The Literary Guide

AND RATIONALIST REVIEW.

[ESTABLISHED 1885.]

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CONTENTS.

The Prostitution of Science.

SIR OLIVER LODGE'S "REVELATIONS" OF AN AFTER-LIFE.

According to the traditional Christian view of things, this world is no more than the threshold of eternity, and this life no more than a knot in a curve which leads to the infinite. At a time when Christian nations, each in the name of the one true God, are wasting thousands of human lives every day, such doctrine must be very comforting. It diverts our minds from the lists of casualties to the immortality which the dead have gained. And if we should feel a tremor of uncertainty about the religious grounds for our faith in the after-life, Sir Oliver Lodge looms up to remind us that survival after death has been scientifically proved.

On many occasions Sir Oliver's language is inclined to be amorphous, but in making this claim about a month ago* he used words which are clear and unequivocal. Moreover, he spoke with full deliberation and a sense of the profound importance of the subject. He left not a shadow of doubt that the Principal of Birmingham University believes the survival of the dead to be proved in the same manner as the evolution of the chicken from the egg, or the production of water by the combination of oxygen and hydrogen:—

> We ourselves are not limited to the few years that we live on this earth; we shall go on without it; we shall certainly continue to exist; we shall certainly survive. Why do I say that? I say it on definite scientific ground. I say it because I know that certain friends of mine still exist, because I have talked to them. Communication is possible. One must obey the laws, find out the conditions. I do not say it is easy, but it is possible; and I have conversed with them as I could converse with anyone in this audience through a telephone. Being scientific men, they have given proofs that it is really they, not some impersonation, not something emanating from myself. They have given definite proofs. Some of these proofs have been published. Many more will have to be withheld for a time, but will ultimately be published. But the fact is so. I tell you with all the strength of conviction I can utter that the fact is so, that we do persist, that people still take an interest in what is going on, that they still help us, and know far more about things than we do, and they are able from time to time to communicate with us.

Many people are doubtless content to accept this statement on the authority of so eminent a physicist. But as soon as one begins to probe the matter it becomes apparent that the statement has no other authority. The "definite scientific proofs" claimed by Sir Oliver are of two kinds—some already published, and many more which have yet to be given to the world. In a letter to the *Times* of November 28, written in reply to a demand from Sir Bryan Donkin that the evidence should be made known, Sir Oliver is more specific about the published proofs. They are embodied in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, which contain "a record of facts which, to most of those who have studied them, amount to a cumulative proof of the reality of facts not yet admitted by orthodox science, of which telepathy is one." Here, it should be observed, we have got somewhat away from the pointed simplicity of definite scientific proofs. We have reached a vague region of records which have been accepted by some people as amounting to cumulative proof of telepathy and other "facts not yet admitted by orthodox science." The nature of these other facts need not concern us, as Sir Oliver Lodge himself states that "the beginning of the proof is telepathy—*i.e.*, a connection between mind and mind through unknown and apparently immaterial channels."

Clearly, therefore, Sir Oliver regards telepathy as a scientific fact. Anyone who is curious about Sir Oliver's notion of definite scientific proof will be able to form a very fair estimate of it by studying the available evidence for telepathy. At the very best it amounts to no more than a group of occurrences which do not seem quite fully covered by the long arm of coincidence. The hypothesis of telepathy—a kind of wireless transmission of impulses between brain and brain—has been evoked to suggest a cause for these occurrences; but it is no more than a hypothesis. There is nothing about it which contradicts scientific probability, even upon the materialistic theory of mind. Moreover—and this is of cardinal importance—there is nothing about telepathy which has any bearing on the question of the survival of the dead. The possibility of communication between mind and mind, independently of the five senses, is something which might take place whether consciousness did or did not survive the death of the brain.

Sir Oliver, nevertheless, builds his belief in the survival of the dead upon telepathy, because he holds that the mind goes on existing after the brain has dissolved into dust. He refers contemptuously to people who have "an extraordinary doctrine" that "the brain is the mind." The psychologists who entertain such a doctrine have yet to be discovered; but Sir Oliver appears to be as convinced of their existence as he is of the "minds" of the departed. Modern psychology tends to the belief that the phenomena of mind are dependent upon the activity of living brain tissue. Sir Oliver, on the other hand, is quite sure that "mind and consciousness are not limited to the brain." When the brain is destroyed "your consciousness is still there, but it can no longer manifest itself, for it has lost its instrument of manifestation."

