

of the gold deposits continued to be more than confirmed, and there can be little doubt that the estimate of a weekly production at the rate of nearly \$2,000,000 will be maintained. New discoveries are reported in various directions, and at one spot, about eighteen miles from Melbourne, and between that place and Sydney a locality is said to have been found which exceeds everything that has yet been discovered. The operations at the place are stated to be like digging in a garden. Large nuggets of enormous value being turned up at a depth of one foot.

The arrivals of emigrants from Europe and elsewhere, were becoming very large, about 5,000 persons having just landed at Melbourne in one week. Great anxiety was consequently felt with regard to the further supplies of breadstuffs, and flour had reached £40 per ton.

The *English Churchmen*, speaking of the late Derby ministry, sa. s.—

But while we thus regret, for the sake of the country at large, the fate of the Derby Ministry, we must not forget, also, that we are especially bound to regard this subject, not as mere general politician, but as English Churchmen. It is as Churchmen that we regret that fall still more deeply. It is as Churchmen that we are bound to censure the conduct of those who professing the strongest regard for the Church's welfare, have yet been the main instruments in bringing about this result. We must say, we feel it our bounden duty to say, that, by the course he has taken Mr. Gladstone has incurred a fearful amount of responsibility. He has been meanly instrumental in driving from power the only administration to which for many years past, the Church of England has been able to look, with the smallest degree of confidence. Without, for a moment, pinning our faith, in any spirit of blind and unhesitating confidence, on the late administration, we still did feel that under that Administration, the Church of England was likely to receive that measure of justice, which for many years past, she had sternly been denied. Nor as far as we have gone, have our expectations been disappointed. Under Lord Derby's Ministry, the Convocation of this realm has met and transacted business, in a solemn Session of three days duration. Under Lord Derby's Ministry, a Cathedral Commission has been issued, in which most Churchmen feel implicit confidence. Under Lord Derby's Ministry, the Education Question has been placed on a greatly improved footing; and yet this Ministry, the Members for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have, as we think, most unnecessarily, if not wantonly, and recklessly driven from power! We are compelled to use such terms, because there was not a shadow of real reason why Mr. Gladstone should not have joined Lord Derby's Government. It was always expected, the principle of "Protection" once being abandoned, that such a communication would inevitably follow. Many Churchmen eagerly looked to such a result.

But, it may perhaps be said that if Mr. Gladstone joins the New Administration, whatever that may be, he will take care that the interests of the Church are fully protected. But is so. But then comes the question, could not Mr. Gladstone have made better terms for the Church with Lord Derby, than he can possibly make with the author of the "Durham Letter" or his colleagues? Are not Lord Derby, and Mr. Walpole, and Lord John Manners, likely to be, at least, as well disposed to the Church as Lord John Russell and Sir James Graham? Surely then, if Mr. Gladstone really wished to strengthen the hands of the Church, he could have done so better and with much more personal credit to himself, by joining the late Administration, than by taking office with men who have uniformly treated the Church with contempt and insult.

But it may be said, that Mr. Gladstone's theory of "religious liberty" would stand in the way of his joining Lord Derby, together with the line he took on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. But surely, on these very points, there must be very much graver reasons why he should not coalesce with Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone is placed here in an awkward dilemma. If, on the one hand, his view with respect to the Papal Aggression, is it to be adopted for the future, public opinion will at once condemn the new Administration. It cannot, in that case, stand for a week. If, on the other hand, Mr. Gladstone is going to surrender his peculiar opinions, Churchmen will be bound to ask why he could not have given up those opinions before; and, by joining Lord Derby, have placed his Government in an impregnable position? We say then, again, that by the course he has recently taken, Mr. Gladstone has justly incurred the censure of many good Churchmen; censure which, if he succeeds to office, the University of Oxford may not be slow to visit upon him.

MEMORIAL OF HOOKER.—It is proposed at the approaching anniversary of the birth of Richard Hooker, to raise subscriptions for a painted window in the Metropolitan Cathedral, (St. Paul's) of rare magnificence and beauty, emblazoned with the name of Hooker, and which shall cast its "dim religious light" on the graves of England's greatest warriors.

THE WESLEYAN SCHISM.—A third party has sprung up in the Wesleyan Connection, under the name of Mediationists, whose professed object it is, by the suggestion of a middle course, to effect a reconciliation between the Conference and the "Reformers," but whose efforts are according to present appearances, more likely to end in giving to the schism a still wider extension.

