

## THE GIFFORD LECTURESHIPS.

BY PROF. R. M. WENLEY.

THE recent appointments of Prof. William James by the University of Edinburgh, and of Prof. Josiah Royce by the University of Aberdeen, to the Gifford lectureships, have called the attention of many Americans to this foundation. It is so remarkable in itself as to merit notice in such a magazine as *The Open Court*; and some account of the deed of gift, of the incumbents, and of the results achieved may not be unwelcome from one who has had the privilege of listening to seven of the distinguished lecturers.

More than ten years ago Scotland was startled by the intelligence that Lord Gifford, one of the judges of the Supreme Court, had by will left \$400,000, to be divided among the four universities, for the purpose of founding lectureships on what he designated Natural Theology. Before passing to consider this sign of the times, its results, and the personality of the donor, it may be well to determine the precise nature of Adam Gifford's wishes by reference to the testamentary deed—which is in itself a sufficiently striking document:

"I having been for many years deeply and firmly convinced that the true knowledge of God, that is, of the being, nature, and attributes, of the Infinite, of the All, of the First and Only Cause, that is, the One and Only Substance and Being, and of the true and felt knowledge (not merely nominal knowledge) of the relations of man and the universe to Him, and of the true foundations of all ethics or morals, being, I say, convinced that this knowledge, when really felt and acted upon, is the means of man's highest wellbeing, I have resolved to institute and found lectureships or classes for the promotion of the study of said subjects among the whole people of Scotland. . . . The lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath, or to emit or subscribe any declaration of belief, or to make any promise of any kind; they may be of any denomination whatever, or of no denomination at all (and many earnest and high-minded men prefer to belong to no ecclesiastical denomination); they may be of

any religion, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called sceptics, or agnostics or free-thinkers, provided only that the "patrons" will use diligence to secure that they be able, reverent men, sincere lovers of and earnest inquirers after truth.

"I wish the lecturers to treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science, that of Infinite Being, without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special exceptional or so called miraculous revelation. I wish it considered just as astronomy or chem-



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istry is. I have intentionally indicated, in describing the subject of the lectures the general aspect which personally I should expect the lecturers to bear, but the lecturers shall be under no restraint whatever in their treatment of their theme; for example, they may freely discuss (and it may be well to do so) all questions about man's conceptions of God or the Infinite, their origin, nature, and truth, whether he can have any such conceptions, whether God is under any or what limitations, and so on, as I am persuaded that nothing but good can result from free discussion. . . . My desire and hope is that these lectureships may promote and ad-

vance among all classes of the community the true knowledge of Him Who Is, and there is none and nothing beside Him, in Whom we live and move and have our being, and in Whom all things consist, and of man's real relationship to Him Whom truly to know is life everlasting."

From the document just quoted, it is sufficiently evident that Gifford was a noteworthy man. At a time when many of his compatriots still stood hedged in by an obscuring ecclesiasticism, he was freely and fearlessly revolving the highest problems and arriving at conclusions which none but the most tolerant, open-minded, and strenuous, could be expected to adopt. We know from his friends—he is without biographer—that he delighted to escape from the exacting routine of a large legal practice in order to be free to live alone in peaceful communion with his beloved books. And from the same source we can glean partial and fragmentary information about the authors and studies that went to the moulding of his intellectual career. For, like so many Scots, he seems to have been impelled by mastering intellectuality, which was called forth into active exercise by the profoundest questions respecting the origin, nature, and final cause of human life. These predilections led him into many fields of literature, and he read omnivorously. But amid all his literary and philosophical acquaintances two swayed him, not exclusively, but with a subtle spell of which the others did not possess the secret. Devotion to Plato, saturation in Spinoza, tell a plain tale regarding his speculative tendencies; and this becomes even clearer when one calls to mind that Spinoza figured as his most constant companion. Indeed, what the Romantics said of Spinoza might be applied with equal fitness to this, his late Scottish disciple—he was a God-intoxicated man. Little wonder, then, that he slowly, but with certainty, arrived at monistic conclusions, and became firmly convinced that God is the one reality, this universe but the sphere of divine self-expression. Very naturally, too, he came to drift far from the dogmatic faith wherewith he had been early indoctrinated. We are unaware that he ever formulated his results and the reasons of his dissent. But we do know that he lost faith entirely in what is called the "supernatural," and rejected the miraculous element in the Bible. It may therefore be inferred that the liberal conditions of his bequest, like the subjects he prescribed for study and investigation, were dictated by his own dearest interests, as well as by an earnest desire that, in the coming time, others might find opportunity to enjoy benefits that he had longed to share.

