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REV. F. C. SIMPSON'S REPLY TO REV. P. W. DIXON'S SECOND LETTER ON THE NE TEMERE DECREE.

The following sermon, in reply to Rev. P. W. Dixon's second letter on the Ne Temere decree was preached by Rev. F. C. Simpson in St. Mark's church, Douglastown, on August 6th, 1911.—

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."—Matt. 22:21.

I use these words so my text may appear to be treating Father Dixon as David treated the fallen giant of Gath; for you will remember that this verse was the sword with which he thought to slay and silence me. In spirit and attitude he greatly resembled that ancient enemy of God's chosen people, Goliath, who proudly boasted of his strength and was arrayed, from head to foot, in brass; but all his boasting and all his brass did not save him.

When I had finished reading Father Dixon's letter I also thought of an old Latin saw, which he will be able to interpret for himself, "Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus." Such a heap of inconsequent rubbish, arrogance and insolence, braggadocio and calderdash I have rarely met with. He begins by questioning my right to speak from my own pulpit regarding a matter of vital importance to the Protestants of this country. He says "the man on the street would naturally conclude that Dr. Cousins should have replied to him and insinuates that my speaking was a breach of good breeding. I may say that I have had no communication whatever with Dr. Cousins regarding the matter, and he has nothing to do with my action. Father Dixon says I should have kept quiet and allowed the Dr. to look after his own affairs, that is childish quarrelling. The promulgation of the Ne Temere Decree and the painful and disgraceful consequences, cannot be considered Dr. Cousins' affair. Father Dixon wrote a long letter to the papers purporting to set forth the view of his church with regard to the decree, and it may be presumed he wrote especially for the benefit of Protestants; in that letter he applied his remarks, in a most insolent manner, to ALL WHO SHARED THE VIEWS OF DR. COUSINS. And, frankly and fairly, from my own pulpit, I discussed the matter, presenting the Protestant view of that obnoxious decree and its pernicious effects, AS I HAD A PERFECT RIGHT TO DO. I am quite sure "the man on the street," will concede me that right. Father Dixon charges me with rushing into the limelight. I did nothing of the kind. If there was any such rushing he had it all to himself. Who asked him to publish his elaborate spiteful? I sought no publicity and only gave my sermon to the paper when requested to do so.

"The man on the street" is sharp enough to see that there is NO ARGUMENT in cynical and senseless sneers, or scataleptic and amphibological abuse. Father Dixon ought to be the last man in the world to talk about "the proprieties" and a "breach of good breeding." But after all, what does it matter who preached the sermon? why did not Father Dixon try to answer it? If, instead of whining like a whipped child for the sympathy of "the man on the street," he had in a manly, perhaps I ought to say GENTLEMANLY, way, dealt with my sermon on its merits, he might possibly have done something to show that he is not DEFICIENT IN LEARNING AS IN SOME JUDGMENT AND THE PROPRIETIES" (the capitals are quoted my remarks on the proprieties, I can easily afford to

ignore his personal references in that connection) and then goes on to say that "The Infallibility of the church comprises dogmas of faith and morals, as for instance, the truth of the Trinity, or the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. Discipline changes as conditions of time and place may demand. Thus the liturgy of the East is, in essentials, not the same as in the West. The Tametsi decree has been somewhat amplified by the 'Ne Temere.' No Catholic imagines that they are infallible utterances."

