

the Books of Common Prayer (ch. xi., v. 7, p. 438.) who reminds us that the words "if he humbly and heartily desire it" were purposely inserted at the last revision in 1661-2. So that the special confession is not to be demanded in any case; nor even urged in every case; but only recommended in some particular cases as a relief to persons oppressed with a sonso of grievous sins. And even after any such confession, the priest is not to volunteer this absolution; but only to pronounce it "if it be humbly and heartily" desired by the sick person himself; nor even then, unless he be fully satisfied of the sick person's true repentance, sincere faith in Christ, and unfeigned charity to all men, ascertained by the examination prescribed in a previous rubric (see Rev. C. Benson's Discourse on the power of absolution, pp. 47-52).

Then, as to the exact meaning of the absolution itself, it has been supposed by some that it is merely an absolution from church censures, and a forgiveness of ecclesiastical offences. Bishop Burnet (on the 25th Art., on penance, pp. 279, 371) takes this view, Whately strenuously contends for it (c. xi., s. v. pp. 430-437). Archbishop Secker seems disposed to favor this view (see bishop Mant's Prayer Book, p. 478); as also Rev. J. Venn (Hereford Discussion, p. 69); and Rev. Joseph Bayley thus comments upon it.

"After having pronounced the absolution. . . and having thus declared to the sick person his freedom from all church censures," the church teaches him that such an absolution could not fit him for the judgment-seat of Christ, by praying to the Lord for forgiveness for him: "impute not to him his former sins" (Institutions, pp. 82, 83). Now, doubtless, the words of the absolution may be taken to mean no more than this, and might be so used. But, as the absolution refers, not to notorious sin for which the sick man is supposed to have been visited with the censures of the Church, but to some secret sin voluntarily confessed by one who is in communion with the Church, this does not appear to be its true meaning. The true explanation of this form of personal absolution seems rather to be this: what the Church distinctly teaches that "to God" only it appertaineth to forgive sins, and that he hath merely "given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins," and while Johnson defines the ecclesiastical sense of the word "absolve" to be "to pronounce a sin remitted," so we find the word "absolve" to be carefully distinguished from the word "forgive" in this absolution; for, after declaring that the Lord "hath left power to his Church to absolve" (but only those "who truly repent and believe in him"), it contains a prayer that He will himself "forgive"; after which, the minister proceeds to "absolve" (i. e., to pronounce remitted); and then follows a prayer that the Lord will ratify and confirm the act, and "impute not unto" the penitent sinner "his former sins," which proves the previous absolution to be declaratory and conditional. Indeed, at the Savoy Conference, in 1661-2, the bishops' reply to the Puritans (who wished it to be altered to "I pronounce thee absolved if thou dost truly repent and believe," was this that "the condition needs not to be expressed, being always necessarily understood." (Cardwell's Conferences, p. 361.) That this is the true meaning of this form of absolution has been shown in Jenner's Protestant Character of the Prayer-book, pp. 25, 26, Dr. McNeill's Lectures on the Church of England, ii., pp. 94, 95, 96; and Rev. C. Benson's Discourse on the Power of Absolution, pp. 48, 49, 50.

That the Church of England claims for her ministers only a declaratory and conditional power of absolution might be proved from the writings of many of her best divines. For example, Hooker thus speaks upon the subject: "As for the ministerial sentence of private absolution, it can be no more than a declaration what God hath done; it hath but the force of the prophet Nathan's absolution (2 Sam. xii. 13.) 'God hath taken away thy sin' (b. vi., c. 6, s. 8.) 'God alone doth truly give, the virtue of repentance alone procure, and private ministerial absolution but declare remission of sins' (s. 13.) And so archdeacon Sparks, writing in 1607 on the absolution of the sick, in a work "allowed, and commanded by public authority," and approved by king James I., and the archbishop says "The meaning thereof is no more, but that, they so repenting and believing as is there specified in the book, we, as the ministers of God, assure them, that he doth absolve them of their sins so repented of" (Brotherly Persuasion to Unity, quoted by Rev. W. Goode).

