

## "PASSING ON"

Sir,—Death is but an incident in the age-long life of the individual. It marks the end of one cycle and the beginning of another, but the real man, the self within, is virtually unaffected by the laying aside of the physical body.

J. Malton Murray raises some interesting points. He says: "At death body and mind cease to function." It would be more correct to say body and *brain*, but the analogy he uses is a good one, for just as a motor ceases to function if the power be cut off, so does death occur when the link between the spiritual self and the physical body is broken, and the body is cut off from its source of life and power.

The life which informs the lower kingdoms returns to the aggregate life of that kingdom modified by the "experiences" gained. Only man survives as an individual. Things in themselves are not immortal, but the life force, the tremendous energy locked up in the atoms of even so-called inanimate things, is immortal and indestructible. Both mind and matter are expressions of the Logos "in whom we live and move and have our being," and matter is no less divine than mind.

Finally, the world of the life after death is not an "undiscovered country," for it is our normal field of activity during sleep (aptly called the twin brother of death), nor is it a place "from whose bourne no traveller returns" since the urge for further experience will cause the self to assume another personality in due time or, as our poet laureate puts it, "the old soul takes the road again."

H. M. THORNTON (Auckland).

Sir,—Like all materialists, J. Malton Murray becomes quite confused when endeavouring to discuss the death of man. The mind and body cease to function because the principle of operation behind the harmonious activity—that is, the soul—has departed. The attempt at analogy between the composite being, man, and an electric motor might well be expected from one who apparently delights in quoting woolly thinkers who discern no distinction between mind and matter. For those who believe and practise the Christian faith there is no need for "comforting illusions" nor do they look upon death as a "terrible finality" but merely as the fulfilment of God's law. For all sane people a natural law without a supernatural law is unthinkable.

ETERNAL BEAUTY (Invercargill).

Sir,—Holders of the belief that present day man "passes on" after death to another existence must extend that belief to cover man at all stages of his evolution. They cannot limit it to *homo sapiens* only. Nor can they logically exclude all other life in its myriad manifestations of a million or so species. The infant that expires almost with its first breath—this, too, must "pass on" to a future experience.

Such claims collapse under the weight of their own absurdity. Reason will have none of it. As the poet James Thompson puts it:

This little life is all we must endure,  
The grave's most holy peace is ever sure.  
We fall asleep and never wake again;  
Nothing is of us but the mouldering flesh.  
Whose elements dissolve and merge afresh  
In air, water, plants and other men.

This is immortality—or "passing on," in the only comprehensible sense.

C.P. (Invercargill).

## WHY ARE CHURCHES EMPTY?

Sir,—Surely the remedy for lack of interest in our churches is not to bring in topics other than religion and the teachings of the Bible, but more fer-

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

vently and earnestly to preach the Gospel and let the churches stand on their own feet and keep to their recognised mission in the community. The suggestion that the church should institute discussion groups in other fields such as politics, social problems and so on is side-stepping the issue. Besides, are Christians not required by Christ and his Apostles to be separate from the things of the world and to work to strengthen their minds in a spiritual direction and to endeavour to make others do likewise? If the churches cannot be filled otherwise than by introducing worldly and material matter, then let them not claim to be teachers of Christianity.

The truth is that the churches are not giving out the clear message of the Scriptures, which teach that the present age is running out and that Christ is about to return to take charge of this earth and bring in the Kingdom of God. Prior to this dramatic event there is to be a general apathy (towards the Word of God) among all peoples and nations and things will be very much as they were in the days of Noah. We read this in Matthew 24: 37 and elsewhere in the New Testament.

As far as I can see, there is little hope of filling the churches, but to each individual there is offered the hope of salvation if he will but search the Scriptures and obey its precepts—true Christianity.

ETHEL DACKERS (Dunedin).

## THE COMMUNIST PATTERN

Sir,—It was surprising to see your reviewer "W.B.S." (*Listener*, July 2) passing off Professor Seton-Watson's *The Pattern of Communist Revolution* as—in part, at least—an exploitation of a popular interest in anti-Communism. The book was in response to a popular interest in Communism, but not in anti-Communism.

I have read the book and found in it a resolute attempt to be fair. It is careful and scholarly and shows Professor Seton-Watson to be intimately informed, particularly in relation to Russia and Eastern Europe. This is not surprising since the author knows the languages and the customs of these people, and has a deep sympathy with their suffering first under the Tsars and then under Communism. As a person without the time or the inclination to tackle longer works on the subject, and as a person endowed with an average quota of common sense, I found the book very useful. Furthermore, I am one of those who have not ranged themselves in one camp against another, and therefore able to see that there is as much danger in deprecating anti-Communists as there is in deprecating those with Left tendencies.

A.B.C. (Wellington).

## LISPING IN NUMBERS

Sir,—Our attention has been called to your editorial which denounces our new quarterly. It is difficult for us to comprehend your particular interpretation of our purposes, or to understand the reason for your departure from the usual principles of editorial writing. We imagine that it is usual, in an editorial, to deal with a subject arising from contents of the news pages—or alternatively, with some fact or situation well-known to the reader.

The first issue of our quarterly was launched without benefit of a publicity campaign, and to deal with it in an editorial which mentions nothing of its origins—or from where it may be ob-

tained, seems a discourtesy. That the reader may be given an opportunity to make up his own mind, we feel that he should be told that copies and subscriptions to *Numbers* may be obtained from Box 5121, Lambton Quay, Wellington.

