

TALKS ON RUSSIA

Sir.—A.B.C. speaks of my "timid treatment of religion in Russia." I wonder what he expected or wanted me to say. Was it that I saw secret police listening in at services of worship or that priests told me harrowing tales of oppression, etc.? Perhaps it was not clear that I spoke only of what I saw myself or was told in interviews and conversations. I refuse to be dishonest and do otherwise. My talks were a record of a personal experience, not a collection of other people's writings on the subject.

There were some aspects of religion in Russia which give cause for rejoicing and thankfulness on the part of Christians everywhere, including A.B.C. Should I be "timid" and suppress those things? Other aspects gave cause for concern and I listed them also. Incidentally, I find that my comments are more critical than those reported as being made by other Christians who have visited the U.S.S.R. recently, both before and after my visit. These include some very responsible people in England, Anglican, Baptist and Quaker.

A.B.C. says that I "probably believe that religion is something private, and must under no circumstances be allowed to intrude in public life." He doesn't know me. Just how can a Christian believe that? I believe that Christianity is a very personal matter, and, because of that, we must be concerned with the whole of mankind and his affairs. Our Christian conscience and love must make us so. Christianity hasn't been tried yet. That is why we need a more positive philosophy than we have—just anti-Communist and placing our strength in military might. The Communists have an idea and it is sweeping the world. What have we got? Obviously my comments were directed particularly to the level of national actions and policies. Surely A.B.C. doesn't suggest that the Western world, as represented by its leaders and policies, is Christian?

Russia—Communism—is not our enemy. It's right here, complacency, selfishness, greed, ignorance and all that goes with our "way of life." Yes, Christianity is a positive philosophy. Now let us see and have something better than just talking about it.

NORRIS COLLINS (Christchurch).

WHY ARE CHURCHES EMPTY?

Sir.—The letter from P. Rynd was a welcome comment on the panel discussion "Why Are the Churches Empty?" A discussion on such a subject should surely be conducted on a higher plane. We are still a Christian country; and as the first duty of a Christian (which is also his highest privilege and joy) is to worship God, the question of hard seats, cold buildings, dull preachers is beside the point. Man, being created a worshipping being, must worship something—God or Mammon. There must lie the answer. Mammon is the common choice. As P. Rynd says, Christianity demands something from us which very few care to give—for relaxation the movies are more suitable than church. But do at least allow us to keep our standards of what church attendance stands for—God's creatures entering into communion with God.

A. J. WILLIAMS (Christchurch).

Sir.—Ethel Dackers appears to condemn Christians for taking an interest in political and social matters. Why, then, are we bidden to pray for our daily bread (i.e., material needs), and also that God's will may be done on earth as in heaven? Man certainly does

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not live by bread alone, but he has natural as well as spiritual needs.

Regarding her advice to search the Scriptures, the Bible itself testifies that it was written, not to make people Christians, but to confirm the teaching already received by those who share in the corporate life of the Church (St. Luke, 1, 4). D. L. HENDERSON (Otahuhu).

LISPING IN NUMBERS

Sir.—May I comment on the surprisingly irate lispings about *Numbers* in a recent editorial which restricted itself solely to a criticism of that quarterly's first editorial? It was most disappointing to find that you could not appreciate the desire to usher in another "small magazine" with a certain amount of banner-waving and trumpet-blaring. One's degree of exhibitionism at such times is usually in direct proportion to the weight of indifference. It may be "a little late in the day" for this sort of juvenile nonsense, but surely it is a little early for writers in this country—where the words "literary traditions" are used only when referring to something on the other side of the world—to welcome the first signs of senile decay?

It was also disappointing to find you niggling over a minor grammatical slip in the handbill, which can be corrected by the simple insertion of the word "and," an insertion which anyone with average intelligence or goodwill would be prepared to make on the spot. It came as a shock to be told by some one who must know, if anyone does, the long sad story of publishing in New Zealand, that there are people here who can afford to "play at publication"; as though printers and publishers called at the door for orders, offering discount. But you are correct on one point: the luxury is certainly too expensive. Finally, you warn us against imagining that "a few more poems, parables and short stories" can save the arts. Only "hard thinking and good writing" offer any salvation; but this leaves us with the job of inventing some entirely new and unheard-of literary forms of composition in which to present them. The success of such a herculean task would require a good deal more tolerance and less impatient conservatism than *Numbers* has encountered in the editorial column of *The Listener*.

J. C. STURM (Wellington).

Sir.—You have made it difficult to see that any of your comments on the above topic have been made objectively. Your first dark hint that *Numbers* was the work of a "coterie" (a favourite term of abuse you seem to reserve for welcoming new literary ventures), is now reduced to some special significance arising from your guess that 12 out of 32 pages were written by the one person. This is quite irrelevant. It would appear that *The Listener* editorials are being used to carry on a private vendetta.

LOUIS JOHNSON (Lower Hutt).

(The imputation of doubtful motives is the lowest form of criticism. Mr. Johnson should be ashamed of himself.—Ed.)

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Sir.—If the Church has no more to say about social questions than Mr. Harold Miller suggested in his national broadcast, then many of us fear for the future of Christianity. To say that the Church should confine its activity to man's personal salvation—"to making

good men"—is to perpetrate a dangerous half-truth. It is restricting the Church's role as Adolf Hitler restricted it, to preparing men's souls for the hereafter.

The Christian Church must be concerned with the whole of man's life—personal holiness and social righteousness belong together. The Church, as such, as well as individual Christians, needs to be very active concerning political and social affairs if the world is to be redeemed, or else pagan ideologies will increasingly dominate our social relationships.

