

CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Funeral and Mourning Reform Association.

Office: 16, KING STREET, CHEAPSIDE, E.C.

DEAR

Mr W. Dawson

On behalf of the Council of the above-named Society, I beg leave to submit that the prevalent mode of disposing of the dead, by burial in imperishable coffins of lead in vaults, or in almost equally imperishable coffins of wood, often several in the same grave, is contrary to sound science, and prejudicial to the public health; whereas the mode unmistakably indicated in the Burial Service by the Rubrics, "while the *corpse* is made ready to be laid into the *earth*," and "while the *earth* shall be cast upon the *body*," is in accordance with sound science, and avoids sanitary evils.

You are, therefore, earnestly requested, as a member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, to aid the Society, in every way you can, in its efforts to encourage burial in readily-perishable coffins in the plain earth.

Your name in favour of the movement, and any contribution you may be willing to send toward the cost of the propaganda, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by MAJOR E. F. COATES, Ewell, Surrey, Hon. Treasurer; MR. W. H. MARTIN, Solicitor, 16, King Street, E.C., Assistant Hon. Secretary; or by myself.

I shall be very glad to send the publications of the Society if you desire it.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

Mr W. Dawson

F. LAWRENCE,

Hon. Secretary.

Address until Thursday—RECEPTION ROOM, BIRMINGHAM; afterwards—
WESTOW VICARAGE, YORK.

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Sous
Sept 1886

Church of England FUNERAL & MOURNING REFORM ASSOCIATION.

Presidents :

His Grace the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
His Grace the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Objects.

1. To promote a fuller appreciation of the idea of Christian Burial.
2. To simplify and cheapen Funeral and Mourning Ceremonial.
3. To encourage burial in perishable coffins in the simple earth.

Basis.

The Order for the Burial of the Dead.

“Who hath taught us, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in Him.”

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The Association is wholly unconnected with any party either in Church or State, and aims at including "all who profess and call themselves Christians," in all parts of the British Empire and wherever the English language is spoken, in the effort to reform the prevalent funeral and mourning ceremonial, and this it proposes to accomplish (1) by giving prominence to the Christian principles of Faith, Hope and Love, which are distinctly enunciated in the "Order for the Burial of the Dead," and (2) by reviving as far as is practicable, the usage of timely and proper burial in the earth as suggested by the words "earth to earth" in the same Burial Service.

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All who are willing to join the Association or to act as Local Hon. Secretaries, are requested to write to the Hon. Secretary, at the Office, 16, King Street, Cheapside, E.C., or at Westow Vicarage, York. Subscribers of 5s. and upwards, annually, receive copies of the Society's publications for gratuitous distribution.

In pursuance of a resolution passed by the Council, the following statement has been drawn up for publication by the Right Rev. the BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL, and a Sub-Committee acting with him for that purpose.

The Association has been founded to counteract the evils which have grown round the customary mode of interment. Those evils, it is believed, have mainly arisen from a natural and laudable desire to pay honour to the departed; but the manner in which that desire has been commonly manifested not only involves an expenditure wholly out of proportion to its object, but in many cases beyond the means of the surviving relatives. It is a matter of every day experience that when the head of a family has passed away, the widow and children are found soon after in a state of destitution, though a large sum has been received from clubs or private benevolence, most of which has been spent on an ostentatious funeral and mourning. The association therefore strongly urges the following specific reforms:—

1. The exercise of economy and simplicity in everything appertaining to the funeral.
2. The use of plain hearses or wheeled biers.
3. The disuse of crape, scarves, feathers, velvet trappings, and the like.
4. The avoiding of excessive floral decoration.
5. The discouraging, on the occasion of the funeral, as far as possible, of all eating and drinking beyond that of every-day life.
6. The meeting in the Church or Cemetery instead of at the house of mourning.
7. The dispelling of the idea that all the Club money must be spent on the funeral.
8. The interment of the body as early as possible in soil sufficient and suitable.
9. The use of such materials for the coffin as will rapidly decay after burial. N.B.—This method is in accordance with the laws of nature, and avoids sanitary evils, while the practice of burying in almost imperishable coffins is fraught with danger to the public health.
10. The disuse of vaults or bricked graves.
11. The encouragement, on sanitary grounds, of the removal, in crowded districts, of the body to a mortuary, instead of retaining it in rooms occupied by the living.
12. Shewing forth Christian fellowship in deeds as well as words at the burial of the pauper as of the prince.

The Council are happy to state that the above principles are already being acted upon by many in high social position; and earnestly appeal to the wealthier classes, whose example has so powerful an influence, to give practical effect to them; and, in order to render this easier to their surviving relatives or executors, to leave clear and strict injunctions that the utmost simplicity and economy be observed in their funerals.