

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IN WHOSE SIDE IS SR?

SEEMED WRONG to me that *The Saturday Review* should have published such an abusive letter as Frank C. Waldrop's on Herbert Wiener [LETTERS, SR Dec. 11]. don't suppose you publish every letter you receive; one would imagine that you apply certain standards of germaneness, if not of good manners, which ought to rule out such *argumenta ad hominem*.

Since I am an associate of Professor Wiener, I shall try to confine myself to principles; a personal defense might seem to be motivated by the bias I do have in his favor. Different sorts of people have different ideas about what is important in life. Those of us who work in universities; those who teach anywhere; professional people; scientists and artists; and those who, though not living by cultural (in the narrow sense) pursuits, love and enjoy their manifestations;—all these understand that the life of the intellect and the freedom to pursue it in a sympathetic environment are essential to civilization virtually by definition. It was to these groups and to any who might be won over to a sympathetic attitude that Professor Wiener addressed his appeal for the creation of a climate in which genius might flourish.

There are vast numbers of people who are more or less indifferent to these matters. And then there is a small number who are actively and consciously hostile to the manifestations of the free intellect. To these Mr. Waldrop seems to belong. The most powerful newspapers and magazines of our country shout for his point of view daily; it does not lack means of access to the public ear. If not an honest mistake, then it was a betrayal for *The Saturday Review*, which is supposedly on our side, to give space to such a diatribe.

ARMAND SIEGEL.

Boston, Mass.

YESUS AS JUDGE

WAS PLEASED to learn from the "The Novelist and Christ" [SR Dec. 4] that the authors, Alan Paton and Liston Pope, have read my thirty-three-year-old novel, "They Call Me Carpenter," and sorry to learn that they found my picture of Jesus unconvincing. The paragraph they devote to the book seems to me to contain a flat contradiction. The opening statement reads, "The desire to judge the sins of others is of all motives the most dangerous"; then later they say, "The Christ of the Gospels was concerned as deeply with sinners as with social wrongs." How was He concerned? Did He not judge? Of course He did! He was a moralist and a preacher, and it would be correct to say that He was concerned with nothing else, and that no one ever judged more severely. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful out-



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ward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." He went on like that until He got Himself crucified.

The effort to distinguish between "sinners" and "social wrongs" is a fallacy very popular in our reactionary days. A man may sin against himself, he may sin against his neighbors, or against the community, or the whole human race. The latter sin is committed by those who take the social rebel, Jesus, and turn Him into the stained-glass-window "Christ." At any rate, that is what I have been trying to tell the world in a series of books, "They Call Me Carpenter," "The Profits of Religion," "Our Lady," and "A Personal Jesus." This desert man who had not where to lay His head was very tender with personal and individual sinners, and bitter as gall against those who exploited the poor in the name of their Heavenly Father.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Corona, Calif.

HOPEFUL SIGN

THE FIRST THING which occurs to me on reading "The Novelist and Christ," by Alan Paton and Liston Pope, is the omission of the concept in literature of the words of St. Paul, "not I, but Christ in me." Surely use of this concept is a true Christ-symbol. Perhaps it is the only real Christ-symbol. The fictional returns to earth of Christ take no cognizance of the Church's traditional views of things eschatological. Are these wild

graspings of the imagination not doomed to failure by their very nature?

With the current popularity of anything that smells even faintly "spiritual," the Paton-Pope article is a hopeful sign of discrimination. Religious orthodoxy, in literary circles on this continent at any rate, carries (and as falsely) the same bad taste as does the word peace in political circles. At the same time, the ordinary reader seems to think that anything religious in novels is naturally a Good Thing!

MRS. R. J. CROCKER.

Taber, Alberta.

PEACE OF MIND

PLEASE! More articles like "Peace of Mind," by Warren Weaver [SR Dec. 11]. Too many people today are looking to Norman Vincent Peale, and other writers like him, as a "short cut" to Christianity and inner peace—thinking this will quickly satisfy this "neurotic inner discontent" without having to accept the full responsibility of being a Christian. Man is too conscious today of the lack of time, and therefore these "how-to-do-it-in-ten-easy-lessons" books appeal to his impatient nature. Instead of thinking for himself, man today is too prone to accept someone else's shorter methods of approach.

Mr. Weaver's dynamic closing paragraph—or prayer—is a tremendous summation of his whole article.

MITZI BROWN.

Chicago, Ill.



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"Lucerne, Switzerland," by Miss Theodora J. Gilbert, San Carlos, Calif. (Second Prize).

THROMBOSIS OF THE ITINERARY 1954

By HORACE SUTTON

EVERY year about this time I have a dream. In this dream I am sick. I suffer from thrombosis of the itinerary. Also hardening of the arterial highways. I am treated by that eminent physician Louis Passpeurt, inventor of the Passpeurt method of passpeurtizing people against the bacteria of boredom and the fermentation of the same old scene. In this dream Passpeurt is prescribing his favorite cure. He is saying, "Visa-vie your occupation versus your health, what you need is a nice long trip." I keep protesting. I say, "Doctor, all I keep thinking is that home would be a nice place to come home to." He says, "Very sick, also inflammation of the syntax," and writes furiously on his pad of prescription blanks.

In my dream the prescription pad is the file of contributor's cards kept by this publication which tell about the places that have been covered by each department during the last year. I find that last year at this time I was discussing the strange mores of football spectators on the West Coast of the United States, that thereafter I was,

in that order, over Hialeah in a helicopter and under a daiquiri in La Habana, which is Havana as spoken by healthy Cubans or Americans with a cold. Shortly thereafter I was aboard a toboggan skidding down a snowbank in the Laurentians at incredible speed. It was hellishly difficult to make notes.

The dead of winter found me rummaging among the Dutch as found in Pennsylvania, learning to tell which people were *plain*, which were *fancy*, and when somebody hangs a sign on the door reading "Bump, the bell don't make" it means "Knock, the bell's out of order." I went down to meet the spring in Maryland and sailed among the oyster ships and talked to crab-sorters and watched the buds blossom on the dogwood trees that shade Antietam. I got into an airplane in the Borough of Queens and sat for seventeen hours, and when I woke up a girl was hanging a rope of orchids around my neck and saying "Welcome." I was pretty sure I wasn't dead because Leonard Lyons, Earl Wilson, and Bob Considine were all swimming on Waikiki Beach and Lyons was

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