

MARCH 31, 1944

A Gospel Play

IT would be reckless to believe that no listener will be shocked by the BBC play, *The Man Born to be King*, which the NBS will begin broadcasting next Sunday. Every play based on the Scriptures shocks somebody; and this play is not merely based on the Scriptures but is a translation of them. While there are no visible impersonations of Gospel figures, the Gospel story is presented in everyday language and Christ himself not merely speaks but argues. That is not only a sensation: it will continue, to some, to be horrifying. But the real question is: how many will be horrified and how many helped? The author of the play-cycle did not write it to please people or lull them into religious sleep. She wrote it to wake them up and shock them—to "disturb" them, she says, with "an extremely disturbing story." It was for that reason that the Religious Broadcasting Department commissioned it and the BBC gave it the air—risking, they all knew, the wrath of those who would condemn the performances as irreverent, blasphemous, or vulgar; and it is for the same reason, and with the same knowledge, that they will be broadcast in New Zealand. Time, even in religion, moves on. The voices and attitudes of one age can be foolishness or a dull weariness in another age. It is, for example, a little alarming in New Zealand—to those even with some ancestral preparation—to hear a church service in broad Scots. "He said I gang and he didna' gang." It will be alarming, at first, to hear Martha say: "How many to supper? The Rabbi and you and us three—that's five"; or the Centurion telling Simon on the road to Calvary to cut out his back-chat. Well here is the author's answer: "To make of His story something that could neither startle, nor shock, nor terrify, nor excite, nor inspire a living soul is to crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame." It will be interesting to see how many in New Zealand say Amen.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

PIES AND PIEMEN

Sir,—Beware of piemen on the road if you wish to reach the mature objectives sketched at Teheran. Wendell Willkie wrote an article "Don't Stir Mistrust of Russia." *Pravda* commented: "The article is like a pie. The outside crust strengthens confidence while the filling arouses mistrust." You served us a similar pie on March 17: I refer to the article by A.M.R. on the conflict between Hitler's Finnish jackals and the Union of Republics within which Hitler searched in vain for a fifth column. Anti-Soviet feeling under a "candid" crust! You recently called me stupid, so I presume journalistic etiquette permits me to call you a Simple Simon with pennies in pocket.

KEEPER OF THE FLAME (Remuera)

HELPING THE YOUNG

Sir,—The talk given over IYA on Tuesday, March 7, by the Rev. J. L. Gray under the auspices of the Inter-Church Council, Auckland, was well

speeches. The second item was a detailed and unhurried report of how an 18-year-old mare was mothering young calves, and that it had been doing so for seven years. This was followed by a summary of the deaths from road accidents in February, and a comparison with previous years. Then we heard a letter written by some airman in Britain thanking a lady for knitting him a warm pullover. Last but not least was the exciting news that a sea horse had been discovered on a northern beach, with a full description of the said horse and details of its mannerisms and peculiarities. This concluded the very interesting session of New Zealand news.

We are all aware that there is a war on and that certain items of news cannot be broadcast, but to call that trivial news of interest is absurd. One can imagine a soldier in a forward area listening impatiently for news of home interest, and, when the session is concluded, picking up the radio and hurling it against the nearest coconut tree. And can you blame him?—DAVE BOSWELL (Somewhere in the Pacific).

CORRECTION

IN the supplement issued with this number, the photograph of Mr. Ratana (Western Maori) and of the Hon. Mr. Tirikatene (Southern Maori) have been inadvertently transposed—by ourselves and not by our printers. This unfortunate error was not detected until the supplement had been printed, and to reprint during the present paper shortage is, of course, out of the question. We can do nothing but apologise to the two honourable gentlemen and ask our readers to correct their own copies.

worth thought and consideration. What action is possible to ensure improved ways of living, better films and home-life; a correct sense of the value of money and a realisation of the evil of the sacrifices demanded by private profit? We have unions in plenty to protect the workers—what about one throughout New Zealand to ensure that the quality of films, radio, etc. is such as will promote good ideals, clean thoughts, and stimulate youth to honest work and love of home? The records of the Juvenile Court call for action. Can we unite—not dictate—rather get in alongside of our boys and girls and create a demand for things good and wholesome that cannot be denied?—MOTHER (Titirangi).