In one respect the bequest had peculiar opportuneness. In

Scotland, all the chairs devoted to the study of religion and matters theological were, and still are, upon a confessional basis. In other departments of knowledge the four universities are free to select the best specialists available, and, on the whole, they make the most of their liberty. But in the cases of the Biblical languages; of theology—philosophical, systematic; of apologetics; of New and Old Testament criticism; of the History of the Church, of Dogma and of Religion, the professorships are open only to clergy who have pledged themselves to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Nor is this all. The situation finds further aggravation in the fact that the dissenting communions maintain theological colleges of their own, with the result that the university chairs are practically confined to ministers of the Established Church, the vast majority of whom possess slight expert acquaintance with the subjects mentioned. The Gifford bequest thus seemed destined to fill a gap at once in the matter of study and in the manner of presentation. How far it has contributed to this result we shall see later.

Lord Gifford showed further wisdom in the provisions he laid down for patronage. He might easily have entrusted this to a small body, composed largely of laymen—the kind of body which is more than likely, when elections come to be made, to lie under the influence of one or two partisans, or academico-political wire-pullers. Whether he foresaw this or not—and he must have had plenty of evidence before him—he wisely avoided the danger by remitting elections to the senates of the universities. That is to say, every professor on the teaching staff has an equal voice in determining who the incumbent shall be. While this may conceivably result in occasional trials of strength between the “humanists” and the “scientists,” it is practically certain to issue in elections which are reputable, if no more. And to their credit, be it said, the senates have to this point used their privilege with emphatic freedom from presuppositions, with an eye to the representation of divergent schools of thought, and with a catholicity of choice which guarantees that men of widely varied interests shall have opportunity to express their ideas. Moreover, no special favor has been extended to Scotchmen; indeed France is the one great contributor to the Science of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion (which have now driven antiquated Natural Theology from the field) whose resources have not been tapped. As witness of catholicity, take the present incumbents. At St. Andrews, Wellhausen, of Marburg, the Old Testament scholar; at Glasgow, Fos-



ter, of Cambridge, the physiologist; at Aberdeen, Royce, of Harvard, the idealist philosopher; at Edinburgh, James, of Harvard, the psychologist. A similar breadth of sentiment and of selection had marked the appointments since their commencement, in 1888. The list may be of interest; for the majority of the discourses are available in published form.

Taking the universities in the order of seniority, we first come to St. Andrews. Here the lectureship was initiated by Andrew Lang, who, though his reputation is chiefly that of a critic and litterateur, had given hostages to fortune in the shape of his well-known works, *Custom and Myth*, and *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*. His lectures have never been published as such. But it is understood that the materials employed have been worked over in his recent book, *The Making of Religion* (Longmans, 1898). Mr. Lang was succeeded by the greatest of living British philosophical teachers, in the person of Dr. Edward Caird, then professor of philosophy in the University of Glasgow, now master of Balliol College, Oxford. Dr. Caird's prelections immediately saw the light; and *The Evolution of Religion* has taken its place, not merely as one of the most important of the Gifford series, but as the leading work in English embodying the neo-Hegelian view of the development of religion (The Macmillan Co., 1893). After an interval, during which the lectureship was unfilled, Dr. Lewis Campbell, best known as the editor of *Plato* and biographer of Jowett, followed Dr. Caird. His lectures naturally dealt with his chosen field—the civilisation and literature of Greece, and are now announced for publication under the title, *Religion in Greek Literature*. The present incumbent, as has been said, is Professor Wellhausen, of Marburg. Different interests—anthropology, philosophy, classical literature, and Hebrew literature—have thus been represented at St. Andrews; the single criticism that could be offered by the carper is that three Oxford men, whose traditions had exposed them to similar moulding forces, have occupied the foundation.

