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Mr. BELLOC ON ANTI-CATHOLIC HISTORY

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Rationalists will always be deeply grateful to Professor J. B. Bury for his masterly monograph, *A History of Freedom of Thought*. Having regard to its small compass (256 pages), it is a unique record of a most momentous struggle. Being written by an avowed Rationalist who has the courage of his convictions, it is hardly the book which a Catholic would commend or recommend. Mr. Hilaire Belloc not only dislikes it, but he is obsessed with the idea that, because of one or two obvious misprints or slips which he has detected in its pages, it is unscholarly and unreliable. Professor Bury has written for the *Literary Guide* an article extending over seven columns in which he effectively disposes of the more important criticisms, while acknowledging his indebtedness to Mr. Belloc for having pointed out a few clerical or printers' errors. The whole of the article will appear in our next issue. We may add that *A History of Freedom of Thought* is published at 1s. net (by post from our publishers for 1s.3d.).

Mr. Belloc on Anti-Catholic History.

By Professor J. B. BURY, Litt.D., LL.D.

The Editor of the *Literary Guide* has expressed a wish that I should make some remarks on a pamphlet by Mr. Belloc, entitled *Anti-Catholic History: How it is Written* (issued by the Catholic Truth Society). The pamphlet is a criticism on my little book, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, and I notice that the substance of it appeared in an article in the *Dublin Review* for January, 1914, which I have not seen.

I feel honoured by the notice which Mr. Belloc has taken of my volume, and not a little surprised. It was not written for propaganda. It was written purely for amusement. It is a short study of a subject which happens to interest me – freedom of opinion, written from the point of view of a Rationalist, and without any definite design to propagate anything. Is it not a little misleading to call it “anti-Catholic”? For, surely, it is equally anti-Protestant. At least, Protestants think so.

Mr. Belloc divides his criticisms into three heads: (1) errors in date, fact, and quotation; (2) grave errors, consisting of inaccuracy in “proportion”, due to bias or to ignorance of the original documents, or to both; (3) errors in “accuracy as to the general atmosphere of an event” – the third class being the most important.

Now, so far as the first class is concerned, Mr. Belloc has done me the service of pointing out a number of mistakes, and that is a service for which one must always be grateful. Some of them I had noticed myself shortly after the appearance of the book,

and these have, I hope, already been corrected; others will be amended when an opportunity occurs, for Mr. Belloc, I trust, will not object to my using his criticisms to improve a noxious publication. Carelessness is not a valid excuse for mistakes, and if Mr. Belloc had not built an argument on those which he has discovered it would not be worth while to do more than express regret for *lapsus calami*, *lapsus mentis*, or inattentive reading or proof-sheets. Mr. Belloc himself admits by implication that they do not affect the argument; but as he insists on the errors for the purpose of discrediting the whole work, and suggests that they are “proof of a fundamental lack of scholarship”, and show that I wrote “without any sufficient preparation or knowledge”, a few remarks may be offered as to the nature of the mistakes and their genesis.

I will take the two misprints on which Mr. Belloc has specially insisted as inexplicable by mere carelessness. One is the date of St. Augustine's death, which appears as 410. Now, it was quite natural for Mr. Belloc to assume that this is a case of pure ignorance, since probably few people who have a very good knowledge of general history carry the date 430 in their heads. It so happens that there is no century with the chronological details of which I am more familiar than that or the fifth, and it would be as impossible for me to associate 410 with the death of Augustine as, say, 1810 with the death of George IV. Many years ago I wrote an account of the events in Africa, from 420 to 430, leading up to the Vandal invasion, and utilized Augustine's correspondence. If I had forgotten the date of his death, I had only to refer to a book of my own, where it is twice recorded. Of course, Mr. Belloc does not know this: why should he? But the case illustrates a maxim which, in reviewing books, I have always adopted – that, when a wrong date does not affect the argument, it is unfair to assume that it is anything more than a misprint.

