

ART. III.—*Leonard Lowther.* By the Rev. C. M.
LOWTHER BOUCH.

LEONARD LOWTHER was a natural son of Hugh Lowther, the husband of Dorothy Clifford.

Sir Richard Lowther to Secretary Cecil "Hearing that Sir John Stanhope is gone to the Bath the Bishop of Carlisle will not induct my brother Leonard to Graystock but means to win him six months. I beg your letter to him to institute my brother and not to drive us to a quare impedit." 30 March, 1597.*

He matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, as a sizar in 1570.†

After his death a caveat was entered on 7 Febr. 1609/10 by the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle for the living of Lowther, "on the death of M^r Leonard Hodgson als. Lowther."‡

These three records taken together seem conclusive that Leonard Lowther was a son of Hugh Lowther, but was illegitimate.

As he matriculated at Trinity in 1570, he must have been born towards the very end of his father's life. In 1572/3, he entered Christ's College as a scholar, B.A. 1573/4 and sublector in the same year. In 1577 he was appointed the first Catechist of the College, according to the College accounts.§

He was ordained deacon and priest on 11 August, 1574, in Peterborough Cathedral "ad commend Pres. and Fell. of St. John's Coll., Cambridge."||

* State Papers, Elizabeth, 1595-7, p. 377.

† College Records.

‡ Episcopal Register, 1609/10.

§ Dr. Peile, Biographical Register of Christ's College.

|| Information from Diocesan Registrar, Peterborough.

In 1578, he was proxy for Sir George Howell, clerke, on his collation to the living of Scaleby.*

On 29 Jany., 1577/8 he was instituted to the rectory of Great Orton, on the presentation of Marian Twentyman, to whom this avoidance had been granted by Richard Blennerhasset.† Richard Lowther of Lowther, Esqre. and Thos. Wibergh of Clifton, were his bondmen on 12 May, 1579, for the payment of first fruits.‡

The two following extracts from the Great Orton manor rolls throw a rather humorous light on the relationship of pastor and flock in the 16th century. Perhaps the reverend gentleman was a little overbearing and the parish was rather glad to take him down a peg or two!

“Also we the aforesaid sworne men doo fynde by our corporall othes and the testymoneye of suff[icient] witnesses that Mr Leonard Lowther parson of Orton Kirke within this lordshippe or his servants hath cutt downe felled and also caryd away one ashe tree wch grewe at the backsyde of Will^m Wilson’s house and of and upon the inheritance soile and . . . of the lorde of the manor.” 10 Nov., 1579.

“It is put in payne that Leonard Lowther clarke nor none other that shall gather tieth for him shall leyed any tieth corne of or from on Mansdaill or rigge to . . . daill but shall come owte at the same rigge that they enter in at to the gait agayne without crossing of any rigge or raynes under payne of vis. viiid.” 20 Nov., 1582.

In 26 Elizabeth, Hilary term, Leonard Lowther was party to a fine with John Dalston, Ar. and Frances his wife, for the purchase of five messuages, and lands in Wolmerbye, Broughe, and Moorhouse.§

In 1580, he was presented to the living of Bowness on Solway, on the presentation of Bishop Mey, on a grant

* N. & B. vol. II, 460.

† Register of Great Orton, vi.

‡ First Fruit Composition Books, E334, vol. 9, p. 171.

§ Feet of Fines, Col. P, P. Steel, p. 25.

from the Earl of Arundel and Lord William Howard* and was instituted on 3 September. His bondsmen for first fruits being William Hamonde, St Leonard's, Eastcheap, London, leatherseller and Charles Havers, St Matthew's, Friday St., London, merchant taylor.† This was on 5 August 1581.

He was presented to the family living of Lowther by Sir Richard Lowther in 1586 and was instituted on 15 July.

It is interesting to note that he had resigned the living of Great Orton on 15 December in the previous year, and that on 15 June, 1597, a month after his institution to his next living, Greystoke, which was on 20 May in that year, he resigned Bowness. Either Leonard Lowther had a conscience about the holding of more than two benefices at once, or the Bishop had a rule that this was not allowed.

This living of Greystoke was in the gift of the Earl of Arundel, but as he was under attainder at the time, it had passed to the Queen, who had granted it to Sir Richard Lowther, who presented his brother.‡ It will be remembered that there was difficulty with the Bishop about his institution. Probably the sequestration fees of such a valuable living was a nice little nest egg for the Bishop or one of his friends. Leonard Lowther's bondmen on this occasion were Gerard Lowther of Penrith, Esq^{re} and Nicholas Lowther of Penrith, Gent. The bond was dated 12 May, 1598.§

This Gerard Lowther cannot be the brother of Sir Richard and Leonard, as he died in 1597;|| he must therefore be Sir Richard's son, who was later Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland. His will shews

* N. & B. vol. II, p. 215.

† *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 236.

‡ The evidence for all these statements are the parish episcopal registers.

§ First Fruit, etc., vol. 12, p. 103.

|| *Trans.* N.S. i, 98.

he purchased the inheritance of his uncle Gerrard in Penrith.* But there has previously been no evidence that he ever lived there.

The Greystoke registers record that "on Sunday the nineteenth day of June, 1597 was M^r Leonard Lowther inducted P'son of Greystocke and did make one sermon upon the thirteenth chap^{tr} to the Hebrews, seventeenth verse. "Obey them that have the oversight of you" and he did read the articles set forth by the Archbyshopp and byshops by the Queenes Ma^{tye} aauthoritie in presence of the whole pishe then and there assembled."

These registers throw much interesting light on the state of religion and the frequency of celebrations and sermons in those days. They seem to have been kept by one of the assistant curates who writes with proper respect for "the Right Woorshypfull M^r Leonard Lowther Parson of Grastock."

In 1606, he was elected one of the proctors for the Diocese of Carlisle.†

On 3 December, 1609, the Greystoke registers record "M^r Leonard Lowther parson of Graystocke and Lowther wch M^r Lowther departed to the mercye of God the same day and was buried at Lowther church: the burial there is recorded for the next day.

He left no will, but letters of administration of his estate were granted to his widow, M^{rs} Lucy Lowther, at York on 15 December, 1609.

His wife, Lucy, was a daughter of Thomas Manners of Cheswick, Northumberland. This is proved by the reference in the Greystoke registers to the marriage of John Lowther of Great Orton to Lucy Gray, M^{rs} Lowther's sister daughter.‡ After the grant of letters of administration no further trace can be found of her.

* *Ibid.*, ii, 7.

† Records of Northern Convocation, Surtees Society, p. 281.

‡ *Trans.* N.S. xl, 66.