Glasgow placed Max Müller at the head of her roll, and did him the honor, thus far extended to no other lecturer, of appointing him for a second term. His lectures, thoroughly characteristic of his life-work, appeared regularly at yearly intervals from 1889 (Longmans & Co.). When Professor Müller's term of office expired, this university had a successor ready to hand in the person of her distinguished head, John Caird, the most eloquent of Scottish divines, and the venerated leader of the liberal party in theological thought. He had already been approached by the Univer-

sity of Edinburgh, but preferred to accept the invitation of his *alma mater*. His painful, and as it was to prove final, illness, struck him down while he was in the midst of his second course; his lectures are now being edited by his brother and fellow-Hegelian, Dr. Edward Caird. True to its tradition as the headquarters of British Hegelianism, this university next invited Prof. William Wallace, the translator and elucidator of Hegel, biographer of Schopenhauer, and leader of Oxford Hegelianism. I listened to his lectures, which were amongst the most remarkable displays of wit and learning that I ever witnessed. He spoke for the greater part without even notes, and the effect was almost weird, as the late Henry Drummond said to me. Professor Wallace's lamentable death, by a bicycle accident, followed soon after his term of office ended, and it is a thousand pities that little remains in a condition for publication. These prelections having represented what might be called the left-wing tendency of contemporary British thought, it was but fair that, on the succeeding occasion, the more orthodox party should have its opportunity. This was recognised by the appointment of Prof. A. B. Bruce, who is best known to Americans as the editor of the Theological Translation Fund Library, and to Scotsmen as the most inspiring of teachers to be found in the theological colleges of the dissenting denominations. His first course of lectures was published a year ago under the title *The Providential Order of the World* (Scribner's). The scientific men, who had not hitherto been recognised at Glasgow, have their protagonist in the new incumbent, Professor Foster, of Cambridge. Science of Religion in the strict sense; Philosophy of Religion from the standpoint of a right-wing Hegelian theologian and from that of a Hegelian metaphysician; and Natural Theology according to a convinced supernaturalist, have thus been heard in this university. It remains to be seen what the scientific investigator, in the strict sense, will provide.

Like Glasgow, Aberdeen began with a man whose reputation had long been securely settled. Dr. E. B. Tylor, of Oxford, the leading British authority on early civilisation, and the earliest investigator to recognise the importance of animism in the early stages of religious growth, received the initial appointment. Dr. Tylor's lectures have not been published. He was followed by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, the most celebrated divine and liberal theologian of the Congregational communion. Although Dr. Fairbairn had long been known for his strictly theological writings, it was an open secret that he had

never abandoned those studies in the Philosophy of Religion which were foreshadowed in his first, and now scarce-book, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History* (1877). Among the English divines no wiser selection could have been made. Dr. Fairbairn's lectures have not seen the light as yet; but doubtless he is retaining the material for use in his promised book on "Comparative Religion" in that successful series, the International Theological Library (Scribner's); and his present visit to India will give him new opportunities for investigation and collection of information. Dr. Fairbairn was followed by Dr. James Ward, the most eminent of British psychologists. The Cambridge thinker has never been a prolific writer, and his lectures are still unprinted. Professor Royce, whose *Religious Aspect of Philosophy* gives more promise than some of his more recent writings, is just now entering upon the office for 1899. Aberdeen can claim the same catholicity of selection as her sisters. Anthropology; speculative theology; philosophy in the modern British line; and American neo-Hegelianism, have each received recognition.

The youngest, and largest, of the universities still remains. Perhaps to make amends for absence of academic recognition on her part, Edinburgh chose to begin with her world-famous local philosopher, Dr. J. Hutchinson Stirling, the man who first introduced Hegel to the English-speaking peoples in his characteristic book, *The Secret of Hegel*, known to and appreciated at its full value by Emerson and Carlyle. The veteran took up his task with typical zeal, and soon after his incumbency published that curious, stimulating, but often crabbed book, *Philosophy and Theology* (Scribner's). The influential scientific wing at this university after having invited Lord Kelvin and Helmholtz, without success, secured representation at the vacancy by the election of the eminent Cambridge physicist, Sir G. G. Stokes, president of the Royal Society. From the point of view of the plain man, Stokes's lectures are among the most satisfactory yet given; but they sadly lack information on phases of the subject later than Paley; and one "impertinent" (or pertinent) critic has had the audacity to describe them as "without form and void." They are published in two small volumes under the title, *Natural Theology* (A. & C. Black). Sir George Stokes left the vacant chair to the incumbent, whose lectures—strangely enough as some think,—caused more discussion and ill-will than any yet delivered. Such turned out to be the good or evil fortune of Prof. Otto Pfliegerer, the eminent speculative theologian of Berlin. His lectures were immediately