THE SCHISM AT TORQUAY.—The free Episcopalians of St. Mary's Church, Torquay, have fallen out among themselves. Mr. Kelly in a long letter to the *Western Times*, complains that he has been juggled out of his position as Pastor

"Free Church" congregation, to make way for a more wealthy and aristocratic teacher "whose circumstances in life would make him independent of salary, and who would be likely to draw to the new Church the gentry of the parish."

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION;

A Review of a Letter to the Very Reverend the Dean of Exeter, on a Sermon preached by him in the Cathedral of Exeter, on Sunday, Nov. 7, and since published, by Henry, Lord Bishop of Exeter.

(From the *English Churchman*.)

We have not seen the Sermon of the Dean of Exeter upon which this letter is a comment, but judging from what we learn of it in these pages, we conclude that it is one of those discourses which all would regret who are anxious that provocation should not be given to persons of extreme views on either side. So long as men underrate any matter of Faith or Practice plainly held and enjoined by the English Church, and especially if their depreciation be expressed in an irritating or offensive form or tone, so long will there be men who, in self-defence, if for no other reason, will occupy and maintain an extreme position in an opposite direction. Consequently, what we stand so much in need of in the present day is, that those who desire to carry out faithfully the teaching of the Church, should intelligently, honestly, and firmly discourage, publicly as well as privately, if need be, attempts—on either side—to advocate, or to drive men into, extreme views, as regards Doctrine or Practice. We very much doubt if the permanent and true peace of the Church will be in proportion to the extent of the latitude which is allowed to Doctrines and Practices which either go beyond, or fall short of, her Formularies—interpreted according to that plain, obvious, meaning of the words which commends itself to the truth, honesty, and common sense of unprejudiced men. We entirely disbelieve that public speeches, and especially Sermons, in which extreme men, on one side, pour forth wrath, ridicule, or sarcasm, on extreme men on the other side, will do anything else, or anything better than aggravate the disease.

With these views it will not surprise any one that we regard Dean Lowe's Sermon as one that should not have been preached, and that we consider the defence which will probably be offered for it, viz., that it was to counteract extreme opinions in an opposite direction, as no valid defence whatever. It has clearly laid the duty upon some one to step in and adjust the balance of Truth which, between the two parties, is made to vibrate so violently that it is difficult for plain people to see what the Truth is. This duty may be reasonably placed among those which the office of a Bishop entails upon him, especially in such times, and it is one which, on many occasions, the Bishop of Exeter has felt himself called upon to perform, through good report and through evil report, in times past and times present, whether he had to rescue the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of England from the perversions of Mr. Charles Butler the Romanist, or from those of Mr. Gorham the Calvinist.

The present "Letter" is prefaced by the following correspondence:—

The Palace, Exeter, Nov. 18, 1852.

My Dear Mr. Dean,—In passing through Exeter this day I have received from the Sub-Dean a copy of a Sermon preached by you on the Sunday before last, and since published with the heading "Auricular Confession," together with the very kind communication of your feelings towards myself. Be assured that I estimate that communication as lought, and that I return the assurance of similar feelings towards yourself with equal cordiality.

I have not had time to read your Sermon with the attention which is due to the subject of it—to the time at which it was delivered and published—and to the high place of its highly-gifted author.

But the very first sentence of it has made me feel it my duty to regard the Sermon not merely as the able statement of the opinions of an able writer on a very important doctrine, but also as a public attestation from the Dean of my own Cathedral, the head of a body whose great privilege and duty it is to advise their Bishop, to the existence of a very grave practical departure from Evangelical principles among my Clergy—no less than the assertion of and the acting upon the claim "that Sacramental Absolution is necessary to the salvation of every baptized person, and that Auricular Confession is the Divinely appointed means of obtaining that Absolution."

You say that "there is really no ground in Scripture for this doctrine."

"That it leads in practice to the grossest abuses, and that our Reformed Church does not sanction it."

In all this I should fully concur if I did not think your statement on the whole below the truth; for I hold, not only that the doctrine is not grounded on a true and sound interpretation of Scripture (which is what I apprehend you mean when you say, "There is really no ground in Scripture for this doctrine," for you yourself adduce passages of Scripture on which, however erroneously, the doctrine is grounded).—but also, that it more than "leads in practice to the grossest abuses; for it is in itself a very gross abuse of the truth delivered in Scripture, perhaps the very grossest abuse ever ascribed to the Church of Rome.

And, lastly, that "our Reformed Church," not only "does not sanction it," but is, by very plain implication, manifestly opposed to it.

Thus fully concurring with you in your judgment on this very important particular, I request you to inform me what Clergymen of this Diocese

are the "apish imitators of Rome," and what are "their proceedings in this direction which have lately caused no small stir, especially in this Diocese."