A. J. HANDYSIDE (Roskill).

FLUORIDATION

Sir.—It has been proved that a diet of unrefined foods prevents dental decay, yet little attempt is made in this country to encourage the eating of these foods. The Fijians, who still subsist almost entirely on their natural foods, can well be proud of their strong white teeth. In Fiji white refined sugar is unknown; raw sugar is supplied for visitors at all the tourist resorts; the housewife uses this sugar for all sweetening purposes. It is imported to New Zealand in this raw state, and yet it is often difficult to obtain from the grocers.

How many bakers supply a genuine wholemeal loaf? In some cases colouring matter is added to the white flour, in others some of the wheat germ is extracted. Nor is it always easy to obtain the 100 per cent wholemeal. When I was asking for a packet the other day my grocer remarked that his supply was limited, that he could sell more than he could get.

R. B. D. Stocker says that it is not easy to say "no" to sweets; but, as Dr. Turbott has pointed out, sweets can be taken at meal times. With more unrefined foods and no picking between meals not only would our dental clinics be half empty, but our hospitals as well.

Mr. Stocker admits that it "may be feasible" to take fluorine in tablet form "in places without a public water supply," but infers that it would not be feasible where there is a public supply. Many of us take our daily dose of halibut oil in globule form year in and year out, and I am sure the "cost of propaganda" for this is not "prohibitive." If fluorine cannot be supplied in tablet form it surely could be added to the salt in the same way as iodine is added. We are free to take natural salt or iodised and we should be free agents as far as fluorine is concerned. As for being a "food"—no, I cannot swallow that. Above all, let us keep our sparkling water pure.

WATER DRINKER (Wellington).

RECOGNITION OF CHINA

Sir.—In *Lookout*, Margot Ross drew a comparison between America's recognition of Guatemala's new régime and non-recognition of Red China, representing this as unreasonable hostility to Communism and demonstrating inconsistency in two similar situations. Only

CARE OF RECEIVING SETS

READERS with special problems in the care and maintenance of radio receiving sets are invited to send inquiries to the Editor of "The Listener." Names and addresses are required. Wherever possible, replies will be given, either in "The Listener" or by letter.

a speaker looking for an emotional landmark by which to mislead the ignorant world compare so dissimilar situations with such obvious neglect of facts. Two of these facts, Red China's aggression in Korea and her barbaric cruelty to prisoners of war, have been accepted as such by the United Nations General Assembly. In each case the aggressor substituted vile abuse for reasoned defence.

It is no sign of impartiality to give Red China and America equal credit in international polemics, nor is reason sacrificed to emotion by reciting the reasons why Red China is unfit to be admitted to the comity of nations at this stage. Hope for the salvation of the human race will have died if the time ever comes when the monstrous cruelties perpetrated by the Reds (on their own as well as other nationals) can be contemplated without emotion. When Red China ceases her armed aggressions in Korea, Tibet, Indo-China and Malaya, her nefarious infiltrations into other Asian countries, and turns instead to the improvement of living standards of her own people, who need all the resources now being squandered in war, the "impartiality" of Margot Ross will be more convincing.

LUBBER'S POINT (Bluff).

WILLIAM SATCHELL

Sir.—P.J.W. in his article "Behind the Greenstone Door" (*Listener*, July 23) says of William Satchell: "Samuel White" is a name which he made up by reversing his own initials but there is no obvious reason for the introduction of the middle name "Cliall." Might I point out that, after using letters from "William Satchell" to make up the name "Samuel White," the remaining letters are "liacil," or if rearranged, "cliall."

R. D. HOPKIRK (Blenheim).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Student (Gore): November 2, 1950.
Norman Kelly (Tokomaru): Arrived after correspondence had been closed.
F.E.S. (Otaki), S.J. (Tawa Flat), and A.B. (Christchurch): Sorry, the correspondence has been closed.

A.S.H. (Green Island): The articles promised—and duly printed—were concerned with ordinary receiving sets. Your suggestion will be considered.

E.D. (Christchurch): Applause levels are cut back as seems necessary during recording; but when the compère speaks over applause, his voice would be affected, too, by reducing levels.

R. W. Pippen (Auckland): Friday's is the "open" session in the Friendly Road series; regular speakers are used on other days. The speaker you name was invited to take some of the open sessions and may again be invited; meanwhile, in keeping with the character of the session, others have been invited.

Roy Ullie (Auckland): (1) As in the Bela Siki broadcast, the stations in the main centres are frequently linked by Post Office land lines. Cross-talk from trunk telephone conversations and other noises peculiar to telephone operations unfortunately intrude from time to time. The Post Office is doing everything possible to reduce or eliminate this trouble. (2) 1YD comes on at 5: Wellington's 2YD not till 7; Christchurch and Dunedin have no YD.

A. M. Rutherford (Inch Clutha): All YA stations will include a talk on children's books, by Miss Pat Dennehy, in the Children's Holiday Programme on Tuesday, August 24. There will be other children's book reviews in the Holiday Programmes throughout the fortnight, as time permits. On August 26, all ZB and X stations will broadcast in "Women's Hour" a talk on choosing books for children. The book reviews in ZB and X stations' "Women's Hour" from time to time include reviews of children's books. All YA stations, 4YZ and (from the end of August) 3YZ, carry a monthly review of children's books: the talk you heard, by Anthony Bartlett, was the first of this regular series. Occasional recommended lists of children's reading are published in *The Listener*. The last list was in the issue of August 6. See also page 20.