

SEPTEMBER 21, 1945

And Now?

FIRST, New Zealand is committed as never before to world citizenship. Though it was not necessary to sign a document in Tokyo Bay to achieve this status, the signing committed us to it more publicly, and quite irrevocably. It also made us more consciously a Pacific nation. Whether we realise it or not, like it or not, we have to find our place in a world occupied, for centuries before we had even heard of it, by tens of millions of Orientals. In addition, they are now Westernised Orientals, understanding our science, and rapidly converting it to the same technical uses; as clever as we are, and a good deal more diligent. For they are acquiring Western ways without becoming Western people—learning quicker ways of doing things but remaining under the necessity of doing them without ceasing. The pressure of numbers, which we have never felt and are not for a generation or two likely to feel, forced industry on them ages ago, and enabled them to live comfortably where most New Zealanders and Australians would have starved. Unless we face these facts we are putting an end to one conflict and walking into another. Japan will not again this century—unless America goes maudlin and soft—threaten the world with arms. But 80 million Japanese still have to live, and their threat to our economic standards began before the ink was dry on the surrender document. We have to meet that threat by working harder or by living more simply, or by doing both; and neither will be easy for us. We hope of course to make friends with the Japanese some day; with a new kind of Japanese; but we are not their friends now, and, if defeat changes them into a people with whom we are ready to be friendly, they will not have changed in one respect. They will still be restlessly industrious and aggressively intelligent, and if we want to be their victims a second time the surest way to bring that about is to start a domestic war as often as we are asked to forgo some comfort or put forth a little more energy.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS**A DISCLAIMER**

Sir,—I thank you for publishing my letter, "Function of Films," in the current *Listener*, but I cannot thank you for a letter in the previous issue under the heading of "Freedom of the Air," which appeared over my name and that of R. Hulbert (Waipukurau) who, apparently, is a Rationalist. Apart from "digs" from my friends (who delight in refusing to believe that I had nothing to do with it) I have already been congratulated by one Rationalist whom I had never set eyes on before—and for all I know I may be incurring the enmity of a whole lot of "irrationalists"—or whatever the dickens they are at the other end of the paddock!

I would be glad therefore if you would either publish this disclaimer—or one of your own—otherwise I may get into all kinds of trouble. I am rather annoyed at having to explain to people that I am not a Rationalist—when all the time I have a horrible feeling I may be! What are they, anyhow?

JACK SHERIE (Mt. Maunganui).

(We apologise to our correspondent for this regrettable error. The explanation of course is that the letter he did write was lifted out of the page after it was in type while the line that was his name was overlooked. But if we had not made that mistake our readers would have been robbed of his bright disclaimer. —Ed.)

CUM GRANO?

Sir,—I write to you in a state of considerable mental turmoil. I was greatly distressed, on reading Dr. Blanc's review of Dr. Guy Chapman's new book, to learn that Dr. Chapman had omitted to mention iodised salt as a means of ensuring a proper supply of iodine. In some bitterness of spirit I taunted Dr. Chapman about it. He replied that he had deliberately refrained from recommending iodised salt; that according to Dr. Pulay ("Allergic Man") and other reliable investigators, iodised salt should be taken only under a doctor's orders, owing to the danger of iodism; that goitre specialists often solemnly warn their patients against it; that iodine should be taken in an organic form as part of a normal diet; and a lot more along the same lines. Then I made further enquiries and was told that the iodised salt sold in New Zealand has recently been found to contain little or no iodine; the iodine is absorbed by the bag or other container. Please can you tell me whether or not I do or do not restrain myself when I see a bag of iodised salt? Or do I chew the bag, or munch the packet? And does the Health Department think it perfectly safe for me to refrain from eating de-iodised iodised salt, as long as I chew seaweed regularly?

A. R. D. FAIRBURN (Auckland).

(We submitted this letter to the Health Department, and have had the following reply from the Director-General:

"If your correspondent's reportage of Dr. Chapman's views on iodised salt be correct, then Dr. Chapman is revealed as no authority on goitre and its prevention. He is not a medical man and is being misled in some of his reading.

"There is some truth in the assertion that iodine in iodised salt may be absorbed by the bag or cardboard container. The facts are that during wartime impervious containers become impossible to get, and packing has been allowed in bags and cardboard packs. If these get damp, some of the iodine is lost to the container, but enough is left to prevent goitre.