The other case is the introduction of the Cult of the Supreme Being by Robespierre, which appears as 1795. Here, I think, Mr. Belloc has less excuse. I should have thought that the date of Robespierre's death is as familiar to everyone as the date of the outbreak of the Revolution, and that every reader would recognize a mere clerical error. Mr. Belloc is convinced that it is a sheer blunder, and advances the fact that I mention the month April as a proof. My words refer to the Decree, not to the Feast. I turned up the Decree in Aulard, where the text is given, with the date 18 floreal, which, by a miscalculation, I equated with April 27 instead of May 7. That was an error but it does not establish Mr. Belloc's case, for there is nothing in *April* to suggest the wrong year.

Mr. Belloc takes me to task for another month. I say that “in February, 1616, the Holy Office decided” against Galileo. Mr. Belloc says the Decree “was given, as a fact, in March”. I submit that my statement is absolutely accurate. It was taken directly from the documents of the Archives of the Holy Office, published by Berti. The Decree was published on March 5, but the Holy Office decided on February 24; and on February 26 Bellarmine admonished Galileo. I have been hasty in some of my statements; here Mr. Belloc is hasty in his criticism.

This whole class of errors may be described as inadvertencies and clerical mistakes. They may be slips of memory, or they may be mechanical slips, arising at any one of

three stages – in transcribing from notes, in the typing, or in the printing. And finally they depend on bad proof-reading (in the present case the proofs happen to have been corrected in bed). There is another source or error in a book in which the number or pages is strictly prescribed. You write too much; a process of excision and cutting-down becomes necessary; and if you are hasty you may make an alteration and omit to do something else which the alteration requires. For instance, having written at too great length on Socinianism, I made curtailments, and at the last moment substituted the Confession of 1574 for the Catechism of 1605 without making the corresponding change thereby necessitated. Hence the chronological inaccuracy as to Faustus Socinus which Mr. Belloc has rightly noted.

All errors are blemishes; but is Mr. Belloc justified in his deduction from errors of this kind? Well, take his own pamphlet. Twelve pages of it are devoted to criticizing particular statements in my book. A censor who is passing severe strictures on another for minor inaccuracies is bound, one would suppose, to be meticulously careful himself. And yet we find him stating that a bull of Innocent VII appeared “four years before” a bull of 1501 – that is in 1497. Would it be fair of me to say Mr. Belloc has made a gross blunder? Of course, it would be absurd. I know that Mr. Belloc knows that Alexander VI had succeeded Innocent VIII long before 1497 as well – I will not say as I do, for Mr. Belloc thinks that I know nothing, but – as any well-informed person. *Four* is simply a misprint.

There is another case of a different kind. I date Shaftsbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* to 1699. Mr. Belloc enumerates this in his list of “positive errors” and says “We first find it printed in 1711. Now, if I had dated the *Characteristics* to 1699, that would have been an error. But on the title-page of the *Inquiry* which forms Treatise iv of the *Characteristics* (in the 1723 edition, which is the one I possess) it is stated that the *Inquiry* was first printed in 1699, and is “now corrected and published entire”. The fact is that the *Inquiry* was surreptitiously printed by Toland in 1699. Mr. Belloc has simply been hasty; just as he was hasty in finding fault with me about the decision against Galileo.

I would not for a moment press this against him. On the contrary. I only want to show that these cases, occurring in a space of twelve pages, in which he is castigating me and therefore would naturally take special care to look to himself, would suggest a totally unfair conclusion as to Mr. Belloc's competence, if one applied his own principle.

Under the same head Mr. Belloc includes a more important criticism which I must notice, because if it were justified it would affect the argument. I say that Voltaire began his campaign against Christianity after the middle of the eighteenth century. He says this is a positive error; I think it is an accepted fact. It was after his return from Prussia and his settlement at Ferney, after the philosophical movement associated with the *Encyclopaedia* had begun at Paris, that Voltaire began to inundate Europe with his *feuilles volantes*. This was his campaign, by which he sought to help and hoped to guide the movement of the *philosophes*. That is a leading fact in the history of Voltaire's work, and the publication of his *Lettres Philosophiques*, which was condemned in 1734, is not to the purpose. I never suggested that he wrote

nothing impious before 1750; I stated that his systematic attack began after 1750, and that is perfectly true.