Your comments were confined to the matter of editorial statements in *Numbers*, and no attempt was made to analyse the quality of the literary work in the issue. Had this been done, it would have given a much clearer idea of what the new quarterly is about. The merit of this work is the journal's real justification—and not what may be said about it, or about other things, in the editorial or the accompanying leaflet.

The purpose of the magazine is to put forward worthwhile work for which there is not, at present, a means of publication. This fact is well known to a great number of those who are still actively writing, and the fact that so many of our better-known writers are in the journal, is proof that there are not enough sources of publication in the country for them to exhibit new departures in their work, let alone for younger writers who are always making this complaint.

Your editorial would have it both ways—"that we have no room for this adolescent nonsense" while, at the same time, you say that the names of contributors "include several poets of distinction who seem to have no difficulty in publishing their work." You obviously have been chasing the wrong kind of inspiration for welcoming our new periodical, and must have overlooked our stress upon the importance of a sense of humour. This was not lacking in our editorial.

## THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

Numbers.

(Our correspondents assure us that they have a sense of humour, and we must believe them, though it is hard to do so after reading the first six words of their letter. Editorials are not tied to published items. The "fourth leaders" of *The Times*, for example, are on any subject which happens to interest the leader-writer. If we were discourteous in not mentioning the "origins" of *Numbers*, it was because the origins were nowhere revealed in the journal. Box numbers are decidedly anonymous. Even now, as may be seen from the letter's collective signature, the editorial features remain heavily veiled. The editorial in the first issue of a new journal may be taken as a statement of policy, and is therefore an obvious subject for discussion. What we noticed most about the literary work was that 12 of the 32 pages seemed on internal evidence to have been written by one person, and that a story by another contributor had already been published elsewhere.—Ed.)

## BETTER RECEPTION

Sir,—Better reception is a problem, in spite of your articles on the subject. Arthur T. Cushen has brought forward some points with which I am in full agreement, and which I hope will be taken further. During this past week I have taken particular note of reception conditions and have found that 2YA and 2YC are the only two New Zealand stations which are completely free from background noise. Tonight, with the time at 9.30, I had hoped to hear the National Orchestra (YC stations), but there is interference on both 1YC and 3YC. The two stations available to me are 2YA, which is broadcasting Parliament, and 2YC, which is broadcasting a wrestling commentary. Station 2YX I cannot raise at all. Many other stations are giving strong signals but not enough to overcome the interference which ruins good musical and spoken programmes.

Does Australia need so many stations? The other night I found at least 20

Australian stations broadcasting the same variety programme. You state that requests for a reasonable number of "clear channels" have not been met. Are the authorities here continuing to press for their rights in this matter? I would appreciate an answer to this question. F. J. FORD (Collingwood).

(The number of stations in Australia is not our concern; but New Zealand will continue to press for further clear channels.—Ed.)

## WHO AND WHOM

Sir,—I wonder why "S.D.W." is surprised at A. R. D. Fairbairn quoting a wife as saying "Who do you think I ran into . . . ?" because that is exactly what she would say. Can you imagine a pleasantly-excited wife rushing home and saying, "Into whom do you think I ran . . . ?" Let us be natural sometimes. How dull a story would be if all the characters spoke correctly. Some would lose their appeal altogether. So would some of our most telling quotations, for example, "Them's my sentiments." "Those are my sentiments" would be forgotten as soon as read. I enjoyed "Notes on the Traffic Problem" so much that I posted it to someone who, I thought, might have missed it.

S. DASSLER (Henderson).

## EATING MORE CHEESE

Sir,—Dr. Turbott would like us to eat more cheese. If we were sure that packeted cheese contained no preservative or soda perhaps more of this would be eaten. My preference is for mild cheese cut from the block, but unfortunately conditions for cleanliness are not always ideal. The shop assistant, who may have been handling fruit and vegetables or be suffering from a cold, cuts a portion from the block. He has not touched the cut piece so far with his hand, but he now closes his fingers round it to place it on the weighing machine and then wraps it.

This process can be done easily without the fingers coming in contact with any part of the cut piece by first taking the wrapping paper and putting it over the cheese before placing it (the cheese) on the weights. This is a clean, quick method rarely practised.

CLEAN CHEESE (Wellington).

## A CORRECTION

Sir,—May I be allowed to correct a statement in your issue of July 16? I played the leading roles in *Peer Gynt* and *The First-born*, but did not produce either production.

ALAN S. de MATHMANCHE (Christchurch).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

*Slow-Foot Sam* (Takaka): Resigned to take another appointment.

*P. Batus* (Mātau): Do not know of any source outside radio and musical journals.

*F. Joyce Hill* (Henderson): It has already been found twice by 1YA at times when fathers could conveniently listen.

*Interested* (Christchurch): (1) It is thought that a time limit for the questions would not be fair, as some of the questions are longer and more difficult than others. (2) Since the beginning of the year the Quiz Kids have been based in Auckland, but the present contest brings in challengers from other centres.

*D.H.* (Birkenhead): (1) Major productions are generally repeated and times of presentation suitably varied. See, for example, 2YC's placement of *Volpone* at 8.30 p.m., July 18. (2) The New Zealand features referred to are usually repeated and the times varied. (3) The point about the balance of spoken and musical programmes has been taken up. (4) One bulletin a day? This is not understood.