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## Displaced Persons

ONE of the difficulties encountered by New Zealanders who try to see the world as a whole is the fact that so many world problems come to us in words only. We read of shattered cities and displaced populations, but if we have not ourselves been out of New Zealand our imaginations do not bring those reports to life. No one is dull enough to read of such things with indifference, but it is one thing to feel vague melancholy over long processions of houseless persons crossing a bridge both ways and another thing altogether to see those persons as fathers and mothers and growing boys and girls and misery-dulled little children; to see them before the war uprooted them; and then to see them coming to strange villages and lonely countrysides where there is neither warmth nor welcome for them. It is happening all over Europe to-day, where anything between two and ten millions of people are adrift, homeless and jobless and in most cases friendless, and walking into a continental winter. Those of us who saw the Polish children arrive here, who have visited them in their camp and talked with those who have worked among them, have had one vivid glimpse of the tragedy; but 700 goes into 7,000,000 ten thousand times, and we are none of us capable of the imaginative effort required to see tragedy on that scale. What we can do, however, we should do: try a little harder to understand; wait a little longer for peace; give a little more generously to relief funds; sacrifice ourselves a little more actively to prevent the calamity from snowballing. "Little" is written deliberately. Our contribution must be small in relation to a problem of such dimensions; but if it is nothing at all we are cumberers of the earth and not world citizens.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

**CANTERBURY'S CENTENNIAL**  
Sir,—“At the time when Canterbury was celebrating its centennial . . .” (New Zealand Listener, September 21, page 15). Canterbury having been founded in 1850, it reached its centennial, when? “It’s a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,” said the White Queen to Alice. Perhaps Canterbury celebrated its centennial a few years before it arrived; but if so, we ought to have been told about it.—**CONSTANT ADMIRER** (Ross Dependency).

### “CUM GRANO”

Sir,—The comment made by the Director General of Health on A. R. D. Fairburn’s query regarding the use of iodised salt will have helped neither Mr. Fairburn nor any other of your readers. One does not need to be a “medical practitioner” in order to understand plain English, and I daresay that the Director General himself will find the following quotation from Dr. Pulay’s *Allergic Man* (Muller, 1942) sufficiently unambiguous:

“An indiscriminate administration of iodised salt is therefore to be deplored, as not infrequently the continued administration of even minute doses may lead to iodism and give rise to the symptoms of thyroid intoxication.” (p. 26.)

In my book *Nutrition* I made no mention of iodised salt, because iodine can be and should be taken in an organic form as part of a normal diet, and, unlike the Director General, I am not prepared to take the responsibility of recommending something which might, in however small a number of cases, lead to all those distresses which are involved in toxic goitre.

GUY B. CHAPMAN (Titirangi).

Sir,—Inspired by the advertisement of the Health Department, and suspecting a slight tendency to goitre in my adolescent child, I took him to a doctor who prescribed a daily dose of a colourless iodine concentrate and the exclusive use of iodised salt. Ten months later I took the child to a specialist for a check-up. The specialist is an intelligent, conscientious, well-experienced man. He agreed there was a recognisable tendency to goitre, although the condition was not yet dangerous, but he warned me that, this being so, I must carefully refrain from using any form of iodine in the diet, cut out the use of iodised salt, and even abstain from using iodine tincture on the skin. I was told that iodine administered prophylactically is useful, but once the thyroid is involved in any disorder it serves only to emphasise the symptoms of the disease. It was also pointed out to me that New Zealand’s foremost goitre specialist and surgeon concurs in this opinion. Reviewing Dr. Chapman’s book in a recent issue of *The Listener* Dr. Blanc, from the lofty heights of his B.M.A. degree, called the iodised salt treatment “a measure which has found world-wide approval.”

At various times I have seen references to a school of medical thought which admits organic forms of iodine, but denies any curative properties for inorganic forms. For the perplexed layman there seem to be two alternatives. We must sink back into illiteracy and suppress our reasoning faculties, so that we may cultivate the unquestioning faith demanded of us by the medical fraternity, or we shall humbly suggest to these privileged citizens that they

pool their experience and learning, accept the idea that they are fallible, and try so to organise their lives that they have some free time in which to keep abreast of recent medical thought.  
G.E.S. (Auckland).

### FREEDOM OF THE AIR

Sir,—Though not wishing to extend the controversy on Evolution, I should like to point out to P. H. Bromwell that he is in error when he talks of the “well-established truth” of Evolution, and the “irrefragable basis” on which the theory stands. How can clergymen “confirm the truth” of Evolution seeing they are not scientists? Also Darwin nowhere asserted that we sprang from apes. All through his writings occurs his now well-known phrase, “We may well suppose.” The fact is that very few scientists will

More letters from listeners will be found on pages 24-25.

do more than say that “the theory of Evolution offers an explanation of man’s existence,” and I would point out that many scientists hold the theory in reserve.