Having arrived at this point, one is naturally anxious to know how Sir Oliver has definite scientific proof of the existence of something which can no longer manifest itself. He has obtained this proof quite simply. The something which could no longer manifest itself *talked* to him.

* *The Reality of the Unseen.* An Address delivered in Browning Hall, Walworth, London, on November 22, 1914. Reproduced in the *Christian Commonwealth*, December 9, 1914.

FORM OF BEQUEST TO THE R. P. A.

READERS of the *Literary Guide* who are in sympathy with the objects of the Rationalist Press Association are invited to remember the organization when making their Wills. The progress of the Movement will never be commensurate with the importance of the work to be done until greater financial assistance is forthcoming. Appended is a form of bequest which may be useful to friends who are desirous of allocating a part of their estate to assist in the dissemination of rational views on religion and cognate subjects:—

"I GIVE to the Rationalist Press Association, Limited, whose registered office is situated at Nos. 5 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C., the sum of [here insert amount, adding "Free of Legacy Duty," if so desired], **to be applied to the general purposes of the said Association; and the receipt of the Secretary for the time being shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors for such legacy."**

On making a bequest to the Association, it is desirable that an intimation of the same should be forwarded to the Secretary; though, of course, this is optional.

Random Jottings.

LAST month we invited those of our readers who are in sympathy with Rationalism, and who are not already members of the R. P. A., to join that organization with the advent of the new year. We now repeat the invitation, and direct special attention to the Membership Application Form which accompanies this issue of our journal. We may also again mention that subscriptions (five shillings and upwards) date from January 1. Members can receive the *Literary Guide*, the *R. P. A. Annual*, and current books to the full value of their subscriptions, post paid at the published price; and, in addition, they are entitled to the free use of the Library, the books borrowed being retainable for a month or more. The War has seriously affected the income of all advanced causes, including that of the R. P. A., and there is urgent need for obtaining new members.

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The third and much enlarged edition of Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought*, the first volume consisting of 496 pages and the second of 540, is now completed and ready for publication; but it is not likely to be placed on the market till next April, and possibly not till September. Other R. P. A. works in the press include *Prose Selections from Shelley*, with Introduction by H. S. Salt; *Prolegomena to an Historical Enquiry into the Influence of Religion upon Moral Civilization*, by F. H. Perry-coste; *The Religious Revolution of To-day*, by Professor J. T. Shotwell; and *Myth and Legend in the Bible*, by Keighley Snowden. These will probably be despatched to members in the course of the coming Spring.

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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.).

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The Rev. Mr. Spurr, whose latest attack on Rationalism is dealt with by "R. S. P." in his "Wayside" notes on another page of our present issue, is a peculiarly distasteful Christian apologist. His primary object in life appears to be to impute vile motives as well as the teaching of gross immorality to his opponents. We wonder what his friends and companions think of him. We note that he boasts that he is a careful reader of these pages, and he must therefore be aware of the fact that, instead of the War presaging (as he says) the end of Rationalism, the increased circulation of this journal every month since August last demonstrates beyond controversy that the interest in our propaganda is more than maintained. What Mr. Spurr ought to have said is that, in view of the unspeakable and incomparable horrors of the European struggle, it will be impossible henceforth for any honest man to believe in an all-powerful, beneficent, and interfering Providence. That myth is exploded for all time.

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The first large edition of the *R. P. A. Annual* having been exhausted, it has been decided to issue a second edition, and copies will be ready almost immediately. Does the Rev. Mr. Spurr, who possesses such a vivid imagination when he wishes to beguile his followers, consider this evidence of the imminent passing of Rationalism?

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The subscriptions already received from Life Members of the R. P. A. total about £500, and, in accordance with the undertaking given by the Directors, they have for some time been ear-marked as a Reserve Fund. The money has now been invested in the recent Government War Loan, together with £500 from the donations to the Headquarters Fund.