In reply to that I would observe that the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and such doctrines are entirely independent of, and can be in no way affected by, the Roman doctrine of infallibility. These doctrines were held by the church before there was a church of Rome and many centuries before men dreamed of the infallibility of that church. He tells us frankly that his church is not the same in the East as in the West; that with regard to matters of discipline and the decree "Tametsi" and the "Ne Temere" the church is fallible, that is, liable to err and deceive. I quite agree with him. With regard to my statement that there are Catholic countries where the promulgation of this very decree is not tolerated and where the church of Rome stands before the determination and resistance of its own people; he has this to say: the "Ne Temere" decree was promulgated by its publication in Roman Official Documents independent of any view which peoples or governments may take with regard to it. That is a very misleading statement, and will not deceive many; the fact is, that the views of peoples and governments have been most carefully considered, and the decree HAS NOT BEEN PROMULGATED in certain countries BECAUSE THE CHURCH DARES NOT TO PROMULGATE IT. He presumes that I refer to Germany, but I spoke of CATHOLIC countries; Germany is not a Catholic country. This decree is not promulgated in Italy and if Father Dixon presumed to say in Italy, what he presumes to say of people legally married in this country, he would probably find himself in a penitentiary. His explanation with regard to Germany is exceedingly lame. "The Catholic church was unwilling to create an embarrassing condition of things, therefore did not promulgate the 'Tametsi' and has not promulgated the 'Ne Temere.'" "The Pope made special laws for the Germanic provinces" Why? Where does the boasted independence of the church come in? Surely there was fear of the "embarrassing conditions." Who will believe that "the views of peoples and governments," were not considered? The church of Rome moves carefully in that Protestant country, and the priests of Rome, y.e.a., the Pope of Rome cannot insult the memory of the great Reformer with impunity. We may well wonder why the church of Rome has been so willing "to create an embarrassing condition of things" in this country, and under that flag which has given it greater privileges than have been found elsewhere. It is evidently true that the church of Rome repudiates the doctrine of religious equality; there is the constant demand for toleration where it is in the minority, and an equally constant refusal of toleration where it is in the majority. Father Dixon professes to have been moved to immoderate laughter by my references to "this Protestant country" and "that saint of God, Luther." I am afraid it was forced laughter; he did not find much food for mirth in my sermons. However in quoting his

Latin proverb, he forgets another: "Per multum visum potius cogit nosse cultum." He also forgot the French proverb: "Rira bien qui rira le dernier."

There is a personal matter in Father Dixon's letter to which I think I ought to refer; he wonders what English Village I came from? What difference can it make to this matter whether I came from a village or a city? But what does Father Dixon mean? If his words mean anything at all they contain a distinct sneer at village born people, he considers a youth born in a village the intellectual inferior of a youth born in a city. Is that so? of course it is not. The highest positions in church and state have often been filled by those who came from obscure villages. In all professions and trades the foremost places are filled by those who have come from villages. Where did President Lincoln and President Garfield come from? where did our own grand old man Lord Strathcona come from? where did Father Dixon's own bishop come from? where did the present Pope come from? and did not Jesus himself come from an obscure village. Is not Father Dixon's sneer but a repetition of the ancient sneer of the hypocritical Pharisees who despise Jesus because he came from Nazareth? All honor to our village born youths who can achieve success and rise to high and honorable positions. "What will the intelligent people of Douglastown think," of this sneer at villages and village born people? We are proud of our boys when we hear of their success. Some of them appear destined to adorn the priesthood of Father Dixon's own church, and we are justly proud of those, who seem so well able to take care of themselves when placed in competition with city born youths. It so happens that I cannot claim the honor of being born in a village for my home is in one of the large cities of England.

No one however, will wonder much regarding the antecedents of Father Dixon, for his letter is eloquent of his origin and breeding, which he can neither hide nor forget. I might say to him what was said to Peter when he so far forgot himself as to use foul and filthy language altogether unbecoming in a follower of Jesus, "thy speech betrayeth thee."

Father Dixon's claim that "this country was discovered by Catholic pioneers before that Saint of God Martin Luther was privileged to wear pants" needs a little revision. "But why does he drag in Luther there? it is neither smart nor funny and is just as much to the point as it would be for me to say that Father Chiniquy did a great temperance work before Father Dixon was privileged to wear pants."