Also why does P. Bromwell say that for “us” the Bible stories have become folk lore? There are still many thousands in the world, educated and uneducated, who receive the Bible record as substantially correct—I am one, in spite of the learned bishops quoted. Let the evolutionists speak over the air, but see that they speak the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth—and anti-evolutionists will be satisfied.

COMMONSENSE (Wellington).

Sir,—As the originator of this discussion, may I make a few observations on the letter of “Student” (Canterbury)? I have always understood that the function of science was continual probing, prying, proving or disproving, until a theory is accepted as being true and factual or else rejected as false. Surely theories preceded most scientific discoveries, and though frequently ridiculed were later honoured and vindicated. Harvey held a theory or belief regarding the circulation of the blood; Pasteur and Lister theories on bacterial infection and asepsis, and were proved to be at least on the right line of thought. Had these men not believed in their theories in the face of bigotry and bitter hostility what a tragic loss to the world.

“Student” sees no reason why a biologist should not “use” evolution in his work, while believing, implicitly in Genesis as an “article of faith.” By what process of mental gymnastics may a man believe in a scientific truth and a weird effusion of ignorance at one and the same time? To me, a mere layman, it is attempting a policy of appeasement and self-delusion.

R. HULBERT (Waipukurau).

Sir,—As another science student I should like to comment on “Student’s” letter. First I find that my mind rather balks at his phrase “uses evolution.” A scientist may make use of the theory of evolution to explain varietal differences within species or, he may study the trends of those variations in the past and try to predict possible future trends. But I hardly think you would

say he “uses evolution.” Further, I was assailed by doubts when I read his statement that “there seems to be no reason at all why the biologist should not use evolution in his work while believing implicitly in Genesis as an article of faith.” The statement reminds me of the man with two girl friends, to both of whom he makes passionate love. And while he is making love to one there lurks in the back of his mind the thought of the other, and the hope that “she won’t turn up at the wrong moment.”

Similarly, “Student’s” biologist with his “implicit faith” in Genesis would have to still whisperings occasioned in the back of his mind by his knowledge of the theory of evolution. Or, alternatively, the anthropologist would have difficulty in reconciling the remains of *Pithecanthropus* with the story of the Garden of Eden, which happened so many, many thousands of years later.

I feel that the biologist who is thoroughly imbued with his work would be unable to keep his “implicit faith” untarnished. To do so he would have to have his faith all nicely tucked away in one corner of his brain, and his knowledge of evolutionary theory in another, and trot them out one at a time, and never allow the two to mingle. This is not possible. Two incompatible ideas cannot remain for long in an efficient brain without struggling one against the other. Of course they could easily remain at peace in an inefficient brain which just absorbs ideas and doesn’t bother to ponder on them.—**ANOTHER STUDENT** (Canterbury College).  
[Abbreviated.—Ed.]

Sir,—“Argosy” has it all off pat. Against the lack of inspiration of the Pentateuch he would have us applaud the divinely-inspired higher critic creators of J.E.D. and P. Sir Charles Marston has the answer to these ultra-intellectual pretensions. Basing his remarks on the evidence of archaeological discovery he writes in his book *The Bible Comes Alive*:

“The critical methods assumed that the Hebrews were more or less illiterate. The assumption has completely broken down . . . so J.E. & P. . . the supposed authors of the Pentateuch are becoming mere phantom scribes and fetishes of the imagination. They have made Old Testament study unattractive, they have wasted our time, and they have warped our judgments on outside evidence. In the clearer light that Science is casting, these shadows that have dimmed our days of study and devotion are silently stealing away.”

ROY H. COLLINS (Te Puke).

### BAND PROGRAMMES

Sir,—In reply to the complaint of “Brass Band (Paeroa)” I do not share his view that brass band programmes are “throttled.” I have listened with considerable pleasure to the broadcast programmes by New Zealand brass bands, including the Invercargill Civic, St. Kilda (Dunedin), Woolston (Christchurch), Christchurch Municipal, Ashburton Silver, Auckland Watersiders’ Silver Band, and the Salvation Army bands in various centres. Besides these, there have been recorded programmes by overseas brass bands, including Fodens’ Motor Works, Munn and Feltons Works, Black Dyke Mills, St. Kilda Colliery, Bickershaw Colliery, Halifax Home Guard, and the Salvation Army Bands. I might add that I hope to have the pleasure of hearing the Paeroa Brass Band on the air.

GORDON HILL (Auckland).