

The Rev. John Turnbull Bird, C.M.G., M.A., F.R.A.S.

A well-known member was lost to the West of Scotland Branch in the death on 1930 July 21 of the Rev. John Turnbull Bird, C.M.G., M.A., F.R.A.S. Mr. Bird was born at Fishwick, Berwickshire, in 1862. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he gained the degree of M.A. at the early age of eighteen. He then attended the theological course and, being licensed in 1884 by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, took up the charge of a mission station at Aberfeldy, Perthshire. Two years later he became assistant to the famous Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod, in St. Stephen's Church, Edinburgh. In 1891 he was gazetted a chaplain in the regular army. He served in both the South African and the Great War, and for two periods was senior chaplain to Scottish troops at Aldershot. In 1917 he obtained the high distinction of being created a Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. He was awarded numerous medals, clasps, and other honours for his military services, and was twice mentioned in despatches.

Throughout his life Mr. Bird maintained a keen interest in astronomy. In 1898 November he became a member of the British Astronomical Association. In 1912 June he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and in October of the same year, being at that time attached as chaplain to troops stationed at Glasgow, he joined the West of Scotland Branch of the British Astronomical Association. He took an active interest in the proceedings of the Branch, and served as a member of its Council, and later as a Vice-President. He contributed several papers and notes to the Branch, giving on certain occasions accounts of observations made on objects of the southern sky, including the appearances presented by Halley's Comet. Mr. Bird's active connection with the Branch was temporarily interrupted by the Great War, but after it he returned for a time to

Glasgow, and again took part in the meetings of the Branch. A few years ago, after his retiral, he went to reside in Edinburgh, and became a member of the Edinburgh Astronomical Association. He also contributed several papers to the *Journal* of the British Astronomical Association, and engaged in work with the Association's Computing Section. Part of his leisure during retirement was devoted to the preparation of a book entitled "Christianity and Nature." This production is of a unique description, and includes many passages of literature culled from a wide variety of sources. With great ingenuity and penetration of thought, illuminating and suggestive parallels are drawn between many of the phenomena of nature and experiences of the religious life, and it may be said that any lover of nature or student of astronomy will peruse the work with the greatest pleasure and profit.

As regards his personality, Mr. Bird was a man of high character, affectionate, and modest in manner. He was beloved by the officers and men to whom he ministered, and had upon them a deep and abiding influence. His loss is mourned by a widow and daughter. His burial took place on July 24 at the New Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh, a service being previously conducted in St. Stephen's Church by the Rev. T. B. Stewart Thomson, M.C. Among the congregation were Lord Sands, the Rev. Dr. Sym, the Rev. Dr. Calder of Glasgow University, the Rev. G. T. Wright, and Mr. George McAlpine, O.B.E. At the opening of their session, the West of Scotland Branch of the British Astronomical Association have recorded their profound regret at their loss and their sympathy with his sorrowing relatives.

J. J. R.