The claim that the divine commission "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" etc., was given exclusively to the church of Rome, is preposterous. That command was given before there was a church of Rome; it was given to the disciples, and through them to the whole church, which, as I said in my former sermon is something much larger than the church of Rome. But how Father Dixon can say "to this command she has listened in reverend obedience" in view of the history of the church, I cannot see. This command has been no more reverently obeyed than has the command of my text. What is the use of Father Dixon pretending that his church has confined itself to the work of preaching the gospel and seeking to establish the SPIRITUAL KINGDOM of Jesus Christ on earth. The church of Rome is not willing to

render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." She strenuously endeavors to arrogate to herself both the prerogatives of Caesar and God. And this is especially true with regard to this matter of marriage.

The reference to the language of Peter and John when forbidden to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus, is entirely beside the mark. They were not seeking to steal "the things that belonged to Caesar, any more than they were seeking to usurp the power that belongs to God."

Father Dixon asks if I ever heard of the Catholic missionaries who converted peoples from paganism? Of course I have heard of them; and I also have heard what Father Dixon forgot to mention, how, besides converting them, they stole all their rites and ceremonies. He knows well enough that the ceremonies he practices, and the regalia with which he adorns himself, are neither Christian nor scriptural. Such performances were never practiced by the apostles, and we cannot imagine even Peter himself arrayed in such gorgeous apparel. These are purely pagan in their origin; and probably Father Dixon could tell us whose image that really is in the Vatican which is revered as the image of St. Peter. Where did the Pope's title "Pontiff" come from? Not from the New Testament. It was the title of the Pagan priests of Rome for centuries before the time of Christ. It was later adopted by the Roman Emperors, and when they dropped it, it was picked up by the Christian bishops of Rome; and now this title, borrowed from a pagan cult, forms one of the sacred designations of the Pope. He asks further if I have heard of the "Jesuits" and their work "which is the admiration of cultured people to this day"? Of course I have; and I have also heard something about them which Father Dixon forgot to mention, namely, that they have been expelled again and again from almost every Catholic country in Europe; and that in 1773 the entire order was suppressed by a brief of Pope Clement the fourteenth and all their goods confiscated. THAT IS TRUE and I did not find it in "Fox's book of Martyrs." He refers with pride to their early labors in this country; but what did Frontenac say of them? and their missions to the Indians? In a confidential despatch to the Court of France he said "The Jesuits will not civilize the Indians because they wish to keep them in perpetual wardship. They think more of beaver skins than of souls and their missions are pure mockeries. With scornful contempt he repudiated my statement that this is a Protestant country. I rather think in speaking so boldly he was speaking out of school." But you will not fail to see how thoroughly he corroborates my other statement that this country is now claimed by the Church of Rome as a Catholic Country. He cannot refrain from repeated reference to Luther and Henry VIII. He must surely deeply deplore the action of Pope Clement VII by which England was lost to the Church of Rome. But who can believe that if that catastrophe could have been averted by the granting of a divorce, it would have been granted? A church, as elastic in its discipline, and as accommodating in its dispensations and special laws, as Father Dixon shows his church to be, would have found some way to pronounce Henry's marriage "null and void."

I said that the Church of Rome is not willing to "Render unto

Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." That church claims the right to rule over morally as well as spiritually; he claims the right to rule in civil matters, and that in spite of the words of Jesus. By these words he clearly indicated the attitude his followers should take, and was an example to them in refusing to be drawn into matters civil and political. He distinctly stated that his kingdom is not a temporal kingdom. To Pilate he said "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, they would have fought against me."