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A contributor to these columns, who has been assisting the wounded at the Military Hospital at Limoges, sends us the following interesting account of some of his experiences:—

I suppose you would like some sort of word from me as to how things strike one after being eight weeks in France. One soon gets rid of a few illusions. I imagined in England that every Frenchman was a soldier, and every soldier was at the front. That illusion disappears at the moment of landing. There is no *conspicuous* lack of non-military men anywhere, and there are soldiers everywhere. In Limoges, which is the headquarters of the Twelfth Army Corps, the town seems to keep full of soldiers, although from time to time large bodies go off to the front—for instance, 30,000 went a week or two ago. And I have met men who were mobilized in August and have not got their uniforms yet. Of course, most of the soldiers here have not been to the front, but some have been and have come back for a rest. One military doctor in the town has twice been taken prisoner by the Germans—once he was left for dead on the field, and the other time he was rescued by the French. It seems to have left him quite lively. As for wounded, we have most sorts here—French, English, Belgians, Turcos, negroes, but no Indians and no Germans. There are plenty of Germans in the town, but not in our hospital. Wounded are much what one expects them to be, though perhaps one does not expect the amount of nervous collapse which they nearly all show. It is not only their experiences in the field which knock them out. The journey to the base must be terrible. Things have much improved since we first came, but it still takes three or four days to get men down from the front; and the journey is made in ordinary goods vans, so that the train has no continuous brake. They do their best by close buffering to make the thing as tolerable as possible, but the fact remains that the train is brought to stand by a series of collisions between the vans. For the first few days the wounded hardly speak at all. Usually after a few days' sleep they display the most astonishing bravery. I have seen a Frenchman stroll about the ward within half an hour after coming round from chloroform.

As for the rest, life in Limoges is very calm. There is never any excitement. People are quite tranquil and confident about the war. Food is abundant and cheap. All the shops are open, though I believe that some factories are closed down. I went over a porcelain factory the other day which seemed to be working as usual, but I was told that they had lost 800 out of about 1,600 workmen. Cafés and restaurants seem to be much what they are in time of peace. It was certainly different in Paris, where an English Sunday seemed to have descended on the town; but they tell me that by now even Paris has recovered something of its normal appearance.

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Mr. Harold Begbie is sojourning in New York as the special correspondent of the London *Daily Chronicle*, and one of his latest contributions to that journal is devoted to

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"Open Court" and the War.

By J. M. ROBERTSON.

I.

THE American periodical called *Open Court*, edited by Dr. Paul Carus, has long been known to Rationalists as a respectable organ of latitudinarian, quasi-rationalistic theism, not very scientific and not very clear-headed, but on the whole making for light by way of hierological research. Its management since the outbreak of the War, however, indicates the need for a change of name. The October number is wholly given up to a mass of special pleading and declamation on behalf of Germany, with not only no utterance on the other side, but no attempt to meet in a rational manner the known case of the other side. Owned by a German and edited by a German, the issue in question is a negation of everything that "open court" signifies to English-speaking people.

The number opens with a reprint of a Jingo article from the *Saturday Review*, dated 1897; and Dr. Carus argues that it represents "the English tendency that has led to the War through the policy of the anti-German party of England. ....*It is apparently inspired by the British Government*; and its tendency has gradually become the guiding principle of English policy."

The important thing to be noted here is not merely the categorical falsehoods of the last sentence; we are now well used to that from German partisans. It is the effect of his line of argument on Dr. Carus's own case. The article reprinted from the *Saturday Review* of 1897 is one of the many evil deeds of that mischievous journal. The assertion that it was "apparently inspired by the British Government" is one more exhibition of that signal incapacity for political judgment which has marked the whole mass of German polemic on international matters for the past twenty years. The article expressly states that the *Saturday* had in 1894 begun "to write against *the traditional pro-German policy of England*," and that early in 1896 one of its anti-German utterances passed for "an individual eccentricity." It was only after the gross indiscretion of the Kaiser's action in regard to the Jameson Raid, by the *Saturday's* own avowal, that its attitude found many English sympathizers. So far was Britain at that time from any leaning to an *entente* with France that the then most prominent English statesman, Mr. Chamberlain, soon deeply exasperated French feeling by his insolence; and the English politician who at the time most fiercely denounced the Kaiser's foolish message, Mr. John Burns, is one so devoid of anti-German feeling in general that he resigned from the Cabinet on its decision to make war at the beginning of August last.