Before I consider the criticisms of his second class let me point out an assumption which runs through Mr. Belloc's pamphlet, and seems obviously unreasonable. It is an accepted axiom that in a treatise dealing in detail with a special subject, or in a history of a special period, the author is bound to base his work on the original documents and authorities. Mr. Belloc applies this axiom to a short sketch, ranging over more than two thousand years, and touching on an immense number of special subjects. That is unreasonable. On such terms historical sketches treating long periods could not be written. For parts of his subject which he has not specially studied a writer is surely justified in depending on predecessors whose work he has reason for believing to be sound.

Mr. Belloc is particularly severe on my statement that the Inquisition was founded by Pope Gregory IX about A.D.1233, "and suggests that it is "absolutely typical of the way in which this book has been written" – by which he means that it shows ignorance of the authorities or deliberate misinterpretation. In this case I should have said precisely "in A.D.1231". Now, I had the facts relating to the beginning of the Inquisition before me as clearly (if I may say so without impertinence) as even Mr. Belloc. My indication of time was quite deliberate. The persecution of heresy conducted at Rome at the Pope's instance in A.D.1231 was followed by the Decretal to which Mr. Belloc refers. The organization of the Inquisition throughout Europe hardly began before 1235. In 1233 – though Mr. Belloc says you get nothing important in this year – Gregory issued the Bulls *Ille humani generis* and *Licet ad capiendas* which charged the Dominican monks with the office of persecuting heresy. As this was a very important feature of the Inquisition, and may be said to have completed the regulations of 1231, I took this date and qualified it by "about". It would perhaps have been better if I had written "A.D.1231-1233". But my statement, I submit, is not misleading, and it was based on knowledge of the details.

In criticising me for omitting to mention the persecuting legislation of Henry VIII (both the Statute of 1533 to which he refers, and the Six Articles of 1539 to which he does not refer) I think Mr. Belloc is right. But I can most honestly disclaim the intentions which he imputes to me. In a small book or strictly limited dimensions one is obliged to leave out many topics. I decided to omit entirely the subject of religious persecutions in England, Catholic and Protestant alike. In mentioning, à propos of the Inquisition, that it was not established in England, but that penal legislation against heretics was instituted by Henry IV, I added, as a sort of note, the vicissitudes of his Statute *De heretico comburendo*. Mr. Belloc shows me that this statement might produce the false impression that the Catholics only, and not the Protestants, persecuted by the stake. I hope Mr. Belloc will accept my honest assurance that it never entered my mind to suggest this, and that nothing was further from my intention than to seek to suppress the tyrannical persecutions of which the bigotry of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth was guilty. I find it difficult to understand how anyone who read my chapter on the Reformation (*cp. esp. pp.78, 79*) could suppose that I should have the least wish to understate or minimize the odious deeds

perpetrated by the Protestants. It is inevitable that in any book, large or small which touches on the subject, the Catholic persecutions should bulk larger, because the system of persecution began long before the Reformation, and the Protestant bigots had a shorter time in which to oppress their portions of the world.

Mr. Belloc charges me with not having glanced at the Decretal of John XXII (*Spondent quas non exhibent*) against the alchemists. Let me say that I had read it carefully, just as I have read most of the Papal pronouncements on magic and sorcery. It is aimed directly at fraud; but, taken in connection with the general attitude of the Church towards physical science in that age, I agreed with Mr. White, who had also read the original and describes it as a blow to chemistry. "In 1317", he says, "Pope John XXII issued his bull *Spondent pariter*, levelled at the alchemists, but really dealing a terrible blow at the beginnings of chemical science. That many alchemists were knavish is no doubt true, but no infallibility in separating the evil from the good was shown by the papacy in this matter" (*Warfare of science*, I, 384). Mr. Belloc is at liberty to contest this view, but it was quite deliberately formed.

