

### Parliamentary Intelligence.

The *South African Church Magazine* for September has a full report of the proceedings instituted in the Bishop's Consistorial Court at Capetown, in the case of the Rev. A. G. Lamb. On Wednesday, the 22nd of August, 1855, the Rev. R. G. Lamb, having been duly cited, appeared before the Bishop to answer for what he was reported, during his late visit to England, to have said and written concerning the clergy of this diocese, which was considered to be injurious to their characters as clergymen. Besides the Bishop, there were present his two assessors, the Venerable Archdeacon Welby and the Rev. Canon Judge; the two churchwardens of the cathedral, Captain Herbert and Mr. Penketh; Charles Reade, Esq., H. E. L. C. S., who attended at the request of Mr. Lamb, by special invitation of the Bishop; and Mr. Palmer, acting for the Bishop's registrar. The Bishop addressed Mr. Lamb at length, expressing great pain that he had been compelled to take the present course, as Mr. Lamb refused to substantiate or repudiate the charges he had made, and concluded by calling upon him, as the Bishop to state where and when any clergymen of the Church in the diocese had held or taught anything contrary to the doctrine or discipline of the Church of which he is a minister. The following is an abstract of the questions and answers which followed:—

"The Rev. Mr. Lamb stood up to reply—My lord, it is with deep pain that I appear to answer your lordship in this matter. I would beg leave with all respect, to observe that in whatever I have said I have not accused any man individually, or your lordship's clergy as a body. I must respectfully decline to specify names, or to detail facts. I dealt with general evil in a general way.

"The Bishop—Your language has been understood very generally, both in England and here, to imply that, in your belief, the clergy of the Church in this diocese have held and taught doctrines at variance with the Church of England. Did you mean to imply this, in anything you have said or written respecting the clergy of this diocese? Mr. Lamb—I cannot, my lord, help that. I respectfully submit that I am not responsible for any construction which may be put upon my words. I expressed an opinion which your lordship will not deny me the liberty to hold, and which, in my conscience, I believe, as an Englishman, I am privileged to express.

"The Bishop—Then, am I to understand that you wish me to believe that you did not, in anything you may have said or written respecting the clergymen of this diocese, intend to impute to them unsoundness in the faith, or the holding or teaching of doctrines at variance with those of the Church of England? Mr. Lamb—I have nothing, my lord, to answer to that question, except that I repeat that I have made no charge against any individual, neither did I make any charge against your lordship's clergy as a body. In anything I have said, I never intended to offend or wound the feelings of a single child of God, much less to calumniate my brethren.

"The Bishop—That does not appear to me to be the question. No one will, I believe, impute to you the desire, unnecessarily, to wound the feelings of any of your brethren. The real point at issue is, whether you have made statements injurious to their characters or not. You have said in your letter that you felt that you had a testimony to deliver. That testimony, whatever it was, was delivered before a mixed audience in Liverpool. The proper tribunal before which a clergyman ought to deliver his testimony, when it relates to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of his brethren in the ministry, is the Bishop of the diocese. I now call upon you, in the most solemn manner, to state to me whether it is within your knowledge whether any clergyman in this diocese has held or taught anything contrary to the doctrines or discipline of this Church? Mr. Lamb—I beg to thank your lordship for the opinion expressed in the first part of your question; and to say that I did not prefer any charge against any one, nor is it my intention to do so before your lordship."

After some further attempts by the Bishop to obtain a satisfactory reply to his question, Mr. Canon Judge put a question:—

"May I ask, did you mean, or did you not mean, to convey to your audience at Liverpool, that your brethren in the ministry in this diocese were unsound in the faith, or unfaithful to the Church? Mr. Lamb—I must respectfully decline to answer that question. At this distance of time it is exceedingly difficult to analyse one's thoughts on the occasion referred to; and I must respectfully demand to my being questioned as to

my very thoughts, especially when I have given such ample satisfaction, in my judgement, to any one who may feel hurt.

"Mr. Judge expressed his regret and disappointment that Mr. Lamb's answer was not more satisfactory.

"Archdeacon Welby—May I ask whether your letter of December 23 was written to his lordship with the intention of removing from yourself the charge made against you of having cast an imputation on your brethren the clergy of this diocese? Mr. Lamb—My letter of December 23 contained all the explanation which I conceived that I was called upon to give to his lordship.

"The Bishop—In that letter you say you believe it to be your duty to expose the stealthy introduction of the leaven of false doctrine; that a leaven of principles inconsistent with the purity of evangelical truth, a tendency to Tractarian doctrine, is insidiously working in the colony of the Cape of Good Hope. I call upon you, as the Bishop of this diocese, to state whether it is within your knowledge that any clergyman of this diocese has taught false doctrine, or principles inconsistent with the purity of evangelical truth? Mr. Lamb—I abide, my Lord, by whatever is written in the letter to which you refer; and I must respectfully decline to say anything more in reply to your lordship's question.

"The Bishop—In my letter to you of September 24, '54, I called upon you to say what clergyman has taught 'dangerous doctrines,' when he has taught them, and in what words. I now repeat that call. Am I to understand that you decline to answer it? Mr. Lamb—I respectfully submit, my lord, that the answer to the preceding question meets the one now put to me.

"The Bishop—In your speech delivered at Liverpool, you are reported to have said that a gentleman whom you would not name, under the pretence of teaching Christian doctrine, had lent a book to a young woman; it professed to be the confession of a saint, but you would blush to describe it, and it was not, indeed, fit for the human eye. Is that, substantially, a correct account of what you did say? Mr. Lamb—I cannot, my lord, recollect the precise terms I then used; but I have stated, in my letter to your lordship, my opinions respecting the book.