Thus fundamentally false in his account of the old situation, Dr. Carus puts in our hands the instrument which once for all destroys his case. The article he quotes was not the only evil utterance of the *Saturday* in the period to which he refers. That journal was one of the regular channels of stupid malice in English politics.* But if the utterances of a Jingo journal in England in 1897 are to pass as proof that "England" then began and has since developed a propaganda for war with Germany, what, in the name of common honesty, is to be the inference from the maleficent mass of German propaganda which within the past few years has glorified war in general, and planned and predicted war with England in particular?

II.

The present writer, probably, will not be accused of having promoted anti-German feeling before the War, though he long ago pointed to the pernicious tendencies of German militarism. He did his utmost to collaborate with the better spirits who in Germany sought to counteract that spirit. He hoped to the last that the better spirit might prevail. But he is bound to testify that, whereas in England the condemnation of the Boer War was persisted in by a staunch body of justice-loving men and women, there is latterly nothing to show for any such spirit in Germany beyond the heroic protests of Liebknecht and the handful of Socialists who hold with him.† And here we have to remember that, whereas in Germany there was much loud denunciation of England's part in the Boer War, no German voice save Liebknecht's has a word of censure for the foul iniquity of the German attack on Belgium. The Boer War was bad enough, in the opinion of many of us; but it was at least waged on a quarrel; and the Boers were ill-advised enough to strike the first blow, knowing that England was preparing to strike. But the German invasion of Belgium not only proceeds upon no quarrel with Belgium: it is done in ruffianly repudiation of a national pledge to maintain her neutrality, and of assurances to that effect repeated up to the very eve of the War.

The articles of Dr. Carus, and those which he publishes, are thus the revelation of sheer incapacity for justice in international affairs. The curious thing about Dr. Carus is that in the case of the Boer War he had not even the modicum of fair-mindedness which—with the survivals of the anger set up by the English reception of the Kaiser's message to Kruger—moved so many Germans to denounce Britain in that case as an oppressor. The present writer met him while the war was in progress, and found that, with the normal political incompetence of his race, he could see nothing in the Boer case and nothing wrong in the British. He is simply a creature of gregarious sentiment, at the mercy of his emotional associations. When his pro-German prejudice was not affected, he sympathized uncritically with the English, with whom he had then no quarrel. Now,

* I quoted, in *Patriotism and Empire*, in 1899, the very article now reproduced by Dr. Carus, exhibiting it as a masterpiece of vicious folly.

† It is only fair to say that such protests at present incur in Germany grave risk to life.

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 of 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 of 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 floréal, 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 Bellarmin 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 of error in a book in which the number of 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 VIII 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 Shaftesbury'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 *Encyclopædia* 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 criticizing 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 of 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 conburendo*. 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 the year 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 not 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 of 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.

(To be concluded next month.)

Religion and the Labour Movement.

IN the *Hibbert Journal* Mr. George Haw writes on "The Religious Revival in the Labour Movement," contending that during recent years there has been a great change in labour sentiment, from an attitude of hostility to Christianity to one which accepts it, at least as a gospel of brotherhood in Christ and under God. His conclusions suggest the need of a propaganda, on the part of Freethinkers, of rationalist humanism. Among various articles which gravitate about the War as their chief *raison d'être*, "The Unity of Civilization," by Mr. F. S. Marvin, and "George Meredith and his Fighting Men," by Dr. James Moffatt, are worthy of note. Professor Herbert Strong gives an interesting study of "The Jews as Viewed through Roman Spectacles."

* I have just turned up the article on Press-laws in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and I see that there too the Bull of 1501 is taken as the starting-point of Papal censorship.

The Literary Guide

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German Atrocities and British Humanity.

BY JOSEPH McCABE.

THOSE who despairingly seek some lighter side of the great tragedy in which we are involved may be recommended to study some of the clerical pronouncements on the subject. In substance the clerical theme is identical. If Europe had been more faithful to its ecclesiastical traditions and more docile to its preachers, there would have been no war; and the best preventive of a recurrence is to resume the habit of going to church. As a round statement this is likely to impress many folk of an uncritical nature. It proceeds on the principle of suggestion, or advertisement. Impress a statement with sufficient frequency on the British mind, and it will take root there and blossom into a respectable conviction. But when the clergy come to work out their theory in detail and expose its foundations, the result is amusing. It reminds one of the shrewd American who received an imposing batch of leaflets and an appeal from a certain society in England. "Your cause," he replied, "is so good that I enclose a cheque, and advise you to burn all your literature."

