

MUSIC FOR BANDS

Sir,—Peter J. Heawood expresses surprise at the fact that no one has found fault with cheap and trashy performances of the classics by brass and military bands. I am sure the reason for this is that few, if any, serious-minded musicians regard the brass band arrangements and performances of the classics as "cheap and trashy."

When an arrangement of classical music is performed by a swing orchestra, more often than not, the original work of the composer is changed to a great extent. The melody is often altered to fit words which make little sense; at times the rhythmic pattern is changed altogether; the original chording of the work is not kept, the arranger usually substituting a poor harmonic structure. An example is given in the swing version of Tchaikovsky's second subject of the first movement of his sixth symphony, known as "The Story of a Starry Night." To lovers of good music, these changes the modernists have brought to the classics are intolerable.

On the other hand, when one of the classics, or even light ballads of the present day, is arranged for brass band, the original music—that is, the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structure—is adhered to throughout. The only difference is the change from orchestral score to a full brass score. This, I think, is an important factor—the originality of the work remains the same; it is only presented by a different style of musical combination.

Granted, there is some classical music which is not suitable for the brass band. The brass band has not the tone colour and range of a symphony orchestra. Arrangers for brass band are fully aware of the fact, and so strive in their arrangements of the classics to cater for the limited scope in the all-brass ensemble. I have listened, with much attention to detail, to classical performances of some of the finest orchestras in the world; also I have heard some fine brass bands playing these same pieces; and, taking into consideration the vast difference in the instrumental combinations and tonal colour, I would say that the brass band acquits itself admirably.

Let me inform Mr. Heawood that the repertoire of the brass band is by no means inadequate; marching music is only one of the many forms of music played. Many original works for brass have been written by men who have far surpassed Sousa—men such as Eric Ball, Denis Wright, Hubert Bath, Henry Ghel, Sir Edward Elgar, Granville Bantock, John Ireland, and many others, who are not "men of the brass" only, but men who have had a practical knowledge of the symphony orchestra, and who can see the good which lies in the brass band movement.

P.S.M. (Christchurch).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

TRAGIC DESTINY

Sir,—In *The Listener* of April 2 a Mr. Malton Murray says of the Bible, "It has no more validity than the Veda, the Koran, or even the Book of Mormon." I would like, with your kind permission, to remind Mr. Murray of a few well-known facts. A hundred and fifty years ago, that is to say, just over 1700 years after the last book of the Bible was written, a group of Bible-influenced persons were satisfied that the Bible had so completely validated itself during those 1700 years that it would be of great benefit to mankind if it were translated into many languages and distributed as widely as possible. In this they were backed up by other

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Bible-influenced persons, including the great British philanthropist, William Wilberforce. They founded the British and Foreign Bible Society with a view to carrying out these aims.

The new Society found favour among the people of Britain and that favour has never abated, so that the Society is now doing greater work than ever before. Not only so, but other Bible Societies have sprung up, and are doing good work, so that the Bible has been translated (in whole or in part) into well over a thousand languages and dialects. Again, thousands and thousands of men and women in various lands are making it their life's vocation to make known the precious truths of the Bible, and millions and millions of others by earnest prayer and really self-sacrificing giving are speeding on the work. Lastly, thousands of Moslems are now studying the Bible, either together with, or in place of, the Koran, and hundreds at least are forsaking Islam and embracing Christianity, through the influence of the Bible. I suggest that Mr. Murray should tell us what any one of the three books he mentioned has done to prove its validity.

CHARLES W. FIELD (Rangataua).

Sir,—Mr. J. Malton Murray says "one sees no evidence of any plan of salvation. . . Mankind seems to be approaching nearer and nearer to the climax of its tragic destiny." Yes, if the only begotten Son of God had stayed where Mr. Murray leaves Him, on the Cross. But why stop there?

Dr. Stanley Jones, in *Christ and Human Suffering*, points out, "As from His lips comes the cry 'My God, Why?' it seems that all the anguish and pain of the ages is gathered up in that bitter cry. . . How far can hate go? Why does the universe tolerate injustice? Why are the good seemingly deserted in their hour of anguish? Will the universe back good men? . . . These and many other questions are voiced in that tragic prayer. What is the answer? God did answer, and answer adequately, and in the very place where the questions were raised. The Cross raises the questions and the resurrection answers them. It answers the fact of injustice and pain with a bigger fact—the Victory! God's last word is not the Cross, but the resurrection—a fact, the most stupendous fact in human history. We know now how things are coming out."

WAYFARER (Auckland).

Sir,—I note that Mr. J. Malton Murray "sees no evidence of any plan of salvation." On the other hand, he says, "mankind seems to be approaching nearer and nearer to the climax of its tragic destiny." It is just too bad that he has such a keen eye for the bad, yet fails to see the obvious good.

I maintain that the Bible does teach a very wonderful plan of salvation for the human race. Those who know what this plan really is, find it also very easy to see it being worked out in perfect detail in human history. But if Mr. Murray is foolish enough to ridicule the Scriptures he is cutting the foundation of faith from under his own feet. What then has he left to stand on?

