

THE HYDROGEN BOMB

Sir,—Mr. Murray's proposal that the East-West tension should be eliminated by complete disarmament may be interesting in itself; but it is not an answer to what I said. I suggested that for thousands of years we (and surely even Mr. Murray can understand that in this context "we" means mankind, all of us in East and West alike) have equated weapons with security, and that for this reason we cannot simply toss them aside until we first find some other proposition which ordinary people on both sides of the garden fence can accept with confidence and a feeling of advance.

I suggest that our present position is clearly untenable: if we depend on armaments for our sense of security and actually use them we risk extinction; that is, for the lucky ones a wipe-out and for the rest a long slow irrevocable agony of decline in which babies born dead or deformed will gradually, through generations, become more and more the rule and less and less the exception. But on the other hand, if we rely on the supposed security of armaments well knowing that we cannot actually use them in major war, then we risk social unreason on the grand scale. If Mr. Murray has no better suggestion for leading us beyond this impasse than that someone else should do the leading, on a proposition which both sides are obviously too dependent on the false security of armaments to undertake, then he would be better mannered if he refrained from ridiculing the suggestions of others.

"Simplicity" is hardly the word to apply to the job of advancing and integrating the beliefs of the East and the West; and "delicious" is not likely to refer to anything more than the perverted feelings of those—there will be many of them—who enjoy jeering from the sidelines. I certainly don't want to suggest that this job will be easy or pleasant. It will not. Those who want to help with this work must be prepared for ridicule, contempt, even active hatred; and not all its problems can be foreseen in advance. But if there is no other workable way forward out of the quite untenable situation in which we now find ourselves, then, regardless of what "the Russians" or the leaders of the West or anyone else may or may not have done in the past, this is the job which—somehow—will have to be carried through.

DICK SOUTHOON (Auckland).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

ON THE SEVENTH DAY

Sir,—May I, as a sympathiser with the Lord's Day Observance Society, comment on some points made in your editorial of July 20? The Society's protests against the Duke's Sunday polo have, it seems to me, been made regretfully rather than in waspish anger, and can hardly be considered formidable enough to intimidate any opposition. It would be truer to say that the protests have been reported only because they appear as laughably anachronistic as Lord Dowling's belief in fairies. Further, can the Society rightly be held to confuse one aspect of religious observance with religion itself because it defends the Commandment which, of all the Ten, seems to them most jeopardised by the Duke's example? And is their temper necessarily authoritarian because they measure Sunday activities against the Commandment to keep Sunday as a day of rest and worship? You imply that Christian behaviour does not perforce include so strict a code; yet Jesus, while condemning the rigidity which would not allow for individual emer-

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

gency, recommended the Ten Commandments as a moral code to a young man who came to Him for advice.

It requires better grounds than mere expediency, convenience or inclination to justify the discarding of one of the ten principles which for centuries have constituted the basis of Western law and morality. Nor is it enough to point the example of the European countries, where "true religion" goes hand in hand not only with Sunday recreation but also with legalised prostitution.

The Society believes that no motive short of obedience to a divine command is adequate to ensure the weekly pause for rest and worship, needed as much these days as ever; that even royalty are subject to the divinely-endorsed Ten Commandments; that it is a Christian duty to fight against their reduction to the Nine or Eight; and that therefore the example of the Duke in the whittling-down process is to be deplored.

D. A. HOGG (Te Awamutu).

Sir,—Your eminently thoughtful and reasonable editorial "On the Seventh Day" effectively covers the fundamentals. But fanatics clamouring for Sunday observance will still cling to their narrow point of view. They might be commended to reflect on the fact that the Old Testament Sabbath falls on our Saturday—the Jewish Sabbath. Our Sunday is the Mithraic sacred day adopted by the Gentile Christian Churches to mark their breakaway from the first Christian Church in Jerusalem—which observed the Old Testament Sabbath.

The first dictator about our Sunday appears to have been the Roman Emperor Constantine, who, after becoming allegedly Christian, issued an edict calling for the solemn observance of Sunday. On that day, nobody was to do any work, although presumably, cows would still have to be milked and animals fed. But Constantine was the originator of "Blue Sunday" laws under which mankind has groaned more or less ever since.

It is a mistake to suppose that life is necessarily elevated to higher levels by ritual observances. If the heart is right in its relation to the insoluble mysteries of the universe and life, and functions on principles of toleration and affection for mankind as a brotherhood, it makes no matter on what days you do or refrain from doing specific acts. After all, the kingdom of heaven is within us.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

"SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR"

Sir,—I have been urged to offer a mild rebuke of certain entries of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, appearing in recent issues of your magazine. Having read these articles for some years, I am well accustomed to applaud, certainly to ponder appreciatively, the simple wisdom, the pastoral pleasures, frequently animating this well-established feature. As often, however, in recent months I have noticed an unnecessary and less than creditable petulance invade "Sundowner's" writing, to the disappointment of many readers other than myself. In the entry for June 22, for example, we surely have more evidence for the onset of an irascible old age than "Sundowner" himself found in his incapacity now to whistle or sing (June 13).