printed with the title *Philosophy and Development of Religion* (Scribner's). They contain an admirably clear summary of views he had propounded years before in his *Urchristenthum* and *Religionsphilosophie*. Familiar as they must have been to all experts, they had not then reached the mass of the "nation of sermon-tasters," hence the pother. Determined to err on the safe side on the next occasion, Edinburgh called back to service her eminent emeritus professor of metaphysics, Alexander Campbell Fraser, the editor of Berkeley and Locke, and the surviving representative of Berkeleyan tendencies among British thinkers. His lectures derived power from his great age, and the pathos with which an old man views the profound questions of religion pervades them through and through. They have received publication in two volumes (Scribner's), and, as they happen to give expression to those conservative views that have recently won a large party in Britain and the United States, they have been received with distinguished favor (Scribner's). Like the prelections of Sir George Stokes, they follow more or less closely the lines of the old Natural Theology, though with a philosophical insight and sense of proportion to which the physicist could not pretend. Professor Fraser found a successor in the one professed master of the Science of Religion who has held the appointment to this date—Professor Tiele, of Leyden. With the exception of Dr. E. Caird's lectures, his first volume has generally been regarded as the most important contribution yet made from the foundation. The complete work, under the title *Elements of the Science of Religion*, will extend to two volumes, of which the first, *Morphology of Religion*, has recently been given to the public (Scribner's). The second part, *Ontology of Religion*, is awaited with keen expectation. Prof. William James, of Harvard, is now just about to enter upon his incumbency; and if, as is reported, he intends to devote attention to the psychology of the founders of religions, one may predict an intellectual and literary feast for the auditors, and later for the readers. For Professor James is the psychologist who writes like a novelist, and own brother to the novelist who writes like a psychologist. Edinburgh has not failed in her dispensation of the trust. Metaphysics of the Hegelian and British schools; physical science, represented by a great leader who never lost his faith; speculative theology set forth by its most winning living exponent; the Science of Religion voiced by a Saul amongst its prophets; and the "new psychology," witnessed to by its witliest and most suggestive master, have passed to the rostrum in turn.



In conclusion, what are we to say of the results so far achieved? We may begin by looking at the less favorable aspect of the matter.

As was to be anticipated, neither the foundation itself, nor the lecturers appointed, nor the lines pursued by the incumbents, have escaped attack. At the first blush, the average man scouted Gifford's will as the testament of a crank. What need could there be to institute lectures in connexion with religion, when three or four competing churches existed in every village of the land? Why give such prominence to "unsettling" discussions, and especially, why remove all safe-guards? When the terms of the bequest were announced, one heard these and similar questions constantly. Now they are no longer asked; the "sensation" has passed, and the average man is busy over another occurrence of the hour, one probably more suited to his capacity, or less removed from the field of his *bourgeois* vision. Yet again, when the machinery came to prove itself in the ordinary course of work, the centre of criticism shifted. The *personnel* and the subject matter of the prelections at once fell under review, as was to be expected in a country where university matters attract widespread attention and offer fertile suggestion to the busybody and the "letter-to-the-editor" bore. Curiously enough, the *personnel* has received unfavorable comment from the free-thinker so called; while, less curiously, the orthodox—though not the "unco' guid," as the Scotch Pharisee is called—have entered their protest against the freedom used by some lecturers. In the former case, it has been objected, for instance, that ministers of the churches *ought* not to be appointed. In other words, the patrons have been accused of unfaithfulness to their trust in electing men like Principals Caird and Fairbairn, or Professors Campbell and Bruce. This criticism has raged chiefly round the appointment of the last—in some ways, it seems to me, an excellent testimonial for him. It implies that Dr. Bruce had something to say from his standpoint that might be weighty. The contention of these critics has been that one whose signature stood below the Westminster Confession had thereby unfitted himself for exercising that impartiality for which Lord Gifford was so solicitous. It must be obvious, of course, that this objection holds with reference to Christianity alone. The signatory of the Confession retains perfect liberty to treat precisely as he chooses all matters that fall without the dogmas of the Church. In short, he is as competent as his neighbor to discuss "natural theology" in the old sense of the term, and, be it said, he is almost certain to turn out better informed. Besides, Gifford himself had decreed, "they

