

Sir,—Replying to critics in January 21 issue: G.H.D. sets himself up as an authority competent to decide who is, or is not, a Christian; this is merely religious arrogance. It is clear that Christian virtues are, as du Nouy says, the consequence of the laws of evolution, for without the evolution of the human brain Christian concepts and conduct could not have occurred. My reply to "Awake" has already dealt with other points in G.H.D.'s letter.

"Naturalist" suggests that the views I have quoted are quite old-fashioned and outmoded. J. B. S. Haldane and Julian Huxley, both eminent modern scientists, in *Animal Biology*—first published 1927, fifth edition, 1945—state: "The frog in the tadpole stage has gills, and even the embryos of fowls and men possess gill slits. Both frog and man, though tailless when adult, possess tails when young."

Bishop Barnes in his *Scientific Theory and Religion*, approvingly quotes William James: "Eight hundred million years ago the ancestor of the modern leader of thought was a worm in the sea mud." Some people indignantly declare that the evolutionary theory is derogatory to man's dignity. To me it is not a theory of the "descent" of man, but a story about his marvellous ascent.

In *Adam's Ancestors* the notable scientist L. S. B. Leakey says (1954): "The study of human evolution is still in its infancy. . . . During the last ten years or so, a vast amount of new evidence has come to light, and there is every reason to believe that we shall continue to get more material. Inevitably this means that we must constantly review and revise our ideas, abandoning the conceptions of human evolution held by some of our predecessors, and being prepared to alter our own ideas as new facts emerge." This sustains du Nouy's idea that the scientist can reasonably contemplate "an evolution of evolutions." The scientist is always willing to change his ideas or theories as new evidence comes to light. The man of God is unwilling to change his ideas, for to him, God and his works are the same yesterday, today and forever. He clings stubbornly to this, comforting himself with abstract phrases that have no meaning.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

Sir,—In the current discussion on evolution and Christianity all your correspondents except "Naturalist" (Winton) apparently assume that the two are antithetic. A scientific formula and a transcendental one are incommensurables. The real antithesis to a scientific explanation is maintaining that it is impossible to give one; and antithetic to the transcendental Christian revelation is each, or all, of the other dozen the transcendental Christian revelations. Furthermore, the general insistence on "unproven" evolution is loosely placed. It is the doctrine of descent for which there is no logical proof.

The principle of evolution is the most outstanding fact of nature; the entire cosmos testifies to its truth. Worlds in every stage of evolution are everywhere visible. The principle of inorganic evolution was accepted by the 300 Protestant bishops at the Lambeth Conference way back in 1930, and quite recently the Pope announced that the universe was created out of nothing by God some thousands of millions of years ago, and that from the moment of creation there has been gradual evolution. He stated

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

that science has established beyond all possible doubt the explicit mutability of the inorganic world.

As for organic evolution it is almost as certainly true in principle, even though so much necessary evidence is lacking. The thoroughbred racehorse, cattle, sheep, dogs, plants, etc., have been produced in a few short years by what is nothing less than organic transformation speeded up and supervised by man.

It seems to me that the derision directed at organic evolution is born of fervent hope, not calm thought; there is no known biological fact inconsistent with evolution. L.S. (Wellington).

Sir,—In the controversy about Genesis and geology (J. Malton Murray and "C.P.") wrote on the subject on January 28), I wish to make three points which I hope will be food for thought.

(1) Contemporary narratives casually mention contemporary circumstances. In Genesis 4, it is recorded that Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. When Cain killed Abel, he was banished. This he feared, lest any who found him might slay him. Eventually he found a wife, and built a city. Thus it should be obvious that, at the time of Adam and Eve, other human beings of the same inter-breeding species as themselves inhabited the earth. The first chapter of Genesis records the creation of man, male and female, without reference to date, or to the number of pairs created. The many ancient human fossils, from Pliocene onwards, may have belonged to representatives of this creation. The second chapter of Genesis records the creation of Adam and Eve, whom Bishop Ussher places about 4000 B.C.

(2) The above date was estimated by adding the lengths of lives in the carefully preserved genealogies, from Adam to Christ. The story of Genesis 3 is the story of Adam's refusal of God's will as the best way of doing things. In this chapter is the promise of the Redeemer, the "seed of the woman." I regard Adam and Eve as having been chosen for a special purpose, as was Abraham 2000 years later, and running through the Old Testament narrative is the story of preparing a people for the coming of Christ.

(3) P. J. Wiseman in his books *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis and Creation Revealed in Six Days*, outlined a very reasonable theory which explains much. In Babylonia clay tablets each ended with a colophon, which gave the title, the writer, and perhaps place and date, and, if the tablet was one of a series, whether it finished the series or not. There is no space here to elaborate Wiseman's argument, but he shows that Moses may have had a number of tablets written by eye-witnesses, handed down from generation to generation, the colophons appearing in the Genesis narrative. He regards Genesis 1: 1 to 2: 4 as a series of tablets, in which God revealed to a man in six days lessons about the creation of the heavens and the earth, and Genesis 2: 1-4 as the colophon which states that the series of tablets is finished.

