

HOW THINGS BEGAN

Sir,—My letter of December 23 contained five points of criticism. Mr. Prior has (wisely) ignored the first two, attempted a reply to the third and fourth, and left the fifth till later. I asked Mr. Prior to quote instances to prove his charge that my use of the term "self-contradictory" was indiscriminate. Since "indiscriminate" means "promiscuous" as well as "confused," I think his proof requires several instances. He has furnished one, viz., my statement that Monism is "incompatible with the principle of contradiction." This instance does not serve his purpose, for a statement may be immediately or mediately incompatible with the principle of contradiction, and only in the former case is it self-contradictory. But I did not write "immediately incompatible." Mr. Prior knows enough logic to realise that in making this distinction I am not quibbling. In fact, the distinction underlies the theory of the syllogism.

Mr. Prior says that a proposition may be self-evidently false without contradicting itself. Not so. When we say that a proposition is self-evidently false, we mean that its falsity may be seen from an examination of the proposition itself, an examination which shows that it is self-contradictory, e.g., the proposition, "a part is greater than the whole." Strictly speaking, of course, a proposition cannot contradict itself, for, as anyone who has heard of the Square of Opposition knows, contradiction is between two propositions. To say that a proposition is self-contradictory is merely a short way of saying that it contradicts some self-evident truth, e.g., the principle of identity. Thus "A is not A" is said to be self-contradictory, because it contradicts "A is A" which is self-evidently true. Similarly for the proposition "A change may be without a cause" . . . I suspect (a suspicion reinforced by some remarks in Mr. Prior's original review) that he has not grasped the difference between "evident" and "self-evident."

Mr. Prior says that "being caused" is not part of the meaning of "being a change." I hold that it is, i.e., it suffices to analyse the meaning of "being a change" to see that it implies "being caused." Mr. Prior's mention of "effect" in this context is irrelevant, for we are not discussing "effect," but "change."

Similarly irrelevant is his reference to the unlikelihood of the intervention by the Creator to transform marble into a statue. The point at issue was whether such a change is possible "without the intervention of any cause." To say that it is nonsense, i.e., self-contradictory, if you admit that a change must have some cause. Present-day philosophical fashions, good or bad, have nothing to do with the case.

Finally, I should be grateful to Mr. Prior for that list of transitional forms.

G. H. DUGGAN, S.M.
(Greenmeadows).

Sir,—It seems very strange to me that humans will readily talk about eternity to come, but utterly fail to realise that eternity must reach both ways, that the world has been ever since and will be for ever. Science says that matter can neither be created nor destroyed, only changed, and astronomers have found that new suns are constantly being created by explosions of huge masses of cosmic dust and that old burnt-out suns, for reasons unknown, suddenly shoot off on an elliptic or parabolic course, leaving a trail of cosmic

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dust behind them and eventually disappear. It seems quite ridiculous to assume that God, after doing nothing for an eternity, suddenly made a world by creating the laws of nature which at present govern everything.

I fully endorse J. Malton Murray's timely warning in your issue of December 23, that man at present looks like forestalling his destiny by making an end of himself, which will surely happen unless he starts at once to remodel world education on much more international lines.

G. F. B. WEISS (Mangonui).

Sir,—One point in this discussion stands out clearly: that the only result from any academic discussion on such a theory must be inconclusive, for the reason that the whole case for evolution is based on a pure hypothesis. The most regrettable feature is that, in supporting such anti-God theories, adherents to the evolution boggy have to make blasphemous statements such as the following in one correspondent's letter: "For all he (man) knows he may be just an experiment." The infallible Scriptures declare that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female." That this likeness was marred and ruined by the Fall, is the tragic circumstance that the human race finds itself in. But for the marvellous plan of redemption back to God revealed and consummated at Calvary, man's condition would indeed have been terrible to contemplate. Apart from this, evolution is a heritage from paganism hatched in heathen darkness by Anaxagoras and later propounded by Plato. Since then it has been used down the centuries for the purpose of casting doubt on one of the most profound, noble, majestic and reasonable pronouncements ever recorded: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

In the only field that possibly could provide some little ray of evidence supporting the assumptions of evolution generally—palaeontology—all front-rank investigators agree and admit the riddle of the stones has beaten us. Therefore, in the words of Sir Charles Marston, all the absurd and vain attempts to disprove the sublime Creation story, including those of recent fossil experts, can be classed as so much "scholastic debris" of "science" so-called.

A. STENBERG (Palmerston North).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

CHRISTMAS BROADCASTS

Sir,—We, three devoted radio fans in Canterbury, wish to convey our thanks and appreciation to the broadcasting staff in general, and to that of 3YA in particular, for the excellent Christmas fare provided in our programmes. We fully realise the trouble and imagination and care required to build up such programmes; and we feel a special word of thanks is due to the unselfish announcers and speakers on Christmas Day itself.

THREE CANTERBURY LAMBS
(Christchurch).

