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## REPLY TO REV. FATHER DIXON'S LETTER

Rev. F. C. Simpson's Sermon on  
The Ne Temere Decree

[The Union Advocate]

The following sermon in reply  
to Rev. Father Dixon's recent  
letter on the United Baptist Con-  
vention and the Ne Temere Decree,  
was preached by Rev. F. C.  
Simpson in his own church in  
Dundas, July 9th, and in  
Newcastle Methodist church on  
the 16th.

Rev. Mr. Simpson took as his  
text—  
"If any man trust to himself  
that he is Christ's, let him of him-  
self think this again, that as he is  
Christ's, even so are we Christ's."  
1 Cor. 10: 7.

It is to be greatly deplored that  
the peace and harmony of our  
young and prosperous Dominion,  
should have been so unnecessarily  
disturbed, and the civil rights of  
the people should have been so  
seriously interfered with, by the  
introduction of, and the attempt  
to enforce, the Ne Temere decree.  
It ought to be possible in this  
land, and in this age, for Chris-  
tians of any church and of every  
church to live and work together  
for the glory of God and the good  
of man. And I am free to say  
that, so far as the enlightened and  
intelligent membership of the  
Catholic Church is concerned, it  
would be possible, if they were  
allowed to exercise their own  
judgment. I am persuaded that  
they share with Protestants the  
desire to "live peaceably with all  
men." I make a distinction as, I  
am sure we should, between the  
Catholic people and the Catholic  
church. The full responsibility  
for all the bitterness and strife  
that is being engendered by the  
obnoxious decree in question must  
rest upon the LEADERS of that  
church. It is a pity that the  
Catholics of this country do not  
follow the example of their co-  
religionists in those countries  
where the church is being so  
clearly taught that it cannot con-  
trol, may not interfere with  
matters civil and political. By its  
insatiable lust for temporal power,  
the church of Rome, if allowed its  
own way, will curse this land, as  
it has cursed those lands which  
have for many centuries been  
dominated by its power.

Behind this Ne Temere decree,  
is the arrogant assumption that  
the church of Rome is the only  
church of Jesus Christ on the  
earth; and when that assumption  
is so offensively heralded forth, it  
is high time to rise in indignant  
protest and to let it be known be-  
yond the peradventure of a doubt,  
that the spirit of our Fathers is  
not dead yet, and that the power  
of Rome can never be a controlling  
power in this fair land. The  
Church and Kingdom of our Lord  
Jesus Christ in the world, is some-  
thing far greater than the church  
of Rome. That spirit of exclusiv-  
iveness, of sacerdotal pride and  
priestly assumption which inspires  
men to cry "the temple of the Lord  
are we" is the precursor of religious  
indifference, ignorance, intolerance  
and infidelity. The true church of  
Jesus Christ is not a Lo here or a  
Le there! It is an ideal that has  
been more or less partially realized  
in all churches, Roman, Greek and  
Protestant; an ideal that has never  
yet been fully realized in any re-  
ligious organization. The truest  
church is the church which re-  
flects most fully the religion of  
Christ, and it is certain that  
Christ's ideal of religion was non-  
sacerdotal, non-political, spiritual,  
personal, democratic; trusting ab-  
solutely for its spread and support  
to the power of truth and the  
power of love in the souls of its  
disciples. Jesus Christ had no  
relation to the priestly order of  
things save one of antagonism.  
He made all the great spiritual  
blessings dependent, not on conse-  
crated rites, but on the possession  
of certain inward and spiritual  
qualities. And the society he  
sought to gather and inspire was  
a brotherhood of equal souls, in  
which every believer was a King  
and Priest unto God; and the only  
authority and greatness were

those of greater goodness and ser-  
vice. Jesus said: "where two or  
three are gathered together in my  
name there am I in the midst  
of them." The presence of Jesus  
in the midst of a company of be-  
lievers constitutes a true church,  
even though there be no priestly  
presence or priestly authority. The  
church of Jesus Christ in the  
world is composed of the aggre-  
gate of all true believers in Him,  
no matter by what name they  
may be known among men. There-  
fore we are perfectly justified in  
appropriating and employing the  
language of our text: "If any man  
trust to himself that he is Christ's,  
let him of himself think this again,  
that as he is Christ's, even so are  
we Christ's." But I promised to  
deal particularly with the letter  
which recently appeared in the  
papers from the pen of Rev. Father  
Dixon, and I shall now proceed to  
do so. And I do so for two rea-  
sons; first, because in his letter  
Father Dixon has attempted to  
give a biased, and in some in-  
stances, an untrue exposition of the  
"Ne Temere Decree"; and second,  
because he himself applies his remarks  
to all who have dared to take similar  
action to that taken by the Es-  
tablishment which recently  
met in Newcastle. The General  
Assembly of the Presbyterian  
church in Canada, which met last  
month in Ottawa, must therefore  
be numbered among those char-  
acterized by Father Dixon as  
gentlemen who appear to be as  
deficient in learning, as they are  
in good judgment and in the pro-  
prieties. Surely it is a piece of  
gratuitous impertinence on the  
part of Father Dixon (to say noth-  
ing of the "proprieties") to apply  
such language to those who  
are at least his equals in  
learning, intelligence, and courtesy.  
Father Dixon assumes far too  
much when he assumes that there  
is widespread ignorance among  
Protestants regarding "the con-  
tents of the Ne Temere Decree  
and its bearing on the people in  
general; such is not the case. Even  
those who may not have read the  
decree, are able to form a fairly  
accurate judgment regarding it.  
When a man holds an apple in his  
hand he does not need a technical  
knowledge of horticulture to know  
that the fruit came from an apple  
tree, and not from a pear tree; and  
a far greater than Father Dixon  
said "by their fruits ye shall know  
them" and again he said "a cor-  
rupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit,"  
and we are being made far more  
familiar than we could wish, with  
the evil fruit of this tree of dis-  
cord.