The lesson of the first day was that God made the heavens and the earth. On the second day it was taught that God made a firmament, or atmosphere, to separate the waters on the earth from those in the clouds. On the third day it was taught that the seas were separated from the dry land. On the fourth day, the Instructor reverted to the sub-

ject of the heavens and the earth, and discussed how the sun, moon and stars were made. On the fifth day the lesson showed how the firmament was stocked with flying creatures, and the sea with marine animals. The tablet of the sixth day describes how beasts and man were created to populate the dry land.

I suggest that Mr. Malton Murray and others give careful study to Wiseman's books before they discard Genesis as unworthy of credence by educated people. D. S. MILNE (Lower Hutt).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

## A LITERARY PROGRAMME

Sir,—Mr. Curnow's letter was timely, and you are to be thanked for airing such matters which are of vital concern to writers. It is some sort of commentary on the age that the interpretative artist and the performer of greater commercial potentialities is so highly paid in comparison with the creative. Nor does it remain entirely as a matter of "commerciality," but seems to have established itself as a concept. I mean that a chairman or commentator is often paid more, for instance, to neutrally string a programme of verse together, than any of the creative contributors to the programme. One doesn't want them to be paid less, of course—but there is too little attempt made at discovering what ought to be paid for creative work.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that the Broadcasting Service has some awareness of real cultural needs. It does endeavour to present our cultural activity to the people, and gives a very useful lead to other organs of publication. It is also known that broadcasting officials are themselves aware of the need for higher rates.

The needs of broadcasting will grow as the awareness of the people is increased by their cultural diet—and the final solution must lie in expanding Broadcasting's budget to meet these needs. And this is a decision that must be made on the highest level.

LOUIS JOHNSON (Wellington).

## SOCIETY AND HAPPINESS

Sir,—One is left aghast at the cynicism of some of the remarks made in the columns of *The Listener*. Listen: "The delusion that society can make its members happy never occurs to him; nor the more profound delusion that men can exist meaningfully outside society." Somebody should tell James K. Baxter that the sole justification and end of society is the increment of association. Society exists because ten men together can do what ten men separately can not. Any society in which the increment of association does not redound to the advantage of its members will collapse. What Mr. Baxter means, what Ezra Pound would have said, is—the present monetary system is not working to the advantage of the common man, yet there is no escape from this system open to the common man.

F. W. N. WRIGHT (Christchurch).

## LIGHT MUSIC

Sir,—Your correspondent F. M. Price merits some support in his criticism of what the New Zealand Broadcasting Service gives out as "light music," and I welcome this opportunity to back him up. The gulf between the

refined and the crude musical styles is palpably too wide, and if the NZBS were to institute some form of listener research I venture to suggest that this point would find ample evidence. There are, after all, many middle-aged radio licence-holders who would like to listen to the daytime musical programmes, but as the planners apparently assume that only teenagers and crooner fans do so, these other would-be listeners forgo listening (as I do). Another point: I would like to add concerns the early morning session from YA stations—why their addiction to reels and jigs? What normal person feels like being chivvied about at such a tempo so early in the day?

Sometimes I begin to wonder if the function of broadcasting requires some renewed evaluation. Is it not advisable to consider some form of listener research, such as the BBC inaugurates?

C. H. CHAMBERS (Henderson).

## "OUT DAMNED SPOT"

Sir,—If the creator of Crossword No. 730 (R.W.H.) can find "Out Damned Spot" in Act IV, Scene 1—then she has written something into Shakespeare that was never there before! As one who has persistently sweated over *Listener* crosswords, it is with great pleasure that I take this "refreshing cooler" in which to acquaint R.W.H. with the knowledge that I, too, have in my possession a much cherished edition of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. It is well that the great ones of the world are not infallible; otherwise we poor mid-gets, sitting under the table, would most certainly starve to death. It is therefore with renewed literary strength that I wish every success to your very interesting journal. EDWD. (Nelson).

(R.W.H. admits with regret that the "damned spot" found its way into the wrong act of *Macbeth*.—Ed.)

## SPARS FROM HOKIANGA

Sir,—I agree with Mr. W. Hugh Ross that H.M.S. Victory was sparred with New Zealand kauri. I believe there were Europeans at the Bay of Islands when Captain Cook came here. Captain Trevarthen, of the brig *Splendid*, which sailed from England, 1795, reported in his log taking a Maori off a whaler in the South Atlantic. The Captain of this whaler induced Captain Trevarthen to come to New Zealand. The *Splendid* called in at the Bay of Islands. Many Europeans were there, and whaling vessels. The whale oil was taken to Sydney and sold there.

The *Splendid* was wrecked in the Chatham Islands in 1798.

D.A.S. (Te Kopuru).

## "RADIO ROADHOUSE"

Sir,—In your issue of October 4, 1954, *Radio Roadhouse* is described as being a tonic. Having listened to *Radio Roadhouse* since its inception, we wonder how much lower the comedy of New Zealand programmes can fall. A recent "electric chair" episode indicates depravity in music and in humour. Who is being ridiculed in the Weather Report portion of the programme? Why not use some New Zealand accents?

ADULT LISTENERS (Ohaui).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Mrs. G. D. Hensell (Pokeno): Many thanks. Mozart (Wellington): Tennyson.