I shall thankfully receive and promptly act upon the information when you shall have given it. Believe me, my dear Mr. Dean,

Yours very faithfully,

H. EXETER.

Very Rev. the Dean of Exeter.

FROM THE DEAN OF EXETER TO THE BISHOP.
Deanery, Exeter, Nov. 15, 1852.

My Dear Lord,—I am highly gratified by the cordial expressions of personal regard in the letter which your Lordship had the kindness to address to me in your way through Exeter yesterday; and still more am I gratified by the full and clear declaration of your opinions on the Romish doctrine of Auricular Confession. On that point, however, I never entertained the slightest doubt; for long before I had the honour of your Lordship's acquaintance, I had carefully read your letters to the late Mr. C. Butler, and still recur to them with undiminished admiration. Your Lordship will, I trust, permit me, whenever a fit occasion may present itself, to declare my certain knowledge that, on all the subjects discussed in those letters, your judgment remains wholly unaltered.

With respect to the last, and perhaps the most important point in your Lordship's letter, I feel that, if I had charged any of the Clergy of this Diocese with openly maintaining the Romish doctrine of Auricular Confession, your Lordship would have a perfect right to require of me to inform you who those Clergy are. But I have not brought forward such a charge, though I really think that some of Mr. Prynn's sermons in this direction—as, for example, the penance which he imposed (I presume after confession) on one of Miss Sellon's young ladies—afford a very strong ground of presumption that he is prepared to carry to their full extent some of the very worst practices of the Confession. That there are persons in the Church who maintain the Romish doctrine, or at least a doctrine which the Laity cannot distinguish from it, and that the attempts which are made to defend and revive the practice of Auricular Confession, have made a great stir, especially in this Diocese, is unhappily a matter of general notoriety. I most heartily wish that it were not so. It is also unhappily certain that some, more especially of the younger Clergy, are alarming the minds of the people by an apish imitation of certain practices which are not prescribed by our practices, and are regarded as Romish—such as bowings, genuflections, and intonings, and that they are offending the better part of their congregations by persisting in using them.

Now it is very true that such things as these are in themselves matter of indifference; but I am confident that your Lordship will agree with me in thinking that they cease to be so when they give offence even to the weaker brethren.

Believe me, with great respect, my dear Lord,
Your obliged and faithful servant,
THOS. H. LOWE.

The Rt. Rev. the
Lord Bishop of Exeter.

From the "Letter" itself we take the following extracts:—

Bishopstowe, Nov. 24, 1852.

"My dear Mr. Dean,—Since I have returned to this place, I have had time to read your Sermon on 'Auricular Confession,' with more attention than I could give to it in my passage through Exeter. I have also had the benefit of learning from your letter of the 19th inst., what was the purpose for which your Sermon was written, and who were the parties against whom it was directed. I need not say, that that letter has given me no less surprise. In it you say 'that if you had charged any of the clergy of this Diocese, with openly maintaining the Romish doctrine of Auricular Confession, I should have a perfect right to require you to inform me who the Clergy were; but you have not brought forward such a charge.' Now from this I am bound, in justice to the candour and ingenuousness of your own character, to conclude that you were equally far from intending to say of any among them that they secretly maintain the same doctrine, thus adding hypocrisy to unfaithfulness. For I am quite sure, that you would have felt it no less your duty both to avow this charge, and also to state the names of the clergymen against whom it was directed. But you had no such meaning—and I am equally rejoiced, I repeat and surprised to hear it. My surprise will perhaps, be deemed not utterly unreasonable, when I cite the opening sentences of your sermon:—
"Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, &c."

"This is one of the principal texts, on the authority of which the Church of Rome maintains, that sacerdotal absolution is necessary to the salvation of every baptized person, who has fallen into mortal sin, and that auricular confession is the divinely appointed means of obtaining that absolution. The same doctrine is now maintained by some persons in our Church, who openly claim this power for themselves, and are endeavoring to revive among us, the practice of Auricular confession; and as their proceedings in this direction have lately caused no small stir, especially in this Diocese, I shall endeavour on this occasion to show, &c. &c."

"All this I have now the satisfaction of knowing, on the best authority, that of the preacher himself, was not intended to charge any of the Clergy of this Diocese with maintaining the doctrine which is here denounced.