NEWS FOR THE PACIFIC

Sir,—It was my good fortune to be near a radio one Friday recently and to listen to a session entitled "Items of News for Our Forces in the Pacific." The first item was that the Address-in-Reply Debate was in progress; the names of both speakers were given, but not a word about the main gist of the

BBC BRAINS TRUST

Sir,—The BBC Brains Trust may have been disappointing to "Materfamilias," but to many it has been like a draught of fresh water in a desert. "Materfamilias" writes, "Some programmes end abruptly as though we were being served with only half." This is a fact. The programmes as they came out to New Zealand were to last 45 minutes, but 45 minutes of brains plus entertainment is evidently considered too long for us in this country, which leads the world in so much, and the time has been halved for our benefit or for our sins. Incidentally, half of 45 was sometimes much less than 22½, and it would be interesting to know what happened to the records in the course of the editing process to which they were submitted.

To me, none of the questions seemed "feeble" and, though the answers may have been given with the light touch and often with the inimitable humour of the Englishman, all were more than worth listening to. Professor Haldane was outstanding in his broadcasts, and the so-called "bleating" of some of the others was just the accompaniment to many a pearl of wisdom and some gems of wit.

And since when have the English been our "cousins"? Many would rather have five minutes of their "bleating" than an hour of the programmes provided by our American "brothers."—"FRIDAY NIGHT AT 8.30" (Wellington).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Jane (Havelock North) wants the BBC Brains Trust at least one night a week. M.F.G. (Marton) asks (1) for the text of the sermon by Archbishop Averill broadcast recently from 3YA; (2) for more services from the various school and college chapels. "At present Christ's College have an annual old boys' service broadcast, and King's College in recent years have been having their service of nine Lessons and Carols broadcast over 12M. But I think once a year is hardly enough."

Timely Books

"PLAN FOR ACTION," by John Russell Hancock. Here is a completely new approach to the problem of reconstruction. In this book, the principles of international collaboration are set out and their practical working is shown. The author has written in the belief that since international disorder is affecting the life of every one of us, international reorganisation is the business of every man and every woman.

12/6 (Posted 12/10).

"AUSTRALIAN-NEW ZEALAND AGREEMENT." The full text of the Agreement made between His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia and His Majesty's Government in the Dominion of New Zealand. Canberra, January 21, 1944.

6d (Posted 7d).

"PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE LAND SALES ACT, 1943," by D. J. Hewitt, LL.M. Sets out in a simple manner the meaning of the legislation which affects tens of thousands of property owners—of the owners of the richest farm lands and valuable city dwellings to the owners of the humblest dwellings.

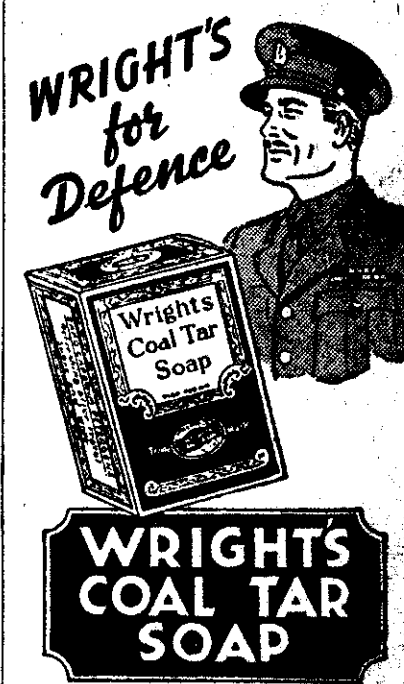
4/6 (Posted 4/9).

"THE NEW ZEALAND OFFICIAL YEAR BOOK."

7/6 (Posted 8/2).

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