A friend sends me a choice example of this clerical war-literature. It is issued by the "Hampstead Evangelical Free Church Council," and seems to have been rained from Zeppelins over the North of London. The Free Church ministers of the district have united—their signatures are reproduced in facsimile lest any may doubt that the ministers of conflicting denominations *can* unite—in pressing every person in their sphere of influence to go to church on a particular Sunday. "Will you let us state briefly to you what good may come of it?" they ask. Most decidedly: it is an issue on which light is urgently needed. People go to church in Germany and Austria much more zealously than they do in France, yet one wonders what good will come of it. Well, these clergymen say, it is not for *your* good that you are asked to come to church; it is for the good of the country. We are to "offer up to God a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for his goodness to us as a nation." That is assuredly a novel view of God's way of doing his business. Since the South African War we have spent a thousand million sterling in maintaining a defence against an enemy; and now in a year we shall have to spend about half a million at least in active defence of our land against a brutal aggression on the part of that enemy. Thousands of our families have lost or will lose sons, innocent civilians have been wantonly maimed or slain, and hundreds of thousands have been crippled in their trades and professions. And the Hampstead ministers ask us to come and, on our knees, thank God for "his goodness to us as a nation." If I went to church at all, it would be for the purpose of asking the Almighty why he put a criminal lunatic on the throne of Germany and put the destinies of Austria in the hands of a dotard.

But the audacity of the Hampstead ministers is surpassed by a prelate at the Antipodes, whose utterance, as reported in the Australian Press, just reaches me. To this distinguished Archbishop the situation is plain: *God sent the war* to punish this generation for its "infidelity"! Of all the monstrous things that bishop or priest ever uttered that seems to me one of the most revolting. It does not merely assume the old and abominable theory that the religious scepticism of our age is a deliberate rejection of truth, a revolt of passion against discipline (a theory which few educated clergymen care to support in our day); it implies a truculence and savagery on the part of the Almighty which remind us of the lower stages of religious development. We are congratulating ourselves on the reform of our criminology. We must not *punish*, though we may deter or reform, the criminal. And the Archbishop comes forward to tell us that a being whom he regards as the incarnation of love and justice and righteousness remains at the medieval level of criminology, and inflicts an immeasurably brutal chastisement on Europe for a supposed transgression. The Archbishop's God could, if he exists, silence scepticism to-morrow by some plain and benignant manifestation of his power; by bidding the stones of Louvain leap back into their places, or summoning from their graves the women and children who have been foully murdered. Yet the Archbishop would have us believe that the God of love chooses rather to steep Europe in blood and pain; to adopt a device which is not merely supremely vindictive, but will have the logical effect of making further tens of thousands join the ranks of the sceptics.

For we can have no illusion to-day about war in general, and this war in particular. A few years ago there were echoes in our midst of the miserable and pernicious sophistry of the German war-writers. War braced a nation; war begot chivalry; and so on. There is no need to refute these things. The man who thinks that such chivalry (and there has been much) as has been elicited by this war was worth the appalling experience which elicited it—worth the withered lives and the devastation of millions of homes—is not a man on whom I care to waste argument. War is a moral anachronism; this war is a sickening exhibition of the prostitution of one of the greatest and most promising nations in Europe.

Some of my friends seem to think that I write of it in a semi hysterical mood which has disturbed what they are good enough to call my scientific attitude. My reference last month to a particular outrage has brought me a shoal of protests, sometimes friendly and courteous. "O when and O where," sadly exclaims one young man, "will it all end when our stalwart comrade McCabe begins to talk such piffle?" I am duly flattered that the age should be measured by me, but for my part I am puzzled by the

Moral Education League has had, of course with extreme reluctance, to dispense with the services of Mr. F. J. Gould, who really was the founder of the organization and its principal asset. Whether or no the Executive has under all the circumstances acted wisely, to many it will appear that it has invited collapse by a suicidal step. We venture to suggest that a special meeting of the members of the League should be convened to consider the situation, and that those who cannot attend should be given the option of voting by proxy.