Mr. Belloc thinks that he has convicted me of ignorance and "a whole nest of inaccuracies" in the statement that "Alexander VI inaugurated censorship of the Press by his Bull of 1501". Now the question is not so simple as Mr. Belloc's confident language implies. I have not made a special study of the history of the censorship and the *Index*, and for my brief mention of the matter I naturally consulted an authoritative specialist. I could hardly go to a better guide than *Der Index der verbotenen Bucher* (1904), by Father Joseph Hilgers, of the Society of Jesus. Having briefly sketched the condemnations of particular books throughout the Middle Ages, Hilgers begins (p.6) with the Bulls of 1501 and 1515, and makes no distinction between them. I was aware of Innocent VIII's Bull in 1487, and also of the regulations of the Papal legate at Venice in 1491; indeed, elsewhere (p.408) Hilgers lays stress on the Bull of Innocent; but as I was tracing the history of the censorship, and desired only to give a single mark of time, I thought it safest to take 1501 as the earliest outstanding date. It is open to Mr. Belloc to contest this, and he may have a great deal to urge for his view; but is it not fair to say that his zeal to convict an opponent of gross and grave errors has led him here into undue and hasty dogmatism?

Again, Mr. Belloc criticizes my statement (p.96) that a charter of Charles II (1663) confirmed the constitution of Rhode Island, which secured to all citizens professing Christianity, of whatever form, the full enjoyment of political rights. He says: "What really happened was that Charles II, in sending his charter to Rhode Island, repeated his own decision in favour of universal toleration. But the colonists were concerned with nothing save the insignificant quarrels of the innumerable Protestant sects; the King ultimately left it to the Assembly of Rhode Island to decide what it would do, and when that body issued its rules (printed in 1719) *they excluded Catholics*".

I am blamed here (1) for not mentioning the Declaration of Indulgence of 1662, and (2) for misrepresenting the toleration of Rhode Island. As to (1), I submit that the Declarations of Indulgence, both of 1662 and of 1672, are exactly the sort of facts which it is expedient to omit in a book of which the compass necessitates the omission or countless facts, inasmuch as these decrees were entirely ineffective, as

Parliament forced the king to rescind them. The decree of Charles in 1662 and the charter he granted to the American colony in the following year mutually illustrate each other as parts of his policy of toleration; but I fail to see that there is anything misleading in recording the one without mentioning the other. As to (2), Mr. Belloc has not stated all the facts. The clause "Roman Catholics only excepted", which appears in the copy of the charter printed in 1719, does not occur in the oldest MSS. of the charter, and it is not in accordance with the ideas of the colonists in the time of Charles II. The conclusion of those who have made a special study of the subject is that it was inserted after the English Toleration Act of 1689. It seems to me, therefore, that, with these facts before me, I was justified in making the statement precisely in the form in which I made it. I was justified in representing Rhode Island as "the first modern State which was really tolerant". And that is the main interest of the history of Rhode Island. That the colony fell away from its principle of complete toleration in the eighteenth century is a fact of quite subordinate importance.¹⁴⁹⁷

My gravest errors, according to Mr. Belloc, consist in falsifying "the general atmosphere". He uses this phrase in such a wide sense that in one or two cases I am not sure that I quite understand what he means.

The first instance which Mr. Belloc produces to justify this accusation astonishes me. He says that I have in mind "some vague, confused picture of a besotted society in which men could believe pretty well anything they were told, and in which no inquiry could be made into the processes of the mind or the nature of witness and of truth"; that I am possessed by "the fixed idea that medieval men in general were careless of philosophy"; and that I "say that the men of the Middle Ages could not distinguish between different kinds or intellectual authority, that they did not concern themselves with exact categories of thought".