BOOK REVIEWS

Sir,—In *The Listener* for November 18 you gave a description of *Pyramid Valley* by Roger Duff so flattering that on December 6 I rang up a bookseller and asked him to get me a copy. He replied that they had sold all they had

got, but would try to get one for me. Again in *The Listener* for December 30 you reviewed *The Coming of the Maori* by Sir Peter Buck. I at once rang up the bookseller again, and again I found that it was sold out. What is the good of recommending books to us that are already out of print? It is most exasperating. Why can't you get an advance copy of classics like these so that you could print your review in time to let your readers have a chance to get one? I'll owe you a grudge over this for a long time. Annoyed is much too mild a word, I feel furious.

THOS. TODD (Gisborne).

(We have also been criticised for reviewing books before they are in the shops. Nevertheless, reviews are not advertisements, and we feel no obligation to discover whether or not books are available before we discuss them. Our task is simply to review books which are sent to us for that purpose by the publishers.—Ed.)

CONTEMPORARY ART

Sir,—It is not my intention to have an unresolved seventh in the final chord, so I shall not be contentious. I would like to restrict myself to thanking Mr. Ward for his last letter, from which I deduce that, although I have had a wider experience of viewing originals, Mr. Ward has made a deeper study of the principles of art, and therefore his opinions should be considered in preference to mine. It is also obvious from Mr. Ward's letter that he is a gentleman. One so seldom meets a gentleman moving in the orbit of art that I feel Mr. Ward's presence deserves recording.

JACK THORNTON (Upper Hutt).
(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

MUSICAL EXTREMISTS

Sir,—In his two articles on the subject of "extreme" composers, your contributor, "H.J.F.," leaves us just where we were before, and has completely failed to answer the case put by Dr. Galway—in fact, all he does is to contradict the latter's explicit statement. Dr. Galway said: "If history teaches us anything, it is that no great composer was unintelligible to his contemporaries." "H.J.F.," however, says: " . . . Beethoven, Wagner and others were incomprehensible to many in their day."

How does "H.J.F." know this? Will he kindly tell us on what authority he bases his dogmatic statement? Also, who are the composers included so vaguely in "and others"? The only people to whom Beethoven and Wagner may have sounded incomprehensible in their day were probably the same class of people who find them incomprehensible at the present time—the musically illiterate, who in every age are always in the vast majority.

Every truly great composer may have enlarged music's vocabulary, but in so doing he still employed the orthodox musical alphabet and orthography, and the accepted system of musical grammar. The strange and beautiful harmonic threads woven by Wagner, Grieg and Tchaikovsky, made hitherto unimagined sound patterns, but never offended the most sensitive tastes. In other words, however much the standard innovators of the past advanced harmonically, they adhered nevertheless to the basic laws, written and unwritten, of music's language.

Dr. Galway had in mind only those modern would-be composers who avow-

edly and of set purpose put down on paper combinations of symbols which, translated into sound, outrage and destroy every vestige of melodic and harmonic propriety.

"H.J.F." says also: "The more we may dislike certain music, the more we must insist on giving it a hearing." Again I ask, why? Are we not to be allowed to trust the evidence of our own senses? Let us suppose that a municipal authority deposits at the gate of "H.J.F.'s" residence a load of manure, and, when he loudly protests, informs him that he has got to smell it, whether he likes it or not, because *that* is to be the smell of the future. What would be "H.J.F.'s" reaction to such procedure?

I can answer for him—he would feel about it just as Dr. Galway feels when the noises of Shostakovich and Co. are thrust upon his ears—and not only Dr. Galway (whom the gods preserve for his forthrightness and courage), but the thousands of sane listeners who share his views, including

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

COMMUNISM IN CHINA

Sir,—I would like to ask "Thy Neighbour" whether he has any idea of what Communism is and what Communism teaches. Apparently he has not, on his own evidence, the slightest conception of what this the greatest of all heresies tries to instil into the hearts of poor bewildered people. I give him the benefit of the doubt and imagine that he is one of those goodhearted people who do not realise the issues involved.

If your city was in the grip of bubonic plague, would you not try to protect the lives of your fellow citizens by medical or preventive measures? Would you not warn them of the means to avoid infection? If you would do this, and I have no doubt that you would, why not take the same precautions with the bubonic plague of class hatred which attacks and destroys man's most precious possession, his sanctity as an individual, a rational being with body and soul?

Chinese Communists, German Communists, Russian Communists are all the same, for Communism knows no national barriers. Here is what Karl Marx says about the Communist doctrine on man: "The idea that every single man in the world has value, is the essence of democracy, and democracy was born of a Christian notion that every man has an immortal soul. We deny a man has a soul, we deny a man has value." I quote now from Lenin: "In Communism every form of ruse, deceit, lying and knavery is permissible." I quote from Stalin's *The Principles of Leninism*: "Communism is founded upon violence which recognises no law and is restricted by no duty." Surely these are solid foundations on which to build a freedom-loving world and to establish an era of world peace! I ask "Thy Neighbour" to examine the evidence and form an unbiased opinion not obscured by false sentimentality.

W.R.F. (Auckland).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J.J. (Summer): We do not print letters on party politics.
J.W.F.F. (Hamilton): Making inquiries.
G.H.T. (New Plymouth): We do not print letters which have appeared elsewhere.
Charles E. Wardle (Hamilton): The irony would be misunderstood. And we have already pointed out the error ourselves.