"Again, when I read presently afterwards, in the first, we must inquire what is that the Church

of Rome, and its apish imitators, mean by Auricular confession."—I am informed that the persons thus discourteously characterized, are not called 'apish imitators' of Rome, by reason of any of their sayings or doings in reference to 'Auricular confession,' though that subject only is mentioned in the Sermon—but because of other matters which are not prescribed by our Rubrics, and are regarded as Romish, such as 'bowings, genuflections, and intonings.'

"I gladly accept the explanation, and pause not to examine how far it accords with the ordinary use of language, especially what might be expected from one who is commonly so lucid a writer as yourself.

"It is enough for me, that I am thus released from the duty of exercising the painful right of requiring you to state who those persons are in our Church, of whom you thus assert, that they maintain the doctrine that sacerdotal absolution is necessary to the salvation of every baptized sinner, and that Auricular confession is the divinely appointed means of obtaining that absolution.' They belong not to this diocese—with this, as Bishop of Exeter, I am quite satisfied. But though I have no special right to make this requirement, as Bishop of this Diocese, for the guilty parties do not belong to it—yet as Bishop of the Church of England, bound by the duty of my high office to guard above all other things, the sacred deposit of the faith, especially in a particular of so great practical importance as you thus publicly denounce, I may be permitted to urge upon you the duty of bringing to the knowledge of those who can legally deal with the case, the names of the offenders and the proof of their guilt: for I do not believe there is a single Bishop amongst us who would hesitate to take the most stringent and effectual means to free his diocese, and the Church at large, from apostasy so foul and odious.

"Having said this, I should here stop, if I were constrained by regard to the character of the doctrine set forth in so high a place as the pulpit of my own Cathedral, and by the Dean of that Cathedral himself, to point out more than one important particular, in which your Sermon seems to me very likely to mislead the people, especially in their estimate of the priestly office. For, if there be, in the present day, some one who are inclined to take too high a view of the powers inherent in their office, yet you will I am sure, be not backward in admitting, that this is not the common and prevailing error; that for one who exaggerates those powers above their due measure, there are hundreds, who depreciate them far below the standard which you and I, and every sound Churchman, must recognise in the word of God."

"After enforcing a particular, which all faithful members of our Church must agree in holding as a main article of the Catholic faith, namely that through Him, our Great high priest in Heaven, and not through the mediation of any priest on earth, we have access with confidence to the Father. You thus proceed:—'If, indeed the mind of any Christian should be so burdened with the consciousness of his past offences, as to make him lose sight of this blessed truth, and to fill him with the alarming apprehension, that his iniquities are too great to be pardoned, and that his sinful life has closed the gates of mercy against him—and such an apprehension sufficiently proves, that the root of faith still remains in him—then it is the office of Christ's faithful ministers to intreat him to open his grief, and in Christ's name, and by His authority, to declare to him'—what? . . . All that you ascribe to 'the office of Christ's faithful ministers,' is, in Christ's name, and by His authority—to do what your virger is competent to do—to declare to the penitent (what few who call themselves Christians can need to be informed) 'that the riches of God's mercies in Christ are inexhaustible; that if we confess our sins, and turn to Him as the repentant prodigal returned to his father, He will forgive us our sins, for the sake of His blessed Son, by virtue of whose all-sufficient mediation and atonement, all his past offences will be no more had in remembrance against him.' Thus to make known the grace of God? is, I repeat, within the competence of every Christian—though not, indeed, to do it with equal authority. But the occasion required you to say openly and plainly what is the special duty and commission of the Christian minister; and I must again frankly avow, that I lament your seemingly studied purpose to forbear from saying this."

"Persons may differ as to the expediency of such a practice; and, for myself, I hesitate not to say that, in my judgement, the habit of going to confession, without some special reason, is likely to produce very grave mischief in many cases—to impair the healthy tone of a Christian conscience, just as constant and unnecessary recourse to medicine weakens the constitution of the body. But this is a matter which the Church leaves open to the discretion of its members, both lay and clerical; and I disclaim the right of interfering with it, beyond saying, as I again say to my clergy, that I disapprove it."

"If you ask what then is the use going to a priest for absolution. I answer that where a man sufficiently 'examines his life and conversation by the rule of God's commandments, and wherein he perceives himself to have offended, there bewails his own sinfulness, and confesses to Almighty God; it he thereupon can 'quiet his own conscience'—can satisfy himself by a faithful search into God's laws and Christ's promises, that he has attained to true Christian repentance and lively faith—I, for one, should advise him not to have recourse to a Priest, beyond joining in the general confession of the congregation of Christ, for that pardon, which already he on just grounds, is sure has been spoken to him in Christ's written word, and has been brought home to his heart by Christ's Holy Spirit."