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Several correspondents have written us lately concerning Pastor Russell and his extraordinary predictions (so-called) concerning the end of the world. We are not in a position to give any information as to this gentleman's *bona fides*; but our contemporary, *Truth*, in its issue of January 20, professes to furnish a true account of his life and work, and the various statements are of so grave a character that they will no doubt be immediately challenged in our law courts.

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We cannot recall a more touching story of family sacrifice than that recorded by a soldier-mechanic attached to the aviation park of the French army, who received the following letter from his sisters:—

September 4, 1914.

Dear Edouard,—We have heard the news that Charles and Lucien died on August 28; Eugène has been seriously wounded, and as for Louis and Jean they also are dead. Rose has disappeared.

Mother weeps. She says you must be brave, and she wants you to avenge them. I hope your superiors will not prevent your doing so. Jean had received the Legion of Honour; you follow in his steps.

All have been taken from us. Of eleven who went to fight eight are dead. My dear brother, do your duty—that is all that is asked of you. God gave you life, and he has the right to take it back—that is what mother says. We embrace you with all our heart, though we should love to see you again before you go.

The Prussians are here. Jandon's son is dead; they have pillaged everything. I have returned from Gerbevilliers, which is destroyed—the cowards. Go, dear brother, sacrifice your life. We cherish the hope of seeing you again, for something like a presentiment bids us hope.

We embrace you with all our heart. Good-bye, and may we see you again if God allows it. YOUR SISTERS.

It is for us and for France. Remember your brothers and grandpapa in 1870.

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It was with much regret that we learned of the sudden death of Mr. Thomas Etheridge Harper on January 6 last. The name of Mr. Harper will probably be unknown to most of our readers, but he and Mr. Bradlaugh were young law clerks together, and in later life Mr. Harper was Mr. Bradlaugh's trusted friend and solicitor, serving him in the latter capacity in the blasphemy case of 1883 and in other law cases arising out of his Parliamentary struggle. After the death of Mr. Bradlaugh his daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, was frequently indebted to Mr. Harper for legal help and advice, which, without fee or reward, he was always ready to place at her disposal. In October last he wrote to Mrs. Bonner in reference to a case mentioned in her *Penalties upon Opinion* bearing upon the Bowman bequest to the Secular Society, Ltd., which was then in dispute. In replying, Mrs. Bonner enclosed a copy of the report of the proceedings of the deputation to the Prime Minister last spring to urge the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws; and, writing a few days later, Mr. Harper congratulated her "upon the logical and lucid way in which it appears to me you put the case."

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We also regret to hear of the death of Mr. John Settle, of Wigan, who had been a member of the R. P. A. for many years. His enthusiasm for the Freethought cause was considerable, and he lived comparatively penuriously in order that he might be able some day to assist it financially, even though in only a small way. We understand that the R. P. A. is residuary legatee under his will, which stipulates that four lectures must be delivered in Wigan during each of the ten years following his death. It was our privilege to know Mr. Settle, and we, in common with many others, gladly pay our tribute to his many excellent qualities, foremost among which were his transparent honesty and his devotion to high ideals. He was greatly respected in his native town.

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The New York *Truthseeker* has the following friendly note concerning the new edition of Mr. Thomas Whittaker's *The Origins of Christianity*: "This will rank as one of the most useful Rationalist works of the year. It is marked throughout by careful scholarship, and gives due attention to the contributions of modern investigators and critics to the entire subject. Besides the general treatment, the book contains an exhaustive discussion of the book of Acts, and of the so-called Pauline epistles to the Romans and Corinthians. While unhesitating in the rejection of the theory which deems the Bible an inspired or even accurate collection of writings, the author assumes no antagonistic position which he does not deem to be well fortified. For example, he concedes the probable genuineness of the passage in Tacitus relating to the Christians, which is regarded by most Rationalists as spurious, though he finds nothing in it helpful to the Christian cause."

Mr. Belloc on Anti-Catholic History.

BY PROFESSOR J. B. BURY, Litt.D., LL.D.

(Concluded from last month.)

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 of 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."* 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. Belloc's criticisms is the fact that their thought *was* limited by external authority; that the principle of Augustine, *maior est Scripturæ huius auctoritas quan omnis humani ingenii capacitas*, was in control throughout the medieval period; and that this constitutes a capital difference between its

* *History of Greece*, p. 834.