Other eminent authorities to the same effect may be seen in Bishop Mant's Prayer-book, pp. 477, 478, pp. 11, 12, and p. 358, where the marked and fundamental distinction between the Anglican and Romish doctrine is pointed out; as it is also more at length, and more in detail, in Bishop Mant's "Churches of Rome and England compared" (No. 109 on the Christian Knowledge list), pp. 16-24; and in Jenner's Protestant Character of the Prayer-book, pp. 24-27; see also Bishop Tomline on the twenty-fifth article, on Penance, Work, pp. 551. It is evident then, that all personal absolution is limited by our Church either to an absolution from ecclesiastical censures and remission of ecclesiastical offences, or to clove and individual application of the general authority "to declare and pronounce to" God's "people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins," agreeably to the scripture model, "your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake," (1 John ii. 12). Nor is this without example among non-conformists. For Dr. R. Doddridge, in his "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," thus addresses the reader on the supposition of his being a sinner: "I can then salute you in the Lord,

as one to whom as a minister of Jesus, I am commissioned and charged to speak comfortably, and to tell you, not that I absolve you from your sins, for it is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, but that the blessed God himself absolveth you." &c. (c. xiii., s. 6).

#### "CHURCH IN MELBOURNE," (AUSTRALIA) AND THE GOLD.

Most of our readers have probably seen a circular, entitled, "A Special Appeal for Funds to provide Additional Clergy for the Diocese of Melbourne." We are induced to notice it because some of our Correspondents think it unnecessary to call for money for this purpose, and compare the proposal to that of "carrying coals to Newcastle," or "pouring water over a drowned man." Now we need not say that we do not take this view of the matter, and we think that on a little consideration our Correspondents would see that none of the analogies they use apply to this case. Indeed they would soon be practically undeceived should they make the attempt of going to Melbourne. They would find themselves stopped *in limine* for want of funds. The money required for their voyage would be considerably more than was demanded before the gold-fields were discovered. On their arrival they would find every necessary doubled in price, and the labour of others they would scarcely procure at any. The theoretical puzzle why, since there is so much gold in Australia, they must carry still more there, might remain to perplex them, but they would certainly be convinced that such was the fact. The man of plain practical sense refuted the old sophist's argument that motion did not exist by, walking across the room. We can only offer the same argument to those who think it unnecessary to send gold to Australia. The demonstration, *solvitur ambulando*, must suffice for both. Any further consideration of the subject would be beside our present purpose. We may remind our readers, however, of the obvious truth, since we see it is sometimes practically forgotten, that gold has a twofold property. It has, an intrinsic value, like other metals. It has, also, a conventional one, as being the great medium of exchange. Gold, when procured in larger quantities and with less labour, will, like everything else in similar circumstances, be exchanged or rather bartered for a smaller quantity of other commodities, and in this sense its value will fall. But its conventional property of regulating the price of every other commodity is something distinct from its intrinsic value. We know from what has happened in former times that a change in one of its properties will be followed by a change in the other. But the process in one case is neither so clear nor so easily traced as in the other. Opinions are divided, as to how and when the medium of exchange will become affected, to say nothing of what results may follow. It is likely to remain one of the "undecided questions in political economy," and which will require much watching and comparing of facts to discover the solution. It is easy to understand what takes place when the weights are shifted in the scales, but when the alteration is in the balance itself, all calculation is baffled.

We cannot judge of what will be the effects of the abundance of gold throughout the world, by the confusion it has caused in Melbourne. The prices of provisions have risen because there are so many more persons to feed, and the labour of others cannot be procured for any sum of money, because all are engaged in more lucrative employment. But the same consequences would have followed had the mines newly-discovered been of diamonds instead of gold. There would have been the same rush to the diggings, and the same rise in all the necessaries of life, only in the one case, diamonds would be bartered for commodities, and to purchase them it would clearly be necessary, that gold, as representing the medium of exchange, must be sent into the colony. At present, what gold is procured at the mines is in like manner bartered for what the discoverer of it needs; and what is sent over to this country finds its way back to Australia in the shape of coin, or the same gold with the conventional property of being a medium of exchange added to it to purchase more. The ancients fabled that everything that Minos touched turned to gold, but their simple formula for describing a glut of gold is inadequate to comprehend the more intricate transactions of the modern system of exchange. Our difficulty is not the individual that is suffocated with the precious metal, but it is a colony that is choking with gold.

