

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

CHRISTIANITY IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—The reading of "Nabal's" letter in your issue of April 18 made me ashamed of the way we have presented Christ to the world. He came to bring a new power to humanity so that the next step in the advance to perfection might be taken. Instead of manifesting this power we have stressed the negative side of His teaching, and to-day the average man thinks of the Church as an old lady who is upset about his pleasures—betting, racing and drinking. A man would have a very different idea of the Church if his wife were healed of a serious malady by one of Christ's disciples. Psychologists are proving to-day that Christ's teaching is entirely practical, if you desire health of mind and body. The trouble with our faith is, not that we are asked to believe what is untrue, but that we have not the faith to believe what is true—the power promised by the Master to His disciples. However there is a stirring amongst the dry bones and we may yet live to see the joy and the healing power of Christ in manifestation.—REGINALD GARDINER (Havelock North).

Sir,—Your correspondent "Nabal" is in error when he says: "Mr. Murray wishes me as a New Zealander to make

a start at re-creating Christianity." I did not say that. I quoted Professor Carr, who says that those who believe Christianity to be the clue to our problems "must face the task of re-creating Christianity before they can use it as a foundation on which to rebuild the world." Although, following Professor Carr's words, I said that our social legislation might be regarded as a fair start at "re-creating" Christianity, I think it would be truer to say that since it cares for the aged, infirm, the sick, it re-creates part of what is practicable in Christian ethics.

Christianity is a system of religious philosophy within a framework that embraces belief in the special creation of man in the Garden of Eden; the fall of man by sin therein; the selection by God of a Chosen People; the history of the vicissitudes of that people including propietic promise of a Messiah and Redeemer; the Immaculate Conception and Virgin Birth; the crucifixion of Christ as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and the Resurrection as a promise and portent of a life to come. Is a return to faith in this system necessary or desirable as a solvent of world problems? We must remember that the present sorry plight of the world is the resultant of some hundreds of years during which so-called

Christian peoples have dominated world affairs. I say "so-called" because, while professing to accept and believe in the gospel of Christ, these nations have lived lives at brutal variance with it.

"Nabal" says I must answer the question as to what there is to put in place of Christianity. He partly answers the question by affirming our enlightened ability to master ourselves and our environment. Incidentally I do not agree with his definition of faith as meaning "believing in that which we know to be untrue." I would describe faith as "believing in that which it is impossible for anybody to prove to be true or untrue; such as belief in a Supreme Being who is a person—in the earthly meaning of that word."

"Nabal" is right in stressing the importance of education. It would be a great step forward if all school classrooms and university lecture rooms had painted in large letters on the walls: "Naked we come into the world and we can take nothing out." An education programme that emphasised our transitoriness and the inherent folly of the struggle for possessions would be preferable to the "go-getter" incidence of much that has passed for education.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru)
(Abridged.—Ed.)

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT PRICES

Sir,—We have frequently been told that an important, if not the main, function of the National Orchestra is to

bring music to the people. May I suggest that the present scale of prices will not bring the people to the music? At the recent performance of the Orchestra in Christchurch the prices ranged from 2/6 to 7/6, plus tax. There was only a limited number of 2/6 seats, obtainable by queueing at the theatre at 7.0 p.m. on the night of the performance. We realise that this is a Broadcasting Orchestra and that we are privileged to hear it for no more than the cost of our radio licence. Nevertheless, the public performances give us an opportunity of hearing and seeing a full orchestra in action, which is a rare treat indeed. The actual presence of the players does enhance the enjoyment, and, I think, increase appreciation.

We understand that the National Orchestra will usually play in a civic hall. Why do we, as taxpayers, have to pay such high prices for the pleasure of hearing our orchestra play in our halls? Public performances should give an opportunity for a widened appreciation of music; they will not do so, if the lowest price is well above that of the vast majority of other entertainments. Would it not be possible to make all seats one price, and that a lower one than at present, so that everybody (without distinction) could share in a very valuable experience?

POOR STUDENT (Christchurch).



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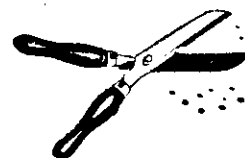
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