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22, HYDE PARK GATE,

London

S.W.

14 June 92

Dear Sir,

I was much pleased to hear from you. [I hope that your health is reestablished.] I am much stronger than I was, although some family troubles have interfered with my literary work. I have, however, got rid of the 'Biographical Dictionary' which was slowly killing me, and have made a beginning of the book upon English Whittierism in which you kindly expressed an interest. [I fear that it may take me a long time; there are so many points of biographical & political interest to be examined, which come more or less into my plan. However I am getting to work; and if I



have health, shall hope to finish it in
time.] I have also been trying to put
together some essays wh. I have published
at different times - The general purport of
them is implied by the title of the first
'An Agnostic's apology'. I mention this
because I was interested by finding
in your pamphlet upon German
Education, a statement of some principles
which I have tried to defend. The com-
cidence of opinion was gratifying to
me, especially in regard to the relation
between ethics and theology. - I am
a good deal struck by one peculiarity
in our English state of mind just
now upon certain matters. - Our clergy
are ignorant enough & we have plenty

Wm. B. E. S. S.

of clericalism of the Catholic & other kinds. But it seems that even
the high church party have found out (at last!) that Balcanis and
and Trench's whole must be given up. The professor of divinity
at Oxford, although a conservative, has just published a treatise
in wh. he accepts all the results of modern criticism as to the
composition of the Old Testament. This is by no means a solitary
case. In fact the high churchmen seem to be inclined to try
whether they cannot give up the bible to the critics, with the
intention of course of laying more stress upon the authority of
the Church. It is a dangerous game to play; but it seems to

show that some perception of obvious facts is more & less penetrating
the minds even of the most backward party. It makes me
often wonder what people do really believe. To infer ^{infer} ^(so consistent) ~~mean's~~
genuine beliefs from his solemn professions of belief seems to
be the hardest of problems. It seems as though the churches could go
one pretty well, while admitting their plain doctrines are ^{nowhere} ~~nowhere~~
& their history false. There was a time, according to Aristotle,

but when the premises were out the men would die; but his
^{maxim} ~~maxim~~ does not seem to apply to creeds - ^(argumentative inquiries) ~~may for a time~~

I must however, spare you further disquisition. I thank you
very much for your pamphlet and am

Yours very truly Leslie Stephen

MS. A. 9. 2. 11. 1