This description of my view of the Middle Ages is so absolutely contrary to the view of which I am actually conscious that I cannot understand how Mr. Belloc could have received such an impression. I am unable to discover a single sentence in which I have suggested or implied that learned men of the medieval period were careless of philosophy, or incapable of logical deduction, or indifferent to exact categories of thought. It was not part of my plan to discuss the philosophical methods and systems of the schoolmen, but in the couple of pages (68, 69) in which I touched on the speculations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so far as my purpose required, I did not fail to recognize their subtlety and acuteness. May I illustrate how different my view of the intellectual power of the eminent thinkers of the Middle Ages is from that which my critic attributes to me by quoting a sentence from a book which I published nearly fifteen years ago? In speaking of Aristotle I wrote: "Nor was it a small thing that his system controlled the acutest minds of the Middle Ages, whose reasoning faculties, though cabined by the imminence of a narrowly interpreted theology, were amazingly powerful and subtle"¹. This is still my estimate of the schoolmen, and I have said nothing inconsistent with it. But the point on which it was, from my point of view, pertinent to insist in the book which has called forth Mr.

¹ History of Greece p.814.

Belloc's criticisms is the fact that their thought *was* limited by external authority; that the principle of Augustine, *maior est Scripturae huius auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas*, was in control throughout the medieval period; and that this constitutes a capital difference between its intellectual atmosphere and that of either the Greeks or the moderns.

I can only explain Mr. Belloc's criticism by supposing that he assumes as a self-evident postulate that practically nobody reads a line of medieval literature except those who are in sympathy with the Middle Ages, and logically deduces that any fragmentary knowledge I may possess about that period is derived from secondhand and probably not very trustworthy modern books. He says that I seem to have a vague and confused mental picture of those ages. That is a statement which naturally I cannot contradict.

Mr. Belloc does indeed cite one remark of mine, as an instance, to show my bottomless ignorance of medieval habits of thinking. In commenting on the meaning of the word "authority" I used the following illustration: "In the Middle Ages a man who believed on authority that there is a city called Constantinople, and that comets are portents signifying divine wrath, would not distinguish the nature or the evidence in the two cases". I should have thought that no exception could be taken to this. Mr. Belloc denounces it as "wildly and ridiculously false", in glaring contradiction to the fact that from the twelfth to the sixteenth century "the habit or definition and of clear deductive thinking" was pushed to excess. This is an amazing interpretation of my remark. Surely the whole context shows that I am not speaking of savants or philosophers, but of the man in the street, and that my illustration might just as well have been taken from some other period. Suppose I had written, as I might: "In ancient Greece a man who believed on authority that there is a city called Susa, and that comets are divine portents, would not distinguish the nature of the evidence in the two cases". Would Mr. Belloc or any sensible reader say: "This is wild and ridiculously false; the writer has evidently never read a line of Aristotle"?

I had, indeed, a motive for fixing my illustration in the Middle Ages – a motive of convenience, not of malice. For, in this form, it admitted of a further development (see foot of p.17), as it would not so easily have done if I had connected it, as I might, with the ancient or with the modern world.

Mr. Belloc next asserts that it is "bad general history" to talk of the profound conviction that those who did not believe in the doctrines of the Church were damned eternally, including unbaptized infants. "The ultimate authority of the Church has never condemned all the unbaptized to eternal damnation. To say so is simply thoroughly bad history, and there is an end of it". I really don't quite know what Mr. Belloc means. In the passage to which he refers I do not speak of, or imply, the ultimate authority of the Church, by which I presume he means a decree of an Œcumenical Council or an *ex cathedra* pronouncement of a Bishop of Rome. But surely it cannot be questioned that from the time of Augustine the prevailing conviction was, not only among the masses, but also, and perhaps even more, among the leading ecclesiastics in the West, that there is no salvation outside the Church, and that this doctrine applies to unbaptized infants. Consider the well-known facts.

