

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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For Those Who Pray

THIS is a secular journal, catering as frankly for those who doubt as for those who believe, and not squeamish about the support of scoffers. The rationalist has exactly the same rights in our columns as the saint, those who live for the day the same rights as those whose minds are fixed on eternity. Our waggon is not hitched to the stars, but lumbers along the dusty road.

And yet we have no kind of hesitation in drawing attention to the fact that the Religious Advisory Committee of the National Broadcasting Service has prepared and published a folder called "The Dedicated Minute," the purpose of which is to unite all those who can unite in a minute of silent prayer every day. Nor do we doubt that the number who can and will respond to this appeal is vastly greater than most people imagine. Over the whole English-speaking world it is certainly many millions, but even in New Zealand it is probably a bigger and closer and more earnest host than any call has ever rallied before. However foolish it would be to pretend that listening to Big Ben is prayer, that it is praying to stop talking or working for a moment, or even to stand reverently in a public meeting, it would be many times more foolish to say that prayer is meaningless and useless, and that those who engage in it waste their time. Science has made no difference whatever to the statement that those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. It never can make a difference while people do wait on the Lord.

Renewal of strength is the purpose of the silent minute. It is the purpose of this folder, which anyone can buy for a penny. It will not renew the strength of those who do not seek renewal, or of those who can't, but to say that it will not help those who turn that way for help is like saying, if we are deaf, that birds do not sing, or that roses are not red because we ourselves are blind.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible, and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send in their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

BRITAIN AND AMERICA.

Sir,—May I, through the medium of your greatly appreciated pages, express my admiration of the magnificent conclusion to the series of National Weeks that "Major" of 3YA Children's Session presented recently? My children sat enthralled while the gripping story of the voyage of the American Ship of State was told by "Major." The speeches of Henry, Webster, and Lincoln were brilliantly delivered by a new voice to me (obviously a true lover of America). And to hear Churchill and Roosevelt joining in this stirring message to the children of New Zealand made us all throw up our chins and thank God we are of the same blood.

—GROWN UP TINY TOT (Christchurch).

IMPORT OF LUXURIES.

Sir,—In reply to "Discobobbulous," if no more classical music is being imported at present, three cheers for that. Would "Discobobbulous" like to be forced to dress in the fashions of, say, the 18th or 19th centuries? Let the dead bury the dead. This world is full of misery now, but when the radio gives voice to such funereal dirges as nocturnes and all the other hokey of the classics, God have mercy on us! Let us be gay. Let the "Discobobbulous" tribe grow their long beards of melancholy and listen to their symphonic discords if they must, but we of the present generation prefer to sing our V for Victory song to a happy tune and whistle while we work.

—ANTI-BLUES (Timaru).

JOKES IN THE BIBLE.

Sir,—"K.S." (New Brighton) refers to what he calls a joke in the book of Job as a sample of Hebrew humour. Unfortunately for "K.S.," the book of Job is not of Hebrew origin, but has been cribbed from a "Gentile" manuscript by an enterprising Hebrew. The compilers, or selectors, must have had some difficulty with the chronology of Job, but the date they arrived at corresponds with the time when the Hebrews were supposed to be in Egypt. Job is too scientific to be a Hebrew work, and the references to astronomy are in Greek terms.

The book of Jonah is also by a "Gentile" writer and is really a satire on the Hebrews, so the "satirical joke" is against them.

—OLIVER (Te Awamutu).

OUR FILM REVIEWS

Sir,—My comments upon your film review's criticism of a certain screen production have been misunderstood and distorted. What I pointed out was that "G.M.'s" description of a risqué play as "bright, farcical entertainment" amounted to condonation of film indecency. Whether I myself witnessed the film in question has no bearing upon the argument; consequently, Mr. Editor, your footnote to my letter was beside the point.

Now we have two anonymous correspondents (*Listener*, September 12) who uphold your reviewer. One of them over the initials "H.W.," says he "supports 'G.M.' against the dull moral and etymological puritanism of L. D. Austin."

He goes on to remark that "those of us who are mentally adult know that 'bright farcical entertainment' has depended on risqué (i.e., indecent) situations from Aristophanes to Hollywood, and we are content to enjoy what has amused every generation to date."

According to "H.W.," then, it is simply "dull" to be moral, immorality being so much brighter. This, Mr. Editor, is the considered opinion of a "mentally adult" person! A better term would be

mentally adulterated. It is quite erroneous to assert that indecency has always been an essential ingredient of bright farcical entertainment. What about the musical farces of Gilbert and Sullivan and hosts of others that could be mentioned? No decent-minded individual is really amused by suggestive innuendo, whether in films or books. I challenge "H.W.," Sir, to re-express his commendation of indecency in public entertainment and to sign his full name to his letter. But of course he will not do this because he has not the courage of his alleged convictions.

"H.W.'s" further championship of Americanised English is naturally on a par with his "adult mentality." He rejoices in the debasement of our beautiful mother tongue by the admixture of hideous Yankee slang. There is no need to waste words over such a self-condemnatory attitude.

As for the question put to me by your second correspondent, "Just Curious," viz., whether I object on similar grounds to Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*—I presume he means to its libretto—my answer is, yes, if the work be given in English without expurgation. Sung in Italian, nobody cares twopence. "Just Curious" may be interested to know that various attempts have been made to amend the libretto and render it fit for respectable British ears. Three versions of it are extant under the following titles: "Tit for Tat" (produced at the Lyceum Theatre, London, 1828), "The Retaliation" (Lyceum, 1841), "The School for Lovers" (by Marmaduke Brown, 1890).

Not even Mrs. Grundy could take exception to these translations, which, however, still remain "bright farcical entertainment."

—L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

(Our correspondent asked why we devoted space to film reviews. We told him why. If that was "beside the point" his letter was sheer humbug.—Ed.)

THANKS FROM A "MIDDLE-BROW"

Sir,—May I offer a bouquet to Station 2ZB for the splendid programme with which they provided us on Sunday, September 7? The beautiful renderings of "The Blue Danube," "Liebestraume," the selections from "The White Horse Inn," "Sally," "The Desert Song" and all the other tuneful melodies by orchestras, popular vocalists, and the Light Opera Company, constituted a feast of music for that vast audience composed of those, like myself, who may perhaps be termed "middle-brows." The request sessions which have been held from time to time, have proved that this is the type of music which is widely appreciated, and prove also that, while a number of the listening audience prefer the crash-bang variety of "swing," and are fully entitled to hear some of it, real music is nevertheless appreciated by the majority. Saturday night programmes are hopeless for those who want to hear anything other than jazz, and surely one station somewhere could cater for these listeners with a desire for something in between classical music and swing bands. Sunday's offering from 2ZB was particularly enjoyable. But why do we not hear more of the work of Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon? Their BBC broadcast feature is billed in London as the "most popular war-time programme," and yet we seldom hear them.

—PASTORA (Wanganui).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

"WHAKATANE" supports the request for itemised classical sessions, and wants "a talk each week again on World Affairs" by Guy H. Scholefield and Leicester Webb.

"DISGUST" (Petone), approves of Dr. Lyon's remarks about crooners, but not of our method of reporting him. We should not have allowed him, we are told, to say what he did say but should have "blanked" his swear word.

"HERE'S HOPING" (Auckland) complains that most radio serials are far too long, that the Commercial stations are beginning to be less interesting than the National, and that the "Diggers' Session" from 12B on Sundays is put on at a time when "lots of diggers are busy attending to outside jobs."

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

"PRO BONO PUBLICO" (Wanganui).—Doing our best to read it. But why blush unseen? Send us your name and address.