We need scarcely give any illustrations of the revolution that this event has caused in Melbourne. Every arrival from that quarter adds some new feature to the picture. At present, the old colonists who were advancing slowly but surely in a course of prosperity, look upon the mineral wealth that has been added to the country as their ruin. This "hasten to be rich" may be un-

favourable to the well-being of a nation, as we are assured it is in the case of an individual.

Among all the difficulties with which this new colony is beset, it has some circumstances in its favour which ought to be turned to advantage, and which, if duly improved, may result in its increased prosperity. Some of these are alluded to, in the following extract from the circular which we have already mentioned. Those who have read the Primary Charge of Dr. PERRY, and the two sermons with which it is accompanied, will acknowledge how just an estimate of that excellent Bishop's character is formed in the following:—

"Happily, under the good providence of God, the emergency has not arisen without some provision being first made for meeting it. The boundless treasure, though lying on the surface of the Australian pastures, and trodden by the unconscious foot of shepherd, and flock, has been practically hidden and reserved until the country in which it is found has acquired something of a settled character; until a separate Government has been established; until religious institutions have been framed; until a Christian bishop, of eminent and acknowledged piety and of untiring energy, has been appointed; until his personal influence and operations have had time to produce a marked effect upon society; and, finally, until the Church over which he presides has been furnished with a more complete organization than is to be found perhaps in any other, and, so framed as to admit of ready and immediate expansion, to meet the enormously extended basis on which the operations of the diocese of Melbourne must now rest. Amongst the many remarkable circumstances connected with the recent gold discovery, one which cannot fail to strike the attention of those who are careful to mark the finger of God in the events of the world's history, and which must call forth a feeling of admiration at the wisdom, and thankfulness for the goodness of Him who ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will, is the nice adjustment of the time of discovery to the social and religious development of the colony."

The circular proceeds to state that—

"The Bishop has requested his commissaries to select and send out, with as little delay as possible, clergymen fitted for the arduous duties of the crisis. But, finding no funds available for this purpose, they are compelled, in conjunction with the Committee for the diocese, to appeal on the Bishop's behalf to his Christian brethren in England, to procure for him, on the one hand, some further extension of that kind and ready liberality which has enabled him so auspiciously to commence his great work—more money; on the other, the supply of additional hands of labourers, to enter upon the new harvest-fields which are stretching on all sides of him—more men."

In fact, the funds available for this purpose only amount at present to a hundred pounds.

With reference to the Bishop's want of men, we can only echo the hope expressed in the following passage of the same document:—

"It is to be hoped that his call will find a response in the hearts of many who have been waiting to know where the Lord of the harvest would appoint them their task. The gold regions of Australia present a field of missionary labour of the most difficult but most interesting nature. Nowhere, perhaps, on the face of the earth will the minister of Christ be brought more directly into collision with the power of the Evil One in his most formidable array; not holding his sway over the ignorant and degraded Heathen of the eastern world, but ruling amongst the sharpened intellects of the west, with the lust of gold, and the full swing of all carnal enjoyment, as the instruments of his tyranny. May we not hope, that amongst the many who are streaming forth in the adventure of corruptible gold there will be a band of true and faithful men who will count it great riches to contend for the cause of God against the forces of Mammon?"

We have, in another part of the paper, inserted an extract from the *Melbourne Church of England Messenger*, a periodical that is conducted under the Bishop's supervision. The account there given of the state of the colony may be considered as authenticated by his Lordship and embodying his own sentiments.—*Record.*

#### News Department.

From Papers by R. M. S. America, Oct. 12.

THE NEW APPOINTMENTS.—We have no disposition to find fault with the appointments to the offices vacated by the Duke of Wellington. The fact that Prince Albert has not the command over the army, but instead of that of the colonelcy of the Grenadier Guards, adds to the many evidences of his excellent sense, and will increase his high credit with the country. Next to the Ministry belongs the credit of having preferred the claim of a veteran soldier to Prince George of Cambridge, who though he stands extremely well in the opinion of the array as an officer and gentleman, must of necessity want the amount of experience and the weight of professional reputation required in the office of Commander-in-Chief. The fair choice of a Tory Government lay between Lord Fitzroy Somerset and Lord Cardigan. Other names might be mentioned of the opposite party, but we cannot object to the Government's preferring members of its own party, qualifications not being inferior. Of Lord Fitzroy Somerset there is but one opinion. No man was the business of the Horse Guards better performed than by him. He has proved, as Secretary, an able administrator and