may be of any religion, or of none." This criticism has proceeded mainly from the "letter-to-the-editor" bore, and may be dismissed as not worth the ink spilt upon it. Closely connected with it, however, is another objection that seems to be better based. Under the wisely liberal administration of the late Principal Caird, the chapel of the University of Glasgow had become a unique institution. From Sunday to Sunday during the academic year, the pulpit was in the occupancy of distinguished men belonging to all denominations. When the principal himself received election it was but natural that, in order to reach as large an audience as possible (it often ran to several thousands) the lectures should be incorporated with the regular Sunday service. And when the Rev. Professor Bruce followed, it was equally natural that the custom should be retained. As the Scottish universities are Presbyterian, the service was substantially that of the Church of Scotland. Hence, Roman Catholics, Freethinkers, Anglicans, Unitarians, and others objected that it was no part of the founder's intention that, in order to hear a lecture, auditors should have to submit to an alien religious service. On the whole, this objection has some reason; although the critics apparently forgot the peculiar circumstances, which must cease on the appointment of another layman, and the equally prominent fact that but a very small percentage of the hearers could have been outside Presbyterianism, Scotland being, with the exception of Sweden, the most unanimous country in the world in this matter.

While these criticisms, being on the surface, did not excite much attention, others, proceeding from traditional quarters, and directed to the subject matter of the lectures, caused commotion from time to time. The learned professor of theology at Glasgow indulged in a tilt with Prof. Max Müller, in which the theologian had all the best of the linguist. Much adverse comment was passed upon the "flippancy" of Professor Wallace's lectures, and the same thing happened at St. Andrews in one or two cases. But the real fight did not come till Professor Pfeiderer's occupancy of the Edinburgh lectureship. Though the opinions of the great Berlin theologian had long been known to students in Scotland, they had not reached the mass of the public till he found this occasion to present them. They caused much heart-searching, and prominent theologians of the three chief Presbyterian communions delivered public replies, which were afterwards printed in book form. For the Church of Scotland, Professor Charteris, the occupant of the chair of New Testament criticism in the University of Edin-

burgh, was the spokesman. For the Free Church, Principal Rainy, of New College, Edinburgh, and Prof. Marcus Dods, of the New Testament chair in the same institution ; for the United Presbyterian Church, Prof. James Orr, of the Church History chair in the Theological College. The purport of their joint volume is indicated by its title, *The Supernatural in Christianity*, and by the titles of the three lectures it contains:—Principal Rainy on the “Issues at Stake ;” Professor Orr on “Can Professor Pfleiderer’s View Justify Itself ?” and Professor Dods on “The Trustworthiness of the Gospels.” Professor Charteris, who was prevented by illness from lecturing, affixed a preliminary statement, which well exhibits the general tenor of the argument. After admitting that Pfleiderer’s conclusions are not new, and after paying a tribute of respect to the lecturer’s ability, he continues : “There seems to many of us to be a call to say, at the earliest possible moment, with all possible personal respect for the lecturer, that we object to many things clearly stated in those Gifford lectures. Perhaps I may be allowed to speak for myself, and say that I object to the lecturer’s presupposition that the Incarnation is to be disbelieved because it is not, according to his conception of history, founded on our experience. Further, I object to his assumption that all the more marvellous incidents in the Gospel history of Jesus Christ are of later invention than the others. I object to his extraordinary assertion that St. Paul believed in a merely spiritual resurrection of Jesus Christ. I object to his almost as extraordinary assertion in regard to Baur’s view of the Fourth Gospel, that ‘all further investigations have always only contributed anew to confirm it in the main.’ . . . Objection may well be taken to the lecturer’s attempt to borrow all the ethics of the Christian revelation, and to appropriate all its highest hopes, and to make them parts of a speculative system which I know not whether to call Deism or Pantheism, which seems to deny any revelation except what may be found in gathering the lessons of history and science. . . . Therefore, I, for one, am glad that some men have come forward to protest, in the name of the Christian Church in Scotland, against this attack upon their faith. . . . *I hope steps may be taken by the Senatus to prevent any future lecturer on Natural Theology from making an attack on the records of the Christian faith.*” The words I have italicised contain the secret of the difficulties to which the lecturers are exposed. Of course any Senate which took such steps would be directly traversing Lord Gifford’s most explicit injunctions. But the question still remains, What is Natural Theology? Professor Charteris evi-

