

CORRESPONDENCE

FAIRNESS THROUGH LOGIC

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—I am afraid that your suggested remedy for the logical deficiencies of leader-writers in the Catholic Press will not always work. The leader-writer of the leader of the *Catholic Herald* to which you take exception on the ground of its being illogical and, as a result, injurious to a number of fellow-Catholics had about seven years' training in logic and related subjects. With what results!

With what results? Well, I find it rather hard to defend him because after making fun of his dialectic you admit that the general drift of his argument is clear. I fail to see how an argument can be clear and yet illogical. And in fact your interpretation is neither clear nor correct. It is evident then that you missed the point of the leader, which is not saying much for it.

But was it illogical?

The general drift of the leader—the greater part of which you did not quote—was the contention that in fact the Reds wished to drive out of Spain the religion and culture of Spain at any price in human lives, vandalist destruction and the smashing of the tradition of law and order. On this view, it was argued, Catholics who found themselves able to remain impartial must either deny that there was any such danger to Spain from a Red victory or hold that war was so horrible that nothing, not even the resistance to Red revolutionaries, may justify it, or hold that the liberal and democratic reforms which preceded the war and which had temporarily gone bad largely owing to a Fascist military coup were, even so, more in line with Christian social revolution than the reaction that must succeed a Nationalist triumph. In answer to these alternative reasons for remaining impartial we said as regards the first: the Reds *are* trying to destroy religion and culture; as regards the second: much as we hate war, we think it justified under such circumstances; as regards the third: we think it an absurd contradiction to support liberal and democratic reforms largely initiated by anti-Christians and necessarily drifting under such false lead into anarchism and communism of a violently anti-God nature, on the pretext of helping to achieve Christian social reform.

Is this illogical? We never said that those who are not anti-Red are pro-Godless, though we do not deny that in effect they are, though they may not have thought it out. What we did say was that those Catholics who remain impartial because they favour liberal and democratic reforms even though based on an agnostic

philosophy, reforms which necessarily lead to their logical end, an atheistic regime after the style of Moscow, are remaining impartial because in effect they are supporting anti-God social reformers.

I do not wish to trespass further on your space, but I must note that when you attack the logicity of the remark that those who worship no God must in fact worship force, you are plainly showing a mere desire to fault-find. The arguments in support of this view are to be found in any text-book of apologetics.

May I say, before I close, that I am largely in agreement with the views of *The Sower* in regard to the dangers of the Catholic Press.

I should only disagree with you when you say that the Catholic Press *leads* the Catholic Public. The power of the Press, whether secular or Catholic, is in my view very much exaggerated. The Catholic Press is certainly as much led by general Catholic opinion as leading. And though, as far as I am aware, no official or unofficial direction in regard to Spain has been received by the Catholic Press, the fact remains that the whole Hierarchy is in sympathy with the unanimous attitude of the four weekly Catholic papers. This unanimity is expressed in different ways and with different emphases, as, no doubt, it would be by various members of the Hierarchy, but that is all. Surely BLACKFRIARS does not allege that the Catholic Press is even leading the Bishops!

Yours, etc.,

The Catholic Herald,
110 Fleet Street.

MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE.

[It is just a matter of the Principle of Non-contradiction. The leader-writer was entitled to maintain that the Catholics whom he criticized support *neither* side or that they support *either* one side or the other. But even seven years' training does not entitle him to have it both ways—nor to maintain that an argument is logically valid because its drift is clear! But I should be sorry to be thought anxious to find fault with *The Catholic Herald* which has set fine standards of Catholic journalism, and is usually quite exceptionally fair and hospitable to those with whom it disagrees.

To the last exclamation: BLACKFRIARS did not allege that the Catholic Press is leading even the Bishops; but the contributor to *The Sower*, with whom Count de la Bedoyère "is largely in agreement," quite expressly did so in a passage which we refrained from quoting. Here, it would perhaps be unkind to press logic too far!

As a matter of interest: would the Count oblige with the reference to one single text-book of apologetics that supplies the arguments for the idea that "those who worship no God must in fact worship force?" One knows many people who worship neither, besides many more who seem to worship both.—PENGUIN.]