

# Medical Spiritual Healing.

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The attitude of the medical profession as a body toward the Hickson Spiritual Healing Mission has been set forth by *Dr. J. Hardie Neil*, President of the Auckland Division of the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association, and as *Dr. Neil's* opinion coincides with our own and is a fair presentation of the views commonly held by the medical profession, we think it advisable and opportune to place this aspect of the question before our readers.

Auckland was particularly well served at the present time, *Dr. Hardie Neil* pointed out, by keen and honourable medical men, many of whom were possessed of academic qualifications which were the best obtainable in the English-speaking world. It was possible for a patient to obtain general and consultative opinions equal to those to be had in any other city of its size in the world. They had been assured, he said, that Mr. Hickson came "with clean hands and a pure heart," and in certain cases of illness he was very likely to do good. For example, there were people who were mentally afflicted, and whose physical processes were thereby vitiated. In cases of that type, the healing mission would undoubtedly bring benefit.

About 20 per cent. of those seeking medical advice had merely imaginary ills, based possibly on transient symptoms, and, after making a proper investigation, the medical practitioners sent them away with that assurance. Often those people were obsessed with the idea that they had some grave malady, and under that belief they became the prey of some of the quacks and charlatans who made up what might be called the "medical underworld." Such people, if they attended the Hickson mission, would undoubtedly in many cases gain benefit from it. And they were not the only ones whom Mr. Hickson would probably benefit.

There was a certain class of practitioner of the irregular type, *Dr. Hardie Neil* continued, who made use of machines which had a camouflage of electrical terms. It was on record that a lady undergoing that treatment with others had gratuitously mentioned that the most devout seemed to derive the greatest benefit. There they had another instance of the power of suggestion.

The reason why the British Medical Association did not cooperate with the Spiritual Healing Mission, *Dr. Hardie Neil* said, was that they felt it would be obviously a fruitless effort. The medical profession would demand scientific investigation of a number of cases, and thus discredit would fall upon the mission. In the state of our present knowledge it could hardly be said that the mission's operations could influence the general work of medical and surgical practice, except in those cases of physical vitiation following upon or associated with mental or nervous trouble.

The medical profession had never known an instance where spiritual healing, either by Mr. Hickson or any other spiritual healer, had effected a cure of malignant organic disease. But in cases of obsession as to disease, rising from some slight ailment, Mr. Hickson, by giving ease to the mind through spiritual administration, might help the patient to become mentally normal. Thereafter he would be able to carry on with a minimum of discomfort in regard to the real ailment, and in time that disability itself might, by adaption, practically disappear.

At the present time, said *Dr. Hardie Neil*, in the various hospitals in New Zealand the medical profession restored sight, gave hearing and prolonged life. That was regarded as purely routine work, and was not advertised, because it was a commonplace, and the profession expected such results to follow if ordinary modern methods were carried out. In those hospitals many gratifying results were accomplished. If Mr. Hickson were to bring to pass even *one* such good result, that fact would be broadcasted over the world. Such information as the medical profession now had in its possession showed that results such as were obtained by the ordinary methods of medical and surgical practice in organic disease were unobtainable by any other methods.

There was one very important point to be remembered, and that was that early diagnosis would permit modern medicine and surgery to cope successfully with most of the known diseases. These were generally heralded by danger signals, which were easily recognised by trained observers, and preventative treatment could be instituted

with success. Most of the tragedies encountered in practice occurred in those cases where there had been delay in diagnosis, through ignorance in the appreciation of the portent of the early signs of the disease. No person should consult any healing mission until the case had been properly considered from a modern medical standpoint.

Hysteria was a condition implanted in the body by suggestion, and removed by the same means. The medical profession of the world claimed that

hysteria was the basis of some of the marvellous cures reported from time to time as being the result of psychic influences.

“The medical profession is not antagonistic to the healing mission, and certainly it in no way desired to be associated with those who wish to cast stones,” *Dr. Hardie Neil* concluded. “Rather would the profession express the hope that those placing themselves in Mr. Hickson’s hands will receive such benefits as are expedient for them.”