dently clings to the old—and now abandoned—view, that Natural Theology deals with all questions of religion which can be treated apart from revelation; and that *there are other problems which consort only with special revelation*. Every authority on the History of Religion now teaches that all religion is one revelation; or, if you choose to put it in another way, that there is no peculiar revelation. The distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion is held to be a false abstraction; and so the records of the Christian faith cannot claim exemption any more than the Avesta, or the Qu'uran, or the Jewish Prophets, or the Book of Mormon. The central point of interest is that Lord Gifford endowed Natural Theology just at the moment when it had ceased to exist, or had died of inanition, and when its subject matter had been parcelled out to its successors—Science, and especially Philosophy, of Religion. At the same time it may very well be conceded to the critics that lecturers would be well advised to confine their attention to other matters for a time. Biblical criticism has not done its work yet; we are only on the threshold of a competent grasp of the history of dogma; and till these sources are fully exploited it is impossible to reinterpret Christianity in that positive spirit which is the major demand of our age. If Philosophy of Religion and Science of Religion are to be barred from consideration of Christianity, it is a bad day for the maintenance of our religion. But the time has hardly come as yet for the new interpretation. We do not understand the position which we now occupy. But the Gifford lecturers, and their critics, are doing an indispensable work in calling attention to the widely altered and still rapidly changing conditions of the entire problem. Every question presents two sides; and Pfeiderer and his critics happen to be alike right and alike wrong. Time alone can overtake the requisite synthesis. I do not think it is so true of any age as of our own, that special pleaders on opposite sides have had the misfortune to be born too soon.<sup>1</sup>

One criticism I might be permitted to pass on my own responsibility. It is unfortunate, I think, that the terms of the bequest forbid any permanent appointment, and that an appointment for two years is rapidly coming to be of use and wont. In these circumstances it is inevitable that election should be made of distinguished men who, immersed in other specialties, have not had either the time or the unbidden inclination to devote the necessary

<sup>1</sup>What I mean happens to be aptly illustrated by three articles in *The New World*, September, 1898; Professor Pfeiderer reasserts his position; Mr. Denison very cleverly upholds Professor Pfeiderer's critics; while Prof. Henry Jones gives some hint of the clue that we seek for discovery of the larger synthesis.



preliminary years to investigation of religious phenomena. Thus there happens to be more than a danger that the lectures should become interesting rather than authoritative. Physicists, physiologists, even psychologists and philosophers *von Fach*, have more than enough to occupy them in their own field. Thus when they are led to accept Gifford lectureships they are apt to make special preparation under pressure, with the not unexpected consequence that they evince lack of broad knowledge, a deficiency which results from imperfect handling of evidence that may be quite familiar to those who have devoted their life-study to religion. Stimulation may be the consequence; but another unavoidable issue lies in the vulnerable points which are exposed to attack, and successful attack, by learned men who are obscurantists by nature or by the force of circumstances. This, it seems to me, is the weakest point in the Gifford machinery. If four experts could be placed in a position to devote their entire time and energy to "Natural Theology," I feel sure that the results would be more commensurate with the greatness of the opportunity which Lord Gifford created. And this view is gaining ground rapidly in Scotland.

However this personal opinion may be, the mere fact that the lectureships exist is cause for rejoicing. For they afford occasion for the free ventilation of subjects that many have come to consider too odoriferous for common converse. They restore dignity to a department of learning that has too long been, in many eyes, the happy hunting ground of "theologues," as the contemptuous word stands. And they afford the most eminent thinkers of the time a point of vantage from which they may, without false sentiment, and without false pride, unburden themselves on subjects which, after all has been said, have no peers in fundamental importance.