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Sex Morality Changed (official)

When the establishment turns at last, the first signs appear in the correspondence columns of *The Times*. Sensible people have been pointing out for years that a sexual morality (and corresponding law) that evolved in the days before scientific contraception must now need re-examining. The inert Establishment, always very slow to answer the helm, has at last begun to do so in the person of Canon G. B. Bentley, who writes from 8 The Cloisters, Windsor Castle (an address irresistibly reminiscent of Hilaire Belloc).

In *The Times* of 17th June, Canon Bentley gives utterance as one upon whom a great light has dawned. (The fact that the light dawned upon most readers of *The Freethinker* some decades ago should not blind us to the significance of this particular revelation.) Christian moralists, writes the Canon, find themselves in a quandary. The old Christian rationale of sexual morality was based on the structure and the biological function of the sexual act. As a seed-sowing operation that act needed to be confined within marriage, which alone was capable of providing the due environment for the birth and nurture of children.

Along comes contraception. The Canon announces its consequences to the bemused readership of the Top People's paper:

"... the link between sexual activity and seed-sowing having been ruptured, there no longer appears to be any cogent reason for limiting such activity to copulation - 'the natural act', as it used to be called."

So the Canon will take his ruptured link (and invites *Times* readers to take theirs) to extremes, however unnatural. The degree of "kinkiness" now permissible is, he solemnly tells his neighbours in Windsor Castle (along with everyone else), simply a matter for mutual agreement. Canon Bentley concludes with a criticism of Christian groups who "foolhardily" present reports on homosexuality while the grounds of heterosexual morality remain imperfectly understood. What, he asks, could be more absurd? Apparently homosexuals should wait to have their problems sorted out until those of heterosexuals are settled. (They will wait a long time, but are used to that.) *The Times* placed the Canon's pronouncement in the top left-hand corner reserved for the Letter of the Day. A numbed readership was slow to respond. No protracted correspondence developed, but that does not mean the word from the Cloisters of Windsor Castle has gone unnoticed. It is now official that Contraception makes a difference to Morality. Precisely what difference it makes we shall have to wait in line to find out, heterosexuals first and the rest in the rear.

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