned. For years he has been bed-ridden. Two hours later he was dressed and walking about, and doing physical exercises to show his recovered powers. He walked to the Cathedral in the afternoon to return thanks.