He suggests that the Bible records numerous Gods "invented" by different individuals or groups. Rather than this, the truth is that the Bible records the increasing revelation of God to men as they have been able to receive it. The various conceptions of God in the Old Testament show the growth of the

human soul over the centuries. The most perfect revelation came through Jesus Christ, who revealed God as altogether good, our Father, and with a plan of salvation for all men.

Yet even Jesus never suggested that the Plan would be fulfilled quickly or apart from the will and co-operation of the human race. Rather did He predict that good and bad (as "wheat" and "tares," etc.), would grow together till the "harvest" at the end of this present age. Then, He said, there would be a sorting out and elimination of evil elements so that the good could shine forth and usher in the age of peace and righteousness. He said this "harvest time" would be a time of great tribulation in which the human race would have the power to destroy itself, if left alone.

As we see this condition existing today, we might indeed be tempted to think with Mr. Murray that "mankind seems to be approaching nearer and nearer to the climax of its tragic destiny" were it not for the fact that Jesus also told us that this tribulation period would be "cut short" before the human race could destroy itself. Then He—with many more of the prophets—predicted the dawning of a new and better age during which, and following ages, all negative conditions, even to death itself, will be overcome and all men shall finally know God as Father and Jesus Christ as Lord.

So instead of the present chaotic world situation being the "climax of our tragic destiny," it is but one of the dark patches in the overall pattern that will eventually show itself to be beautiful and perfect. The lessons we humans are learning just now will lead us to "beat our swords into ploughshares" and prepare ourselves to do the will of God on earth. Today's conditions confirm the Bible as the Word of God, which points us beyond the present crisis to the grand time of blessing and salvation on the other side.

C. L. SAUNDERS (New Plymouth).

NEW ZEALAND'S PRISONERS

Sir,—Congratulations on your timely editorial "Behind Locked Doors," and the Short Survey of the Dominion's Penal System. To be effective the system must extend beyond officialdom (enlightened though that certainly now is) to link the prisoner to men of goodwill "outside." In this belief the members of a recently re-organised Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society of the Wellington Province have made some progress on the following lines:—

1. To visit selected prisoners offering simple friendship, understanding and willingness to help.
2. To find suitable employment for these and other prisoners on their discharge (or release on remission), together with clothing and small monetary aid where this is advisable.
3. To provide understanding and assistance for wives and dependents where genuine needs are disclosed.
4. To encourage the formation of similar groups in other cities and towns—leading to a New Zealand-wide fully effective organisation.

Like most social ills recidivism can only be reduced if an informed public sincerely wants it reduced. On the lowest level it is uneconomic to keep men in prison—on the highest level the individual owes it to society to make a practical effort towards the return to proper citizenship of his less fortunate fellow man.

The society's work is done with the full knowledge and co-operation of the Justice Department. The support of

churches (Roman Catholic and Protestant already well represented), social, welfare and kindred organisations as well as *individual members* is earnestly sought. The executive makes no apology for seeking this excellent free advertising—we merely ask **WILL YOU HELP** where officialdom leaves off?

N. J. COOPER, Acting Secretary,
8 Punjab St., Wellington, N.4.

Sir,—One day last week some friends and I were discussing Christianity in general, and someone said that, as a nation, we had not progressed very far. Your illuminating article in the current issue is an answer to that.

I think the general idea of prison life is one of locked cells and very plain fare, with little or no communication with the outside world. That, undoubtedly, is what it was not so many years ago. What a difference to the actual life in prison today! Good food, suitable and constructive work, and above all, understanding treatment of each man or woman as an individual—surely all part of Christ's command to love God and our neighbours, and bringing us a little nearer to God's Kingdom on earth.

Please accept my thanks for your fine and inspiring article.

J. McK. (Dunedin).

CONTROL OF ATOMIC ENERGY

Sir,—On Page 7 of your April 9 issue you outline the essentials of the Baruch and Soviet proposals for the control of atomic energy. It may be thought from your account that whereas the Baruch proposal did not envisage the use of the veto, the Soviet proposal, in so far as the inspection agency was to work within the framework of the Security Council, did envisage the use of the veto.

This would be an incorrect conclusion. As long ago as 1947 the Soviet made it clear that once agreement was reached to ban the use of atomic weapons they would agree to inspection at any time and that such inspection could not be subject to the veto.

The following is an extract from a speech at UN by Vyshinsky on November 23, 1949. In an earlier part of this speech he referred to the fact that two years previously the Soviet had taken the same attitude: "We wish to make it clear that periodic inspection means inspection at intervals—not at set intervals but as determined by necessity whenever the international control commission deems it necessary. It is obvious that there would be no unanimity rule, no veto. To put an end to slander and insinuations we make it quite clear that decisions would be by a majority of votes."

J. FERGUSON (Lower Hutt).

THE DESCRIPTIVE ATLAS

Sir,—I am afraid that, as I have mentioned personally to Professor Wood, I cannot agree that the Centennial Atlas should be completed, along the lines originally planned. Such would have entailed another ten years' work, at an estimated cost of £65,000, in addition to the £15,000 already expended. It appears to me that this substantial sum would be spent more wisely in preserving our historical records, many of which, as the Hope Gibbons fire demonstrated, are in danger of destruction.

MARTIN NESTOR (Lower Hutt).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT
The First Stone (Lower Hutt).—The subject is perhaps too serious for that treatment.