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 of 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 of 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.*, lxv, p. 701). All pagans and Jews, heretics and schismatics, will be similarly punished (p. 704). What about Pope Gregory the 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 *carentia 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 of 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 of 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 *majestas* "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 abysmal 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 of his importance. I showed, I think, quite sufficient respect for his reputation by singling him out from all the schoolmen 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 under-estimated 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 the 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 (*funestissime*) 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 civilization in the thirteenth and in the fifteenth century] was arrested at the beginning of a third period which might have been not less splendid."* 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.

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

Rationalism and Politics.

There is one aspect of the "literature" which the War has evoked in all the belligerent countries to which, I apprehend, insufficient attention has been directed (perhaps by reason of its very obviousness), but which, on reflection, suggests certain not uninteresting lines of thought to those who view with some scepticism the attempt to attain, or even the possibility of attaining, to "truth" in questions of politics. (I use the term "politics" in its largest sense to cover not only the study of the relations of the citizen and the State of which he is a member, but also that of the relations of the polities of different nations *inter se*.) The aspect I have in mind is the extraordinary unanimity of thought and sentiment which animates the productions of each of the opposed nations, England and Germany, and the sharpness of the line which demarcates the adherents or supporters of the two camps respectively. That party-politics should be brushed aside in an hour of national crisis is, perhaps, natural enough—many have long been weary of its futilities, and will have eagerly embraced any opportunity of respite from its bickerings. But it is a truly remarkable thing that the truce should have been extended—so far, I mean, as the crisis itself is concerned—to practically every department in which up to now controversy has reigned. The fact is clear, and needs no laboured proof; one or two instances will suffice to make my point plain.

Since the outbreak of the War I have been a diligent student of the *Literary Guide*, and I have been struck by the unusual harmony between the views expressed by its contributors and those of the nation at large. Up till then I had conceived Rationalists as a "sweet selected few," voices which, if not exactly crying in the wilderness, were, at any rate, the organ of opinions hardly, as yet, shared by the majority. But the War has changed all that. I find men like Mr. McCabe and Mr. Whittaker, Mr. F. J. Gould and Mr. J. M. Robertson, Professor Bury and Professor Gilbert Murray, all "shouting out the battle-cry of freedom" with the enthusiasm of the shrillest tongued Jingoes that ever sat on the Tory benches. And when I turn to Germany I find —exactly the same phenomenon. As our divines and Rationalists, our soldiers and politicians, have banded themselves into a kind of mutual admiration society, having for its object the prowess of Britain and her allies in the cause of freedom and justice against brute force, so, too, Harnack and Haeckel, Eucken and Wundt, Windelband and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, have agreed for once to sink their differences and blithely assist their pastors and masters in the task of crushing the independence of Belgium, and mouthing their abhorrence of England's traditional perfidy. Nor is this all: as we are beginning to discover and denounce the hollowness of German "culture" (was it not Mr. Bradley who declared that "where all is rotten it is a man's work to cry stinking fish"?), so, on their side, the Germans have suddenly realized that all that is valuable in English literature might easily be packed into "a book-case of moderate size," and that "all English knowledge and education, such as it is, is based on the work which German heads for centuries past have done for the blessing of the world."

Now, I confess that I cannot agree with either of these estimates, and I feel sure that the day will come when those who have made them will be the first to smile at their own extravagance. Meantime, one is driven to ask what validity can be possessed by opinions thus formed under the stress of an enthusiasm which hardly bears the evidence of being grounded on reason and insight. The very fact that all Britons are thinking one way and all Germans another seems to suggest that they must both be wrong. To be sure, I recognize that the opinions of the majority of Britons or Germans need, after all, trouble us very little. This is not the first time (and I fear me it will not be the last) that whole nations have sheepishly followed their leaders. But the views of such men as I have in mind cannot be dismissed so lightly. They are, for the most part, men whose judgment and acumen we have all learnt to respect—men of eminence in the world of ideas, men of trained critical faculty, accustomed to weigh evidence and to decide on important issues. Yet we find them all agreed that A is B (if they are Britons), or that A is not B (if they are Germans). And it seems tolerably clear (since,