No man, unless he has serious doubts of his own faith, condemns mere cynicism or would deny the writer of the *Calendar* his own prejudices or even his

own superstitions. But the danger of Shavian generalisations and the folly of emotional violence in criticism should be reiterated more frequently than is now the case. In the most real sense it is a measure of our moral responsibility.

I am aware that ill-directed Church services can be very futile, but I am also aware that the methods of ridicule in attempting to remedy these faults may invite more contempt than agreement from both Christian and non-Christian alike.

J. C. ENGLAND (Opunake).

MAN'S HIND LEGS

Sir,—When man, the aloof animal, rose on his hind legs, says James Thurber, he began to chatter and develop reason." As this statement is the first sentence in *The Listener's* introduction to a scientific subject, "A Study of the Mind," it might be taken as a statement of scientific fact, which it is not. We have no proof that Man ever had any hind legs to rise upon. We have had for the last hundred years or more a vast number of theories as to what early man was like, but no conclusive proof. Isolated skulls and fragments of bone whose age has been guessed at have been dug up, and violent scientific controversies have raged round them. The real fact is that the origin of man and the development of reason is a subject for speculation to physical science; and while it is, dogmatic statements such as Thurber's should be presented as theories and nothing more.

E. SATCHELL (Auckland).

MOTHERS AT WORK

Sir,—Some questions arise out of the Wellington panel's excellent discussion on "Why Do Women Work?" which could well be the subject of further discussions. It would appear that women work because of economic necessity; and this being so, it is only too obvious that those most in need of the extra wage are those least able to go out and earn it. I mean the mothers of large or young families. They, more than the mothers of grown families, or childless women, are the ones most in need of labour-saving devices for their homes which some women earn by going out to work. And where these can be considered luxuries is debatable. An excellent subject for discussion if I might suggest is: "Whether it is desirable or not that mothers go out to work, what else can be done to lighten their burden?"

If little else can be done for them, is this going out to work incompatible with a good emotional and spiritual background for their families? Personally, I think much could be done with regard to that economic burden. Why not, for instance, a rising scale for child allowances for each child over a certain number in the family? Children need

"GOON SHOW" BROADCASTS

THE new series of "The Goon Show" is to begin a week earlier than was announced on this page in our issue of July 27. NZBS Head Office Programmes Section have advised us that the first of the new shows will be heard from 2YZ on November 23, and from the YAs and the other YZ stations on November 24. The series of "Take It From Here" which recently concluded at the Commercial stations begins from 2YZ on August 17, and from the other Main National Stations on August 25.

more than food and clothing, even for material well being. Extra children in a family may mean extra rooms, extra rent, or extra building costs. Should parents solve their economic problems by birth control and family spacing? If so, is that regrettable from either a social or spiritual standpoint?

Some recent discussions on leisure in *Question Mark* could be followed by similar ones on luxury. What constitutes a luxury? When is a luxury not a luxury?

E.P. (MacLennan).

"A TEENAGE PRAYER"

Sir,—In this somewhat Godless age, it is comforting to know that teenagers (so called) say their prayers; but do we have to be assailed at intervals by an irreverent and ridiculous number called "A Teenager Prayer"? What sort of person or persons request this Thing? Why do song-writers flout the good English language to the horrible extent of using such grammar (or lack of it) as "My girl friend Betty loves him like crazy," and "I chill when my thrill passes by"? My prayer is that "teenagers" will find more worthwhile and better music to listen to, and that adults will be given patience and tolerance in trying to understand the mentality of those who are going to grow up, and matter in the world.

QUOD SURSUM VOLO VIDERE (Napier).

BBC BROADCASTS

Sir,—May I make a final reply to Roberta Highton and Sandra Du Plat on BBC broadcasts? Both have deduced from my letters my desire to rush quickly to the defence of our own announcers. This was not my intention, for I was as shocked as R.H. at the undeserved criticism of the BBC, and most sincere in my support of her protest. But I did want to point out that we have evolved our own accent peculiar to this Dominion and that we do pronounce some words differently from the accepted BBC standard. There isn't anything we can do about it at this stage of our history. Like Topsy, "it just grewed."

I would, however, make a further mild protest at the classing of us all as "New Zealanders who —" and not qualifying the remarks as "some" or "many" New Zealanders. A number of us are just as aware of our own shortcomings as people from overseas, and can truly appreciate the best in broadcasting, as from the BBC.

I most regretted the intensity of Roberta Highton's retort in her first letter, appearing to dismiss us as a lot of ignoramuses, when I feel sure many of us regretted the initial criticism.

UNDESERVED (Katikati).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

"NEW ZEALAND NOW"

Sir,—I did not write about the Maori in *New Zealand Now* because that task had been assigned to Sir Apirana Ngata. The volume was planned, and I think begun, but was unfortunately never finished.

OLIVER DUFF (Christchurch).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J.S.S. (Tauranga): Alas, yes; it is a pity. But thanks all the same.

N.C.T. (Blenheim): Land lines are used. G. Blaikie (Invercargill): (1) What three, located where, operating on what wave-lengths and with what power, and costing how much, could "easily do a better job"? (2) The demand for "background listening by groups in public places and restaurants" has been voiced by no group frequenting public places and restaurants.

E.B. (Collingwood) and Constant Listener (Christchurch): Much appreciated.