Tertullian and Vincentius were almost the only notable theologians in the West (the opinion of the Greek Fathers was much less rigorous) who held that children might go to heaven without baptism. Augustine, the greatest and most influential theologian of Western Europe, wrote many pages to refute the view that unbaptized infants might escape condemnation, or be interned in some sort of intermediate state; he only went so far as to admit that in hell those who were guilty only of original sin would be punished with a less degree of pain. His view, could be profusely illustrated from his controversial writings, and is, of course, well known. The essential points will be found in his *Enchiridion ad Laurentium* (Migne, *P.L.*, xl, 231 *sqq.*). But it will be enough to refer to the greatest of his works, the *De Civitate Dei*, where, having enunciated the reasonable proposition that the virtues of non Christians are simply vices (bk. xix, cap.25), he goes on to state that all those who do not belong to the *Civitas Dei* will suffer eternal pain (*corpus æternis doloribus subiacebit*). The mitigation that infants, whose only offence is original sin, will suffer the least degree of pain in the place of condemnation, where punishments are graded, is not allowed in the treatise *De Fide ad Petrum*, which was written by Fulgentius at the beginning of the sixth century, but which (until the learning of Erasmus exposed the truth) was generally ascribed to Augustine, and, therefore, had immense authority in the Middle Ages. There it is laid down that unbaptized infants *ignis æterni supplicio sempiterno puniendi* (Migne, *P.L.*, lxxv, p.701). All pagans and Jews, heretics and schismatics will be similarly punished (p.70). What about Pope Gregory Great? Mr. Belloc will agree that he was a man “in really high position”. In the *Moral in Job*, bk. ix, cap.21 (Migne, *P. L.*, lxxv, p.877) he asserts unambiguously that the unfortunate babies who die before they are baptized *perpetua tormenta percipiunt*. The eternal damnation of all outside the Church was the view which generally prevailed, and was held by the highest theological authorities. In the twelfth century a milder view was introduced by some of the schoolmen – and I believe it was adopted by Innocent III – that the unbaptized who were guilty only of original sin would not suffer torments; their punishment would be only *carèntia visionis Dei* – deprivation of the vision of God. This view directly contradicted the teaching of Gregory the Great. I may venture to surmise that respect for the authority of Gregory, and of Augustine – whose views on original sin and predestination darkened the world –, is a consideration which has prevented the Catholic Church in modern times from formally condemning a doctrine which of all theological doctrines is perhaps the most repulsive. But that this doctrine prevailed in the Middle Ages, that it was held not merely by the vulgar, but by “men in high position” – in fact, by the most influential theologians – well, I should have thought that there is no proposition in my little book less contentious, though Mr. Belloc may not like the way in which I have stated it.

My critic next assails me for suggesting that temporal interests and financial considerations were a leading motive in the Church's policy of suppressing the Albigeois. I am quite willing to admit that I may have expressed myself too strongly; but I am sure that, so far from misrepresenting “the atmosphere”, I have here only emphasized a constituent of the atmosphere which is often ignored. The greed of the Church throughout the whole story of the persecutions is one of the most striking features. The imposition, after the battle of Carcassonne, of an annual hearth-tax or

three deniers on a land which had been devastated, the Pope's complaints of insufficient returns from this source, the proceedings of the Papal legate after the Council of Bourges in 1225 concur in impressing one with the importance of this motive. Of the last-mentioned episode Lea remarks that it illustrates "the character of the establishment to which the heretics were invited to return with the gentle inducements of the stake and gibbet". My phrases may have exaggerated the part which financial considerations played in the campaigns against the Albigeois, but the systematic policy or plunder which afterwards accompanied the persecutions under the Inquisition is certainly part of the atmosphere. The evidence is treated by Lea in his chapter on Confiscations, where he points out that the provisions of the Roman law of *magestas* "furnished the armoury whence pope and king drew the weapons which rendered the pursuit of heresy attractive and profitable". He remarks that the "greed for the plunder of the wretched victims of persecution is peculiarly repulsive as exhibited by the Church, and may, to some extent, palliate the similar action by the State in countries where the latter was strong enough to seize and retain it".

As a concluding example of my sins of atmosphere, Mr. Belloc takes my brief notice of Thomas Aquinas. Regarding him as "one of the very few men who have acted as the tutors of the human race", he considers my description of him as "ludicrously inadequate" and, therefore, "bad history", like describing "Shakespeare as an English actor who flourished in the reign of James I". It is, of course, Mr. Belloc's intention to demonstrate, though never offensively, my abyssal ignorance; and in another passage of his pamphlet he suggests that I have never read a line of Thomas in the original. As a matter of fact, I have spent, or mis-spent, many hours over his *Summa*; and the article on miracles to which Mr. Belloc specially refers was one of the things in my mind when I suggested that the treatise was calculated to raise doubts. And I have read the *Compendium Theologiæ* from cover to cover.