All reputable manufacturers have a margin allowing for losses of iodine content. Both bags and cardboard packs are sampled and tested by analysis at frequent intervals and there is no justification for doubt as to the ability of iodised salt sold in New Zealand to do the work it is supposed to do, in spite of any loss to the container. However, as there is no need to allow this loss to continue, now that the war is over, it is proposed to take steps to make it obligatory to revert to impervious containers for the packing of iodised salt, or at least to the use of impervious linings in all packs of this commodity.")

GOD AND MAN

Sir,—If, as J. Malton Murray suggests, there were no evil in the world, what a rapid descent there would be to stark negation in literature, drama, art, religion, sport—in fact, in all human affairs and activities. Life would become as flat, stale, and negative as perpetual sunshine. Everything must have its correlative, and that of good is evil, that of night, day, that of sweet, bitter, that of faith, doubt, and so on, interminably. Browning says, "you must mix some uncertainty with faith, if you would have

More letters from listeners will be found on page 14

faith be." Evil is the perversion of good, as crime is the perversion of law; but man, in general, may please himself how far he carries these perversions to his own hurt. I respectfully suggest that Mr. Murray should make up his mind to accept creation as it is, since man can't, and the Almighty won't, alter it. I suggest, also, that if he meditate on the classic loveliness say of a hyacinth, and the incomprehensible mystery of its growth, he may be able, and perhaps willing, to shout with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

J. E. HAMILL (Rotorua).

Sir,—The last letter by J. Malton Murray on the above subject raises some interesting points. He quotes from an eminent theologian to support his idea that "evil was present in the world before human beings were created." May I suggest that this conclusion is incorrect, because it is based on the assumption that the Fall was an actual event in time and space, whereas the whole story, like a great deal else in the Bible, is simply an allegory—a description of the descent of spirit into matter.

Then again confusion arises because of our extremely limited conception of the Creator. Your correspondent's letter clearly indicates that he regards God as an extra-Cosmic Being, separate from His creation. In fact, there is only one life, one Force, one Power in the whole Universe and that is God's Life in which we literally "live and move and have our being." As Dean Inge says, God uses us, His children, to work out His Plans—and this is the only way He can work.

There is no morality in power—it is neither good nor bad—it is simply power.

However, man can turn it to good or evil, as witness the dreadful possibilities of the recent release of Cosmic energy, locked up in the atom since the beginning of time. Evil may, in broad terms, be stated as anything which frustrates, hinders or inhibits the unfolding Divine life in man; a failure to co-operate and work in accordance with the Divine Plan which is evolution to Perfection for all living things. As an abstraction it simply has no existence.

As regards the war, it was the final and dreadful expression of human selfishness, greed, pride and unwillingness to co-operate. It held certain lessons for us, which, it is to be hoped, we have learned. But we would never learn these or any lessons if as soon as we got ourselves into a mess, the Almighty intervened to save us from the consequences of our folly. In any case, it is difficult to see how such Divine intervention could occur, since, as already stated, God can only work through man. Evil exists only for him who is enslaved by it, and is the outcome of the misdirection and prostitution of the one and only power in the Universe.

H. M. THORNTON (Mt. Eden).

Sir,—The call of Christianity is to God-like living—not to any finding of a satisfying solution of the problem of evil. Christianity assures men that they can hope to be transformed, from being merely "sons of men," into being "sons of God." As such, they can hope to influence the life of the world, at least in some measure, as the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, has done and is doing. He does not enlighten us fully about the mystery of iniquity. What He does about this is to bid us to fight like fury against all corrupting, degrading influence, and to fight as hard not only to get into all that God stands for, but also to take others along with us into Godliness, which is, of course, God-likeness. And He encourages us to believe that the whole life of the world is blessed by the presence within it of God-like men and women, whose existence acts like salt, keeping the whole of humanity from putrefaction, like leaven, lightening the whole stodgy mass, like light, a very little of which can dispel much darkness.

To refuse to respond to the call to do all that in one lies towards man's rising not only to his natural best, but, too, beyond this into super-natural gloriousness, just because one is not given a satisfying answer to "How did an all-good, all-wise, all-loving mind come to create evil?" seems to me silly. It is akin to a man's refusing to use an intricate machine, which he might use to his own good and to the benefit of all mankind, because he is not allowed to know fully how it works. How do I know that God is good, wise, loving, etc.? In the scientific way, that of experiment, as well as in the spiritual way, that of making venture of faith. No amount of argument against God's goodness, wisdom, and love can rob me of my experience of God, Whom I find adorable. Call this a delusion if you must do so, but it is one which makes me expend my whole being on efforts to dispel all evil and towards the revealing of all the glories latent in mankind as well as in God.

C.C.C. (Cambridge).