When Peter drew a sword he rebuked him and said "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Paul said: "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal," and Peter said: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him." Can Father Dixon pretend that the history of the Church of Rome harmonizes with these scriptures? There is resistance, rebellion and defiance of civil laws and civil rights. And how has that church robbed God of his prerogatives? By making that sin, which He has not made sin. What is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law," whose law? Paul makes the matter very clear; but Father Dixon would say "sin is the transgression of the varying precepts of the Pope who makes one set of rules for one country and a different set for another, so that what is sin in one place is not sin in another place." Father Dixon will know that I did not find the following in Fox's book of Martyrs. Question: "Do the precepts of the Church oblige under pain of mortal sin?" Answer: "Yes." In another part of the same book I find this: "It is called mortal sin because it kills the soul; which is sanctifying grace; and because it brings everlasting death and damnation on the soul." It is a mortal sin for a Catholic to be married to a Protestant by a Protestant clergyman IN THIS COUNTRY, but it is not a mortal sin in Germany. It is a mortal sin today, but was not a mortal sin before 1908. The decree Tametsi was never promulgated in Scotland or England or indeed in Protestant countries generally; and then three centuries after the close of the Council of Trent, the CATHOLIC DICTIONARY (1884, p. 436) bearing the imprimatur of Cardinal Manning pointed out that "the marriages of Protestants or Catholics before the Protestant clergyman or magistrate, or without any functionary, in these countries, are valid. But all this is changed by the Ne Temere decree, so that what was not adultery before 1908 is now adultery; and what was a valid marriage is now no marriage at all. Is it not blasphemous presumption in any church to say that marriages are null and void before God which a little while ago she declared to be valid and true and which she continues to recognize as valid and true in some countries?"

Father Dixon is horrified at the thought of "a government of infidels" tampering with the Levitical impediments. By what right then has the Pope tampered with and changed them? He claims the right to change the law of God respecting marriage. Is that rendering unto God the things that are God's? In proof of what I have just said, I may tell you, that of the twelve Tridentine Canons concerning marriage, three run thus:—

"If any one saith, that those

degrees only of consanguinity and affinity, which are set down in Leviticus, can hinder matrimony from being contracted, and dissolve it when contracted; and that the church cannot dispense in some of those degrees, or establish that others may hinder and dissolve it; let him be anathema."

"If one saith, that the church could not establish impediments dissolving marriage; or that she has erred in establishing them; let him be anathema."

"If any one saith, that matrimonial causes do not belong to ecclesiastical judges; let him be anathema."

If that is not arrogating the prerogatives of both Caesar and God, what is it? The church makes unscriptural and unlawful impediments, but for a monetary consideration will remove them; and of course the greater the impediment the greater the cost of the dispensation.

"Whence came this knack? or who did it begin?"

Did Christ e'er keep a custom house for sin?"

No dispensation of the Pope, can make a thing a MORTAL SIN, which is not a sin in His sight. Neither can a sin be changed into a virtue by a dispensation however much may have been paid for it. This shows how wrong it is for Father Dixon to tell people that they are living "in a state of sin" whom the state declares lawfully married. Again, Father Dixon fears that a government of infidels might legislate away "the fundamental rules or principles governing society." What must be said of a church that is attempting to do that very thing? The foundations of society are endangered by this recent decree; our laws and liberties are threatened; happy homes are destroyed; an affectionate husband, in fear for his soul's salvation has been persuaded to leave a loving wife, to steal away her two infants and hide them. She is heart-broken and crying for her children. By this very decree she has been robbed of her loved ones. Could infidels do worse?

There is just one thing more to which I shall now refer as briefly as possible. Father Dixon says Protestant ministers are NO LONGER Christian; (it is good to find him confessing that they were Christian) he says, they have lost faith in the Divinity of Christ and the truths of Christianity; this, he says, is a sad fact which cannot be denied. I most emphatically deny it. A man is sorely pressed when he seeks refuge in lies. I unhesitatingly characterize Father Dixon's statement as a willful and malicious falsehood. Let him take our catechism and compare it with his own and he will find that we hold MORE FIRMLY and teach more faithfully "the truth as it is in Jesus," the truth of our Lord's Divinity, than he does himself.

I had purposed referring to some other things, but what I have said will suffice, for the present. I think I have answered Father Dixon's query, "has he forgotten the command of Christ, 'Render unto Caesar and unto God the things which are God's.'" I shall close by quoting two verses from Martin Luther's majestic hymn (the man Father Dixon called "a weakling").

(Continued on Page 4)

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