Now, I am pleased to see that at least one reader has perceived the implication of my notice of Thomas Aquinas. I am quite aware of the position which his theology has held in the Catholic Church – a position which has become stronger since the Encyclical of Leo XIII. That he was the greatest of the schoolmen is an opinion held by high authorities, and they may be right; he was certainly the most systematic and the most influential. I cannot myself think that intellectually he was so very much superior to his contemporary and opponent, Duns Scotus. One thing he certainly did – he drew firmly and clearly the distinction between natural and revealed theology; and this distinction is now a commonplace without as well as within the Catholic Church. Although he derived this distinction from his master, Albertus Magnus, he deserves the credit for having developed and established it. But I demur entirely to the proposition that it is plain common sense "to speak of him as one speaks of Aristotle, of St. Augustine, or of Bacon". If I had been writing a book intended specially for Catholics, it might be plain common sense to take him for granted; but, outside theologians and well educated Catholic laymen, I suppose that of a hundred readers to whom the names of Aristotle and Augustine are familiar there are not ten to whom the name of Thomas Aquinas would convey any definite idea. In my opinion, Thomas is nearly as far from being on the same level with Augustine as Augustine himself is from being on a level with Aristotle. I should put, say, Napier, the inventor

of logarithms, above Thomas, because he made a far more important contribution to progressive thought. Here Mr. Belloc would profoundly disagree; but I submit that I was justified in treating Thomas in accordance with my own estimate or his importance. I showed, I think, quite sufficient respect for his reputation by singling him out from all the school men for mention in the short space at my command.

It will be remembered how Mommsen treats Marcus Cicero in his *History of Rome*. I dissent as completely from Mommsen's estimate of Cicero as Mr. Belloc dissents from mine of Thomas Aquinas; but, although I am convinced that he has grossly underestimated Cicero's political importance, it would never occur to me to accuse him of falsifying the historical atmosphere.

My "false historical atmosphere", Mr. Belloc says, "reaches its culmination" in the following remark (on p.90): "Rome did not permit the truth about the solar system to be taught till after the middle of the eighteenth century, and Galileo's books remained on the *Index* until 1835. The prohibition was fatal to study of natural science in Italy".

It ought, I think, to be obvious to any reader that this last sentence refers to the period between the final condemnation of Galileo and the actual withdrawal of the prohibition after 1750. Torricelli was a contemporary of Galileo, and the work of Volta and Galvani (to whom Mr. Belloc refers) was done after 1750. Between 1650 and 1750 the study of natural science in Italy languished. I am unable to see how my remark introduces a "false historical atmosphere", or justifies Mr. Belloc's note of exclamation. If he had simply said, "the word *fatal* is too strong" I should be ready to entertain the criticism. But I must point out that Domenico Berti, who is above the suspicion of any desire to depreciate the scientific work of his countrymen, has used very much stronger language in summarizing the effects of the condemnation of Galileo. Those effects, he says, were "deadly (*funeslissime*) for the sciences and for speculation in Italy. Galileo's disciples, even the best, either deserted the great field which he had opened, or became supremely timid, and therefore unproductive The want of liberty in speculation led to the first decease of the Academy of the Lincei, an institution unique in its time, and to that of the Academy of the Cimento. Hence Italy [after two wonderful periods of vigorous civilisation in the thirteenth and in the fifteenth century] was arrested at the beginning or a third period which might have been not less splendid"². Will Mr. Belloc also say "one might suppose that Signor Berti had never heard of Torricelli, let us say, of Volta, or of Galvani!"?

Let me repeat that I feel indebted to Mr. Belloc for examining my book so minutely and detecting some errors and incautious phrases. *Fas est* —; but I will not complete the quotation, for it might give a false impression of my feelings towards Mr. Belloc. He has sought to be perfectly fair, and he has been perfectly courteous.

² Il processo originale di Galileo Galilei, p.111.