This decree, which pretends to  
safeguard the moral and religious  
life of Catholics, is in reality em-  
ployed to destroy the sanctity in  
the home life; it is promulgated  
in defiance of our civil laws; yes, and  
in defiance of the plain teaching  
of the New Testament, for the  
converts to Christianity were  
strictly forbidden to put away or  
forsake their heathen and idola-  
trous partners. The marriage was  
to hold good though an unbeliev-  
ing husband or wife refused to  
become a Christian.

Whatever the intention may  
have been in promulgating the  
Ne Temere Decree in this country  
at this time, in point of fact, it is  
an intolerable interference with  
and an encroachment upon the  
civil rights of our people; and by  
methods that are both question-

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"Fruit-a-lives" Alone  
Cures This Disease

A famous scientist states that Consti-  
pation, or non-action of the bowels, causes  
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Constipation is caused by a weak or  
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of the body, is secreted by the liver,  
which in turn should pour out into the  
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bowels. Unless the liver is active, there  
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the result.

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able and unworthy attempts are  
being made to enforce it. I say  
that this decree is promulgated in  
defiance of our civil laws; that is  
true, for it presumes to declare a  
marriage invalid which the law  
has pronounced valid. Father Dixon's  
letter is certainly elaborate but yet  
not as explicit as it might be. The  
Catholic church does not consider  
a marriage between a Protestant  
and Catholic invalid PROVIDED  
THE OFFICIATING CLERGYMAN IS A  
CATHOLIC PRIEST; it is only invalid  
WHEN A PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN  
OFFICIATES AT THE MARRIAGE. Of  
course this is implied in the letter,  
but I think it ought to have been  
clearly stated in a document that  
pretends to enlighten the ignorant.  
Now I want you to see where  
that places the Protestant clergy-  
man. It puts him in a position of  
inferiority which is simply "intol-  
erable in a Protestant country like  
this."

Father Dixon says that in the  
case of a mixed marriage by a  
Protestant clergyman "the Catho-  
lic church will willingly and glad-  
ly heal the wound and undo the  
injury." But how? by requiring  
the Protestant to repudiate his  
marriage, to repudiate the right  
of his own clergyman to marry,  
by making him a traitor; a traitor  
to his own religion and  
country, for to yield to the decree  
of Rome is to yield a homage to  
the Pope which belongs to the  
King, and the Protestant who  
weakly submits to the cajoleries  
and threats of a Catholic priest  
is the man who would sell his coun-  
try to the Pope.

I understand that Father Dixon  
has himself been busy in this way  
"healing the wound and undoing  
the injury." With regard to that  
particular case I wish to say that,  
notwithstanding the Ne Temere  
Decree and the claims of the  
church of Rome regarding the  
validity or the invalidity of a  
marriage, that ceremony of Father  
Dixon's over those two young  
people was not their marriage. If  
you want to know where they  
were legally married, you may  
find the date duly recorded in the  
Provincial record of marriages,  
and you will find the name of the  
clergyman that married them, and  
it is not the name of Father  
Dixon. THAT WAS THE VALID  
MARRIAGE, and all the power of  
Father Dixon and his church can-  
not change it. It is silly and  
wicked for Father Dixon to tell  
such people that they are not mar-  
ried. Let Father Dixon employ  
the authority of his church to  
separate such a couple, and then  
let him undertake to marry one of  
them to a third party and he will  
soon find out whether the marriage  
was valid or not. He knows well  
enough where he would place him-  
self by such folly.

A marriage in this Province is  
valid when the requirements of  
the civil law have been complied  
with, and the ceremony has been  
performed by a CLERGYMAN OF  
ANY CHURCH, who has received  
authority to marry from the Gov-  
ernor in Council and no Catholic  
priest has the right to question  
the validity of a marriage in in-  
terference with the civil law.  
(Continued on Page 4.)