"The Bishop—In your letter to me you did not deny the accuracy of the report of the speech upon this head. But you add, that 'the book was brought to your notice by a respectable matron, who wrote to you telling you that it had been given to her young female friend.' Those words, as I have already brought under your notice in my letter of August 8, have been understood, even by your own friends, as reflecting severely on the character of the Hon. and Rev. Henry Douglas, one of the most pure-minded and devoted clergymen that ever laboured in this land. He has been charged by them, in consequence of your words of having 'attempted to corrupt the mind of an innocent female by base and unholy means; but they have expressed the 'withering scorn and indignation' with which they regarded him, for placing such a book 'in the hands of a virtuous young female.' I have informed you that the young woman in question was a female of loose character, who was under Mr. Douglas's pastoral charge, and twice confined in Somerset Hospital of illegitimate children. I had hoped that you would have expressed sorrow for the unguarded and untrue language which you have used with reference to a brother clergyman, and which has exposed him to so much unjust animadversion. This you have not hitherto done. Are you prepared now to retract the language which you have used with regard to him, and to express sorrow for having been betrayed in it? Mr. Lamb—I have never made any charge of offensive allusions against any individual with reference to this book; and, in what I did state, I carefully avoided pointing to any individual. I candidly avow that I did not know the character of the woman to whom the book was given. And, while I cannot be responsible for what any injudicious friend may write or express to your lordship, I deeply regret that any one should have addressed your lordship in such language. But my opinion as to the unsifted passages in the book for the perusal of any females whatsoever remains the same.

"The Bishop—Then am I to understand that you did not say, as you are reported to have said, that a gentleman, whom you would not name, had, under the pretence of teaching Christian doctrine, lent the book in question to a young woman? Mr. Lamb—I cannot, my lord, charge my memory with the exact words I

used on the occasion. It was simply my intention to bear my testimony to the character of the work. I scarcely believe that I expressed myself in the precise terms reported.

"The Bishop—Now that you have heard the real facts of the case, and the injustice which has been done to Mr. Douglas, in consequence of the words used or attributed to you, do you wish that those words may be cancelled or withdrawn? Mr. Lamb—I cannot be answerable for any report which may appear in the newspaper. I am, however, ready to confess that, had I known the character of the individual to whom the book was given, I should not have omitted to state it. And as the gentleman, whoever he may be, who gave the book, I can only say that I never intended to wound his feelings; and if I have done so, I regret it.

"Archbishop Welby—When you became aware that, in consequence of what you were reported to have said, the character of Mr. Douglas, as a Christian and a clergyman, had been reflected on, did you, by letters or by words, or in any other way, seek to make reparation? Mr. Lamb—If personally called upon by Mr. Douglas, I have no doubt that I shall perfectly satisfy him in the matter."

The sitting of the court was adjourned to the following day, when the Bishop addressed Mr. Lamb in the following terms:—

"Before proceeding to give any decision in this case, I would make one more effort to induce you publicly to declare, either that you never intended to impute unsoundness in the faith to any clergyman in this diocese; or else, that having in an unguarded moment been betrayed into language which could only bear such a construction, you now feel that you were not warranted in casting any imputation upon your brethren, and desire to withdraw any words which may have seemed to imply such an intention, and to apologise for the same. Mr. Lamb—I respectfully submit that I have already given my answer upon this point; and I trust your lordship will pardon me for declining to say anything further in the matter than I have stated in my letter to your lordship of the 23rd December last.

The Bishop—Such being the case, it now only remains that I proceed to give my decision.

The Bishop then proceeded to recapitulate the facts of the case, and concluded as follows:

"Without any apparent grounds, and with no facts to justify your assertions, you stood up publicly and assailed the character of God's ministering servants in this land. After your examination, and the utter failure of all proof to justify your statements, I again gave you an opportunity of withdrawing them and expressing sorrow for the same. But again you refused to make a full and frank apology. It remains only that I should award to you the punishment which I think your fault deserves. There are three degrees of punishment known in our Church, and usually inflicted on offending ministers, according to the degree and nature of their offence—admonition, suspension, deprivation. Your fault, calculated as it has been to introduce strife and division into an otherwise peaceful diocese, would call, in a Church where discipline had long been strictly enforced, for at least the second of these punishments. Being willing, however, to hope that a lighter sentence may suffice, both to vindicate the discipline of this diocese, and to bring one who has shown both zeal and earnestness to a due sense of the greatness of his fault, I shall content myself on this occasion with administering the lightest punishment which a Bishop can inflict upon an offending brother, and admonish you that the sin of which you have been guilty is a very heinous one—no less than that of bearing false witness against your brethren, and using language calculated to impede the usefulness of the Church of which you are a minister, and thereby hinder the Lord's work in this land. You will consider yourself, therefore, as admonished and censured for the course you have, in a far-off land, adopted towards your brethren, while they were cheerfully undertaking your duties, that you might have rest and relaxation. And you will, at the same time, consider this as a warning; for should you unhappily pursue the same course as that into which you have already fallen—should you again undermine your Church by assailing in public the character of its ministers, I shall feel it my duty to inflict those severer punishments which my office requires me to administer to obstinate offenders. It is with infinite pain that I have had recourse to this formal proceeding. I trusted that you would have rendered it unnecessary, by a frank and free confession, that you had been betrayed into the use of language which, on mature thought, you could not justify. This unhappily you have not done. May God so