

said in my first sermon is quite true, that behind this decree is the arrogant assumption that the Church of Rome is the only Church of Jesus Christ on the earth. Of course we cannot be expected to allow any such claim to go unchallenged. We Presbyterians are just as truly members of Christ's true Church as are the devout and pious members of the Roman Catholic Church.

I very briefly referred to Father Dixon's statement that "Christ consecrated marriage by making it one of the seven sacraments." I said that Christ did no such thing, and challenged Father Dixon to give scriptural authority for his statement; but he very carefully avoided that question. Let us now look a little further into that pretention. The Catholic Church teaches that "the marriage of all Catholics before a Protestant minister is *no marriage at all*." "The marriage of all fallen-away Catholics, who have become Protestants, before a Protestant minister, is *no marriage at all*." "The marriage of a Catholic to a Protestant, before a Protestant minister, is *no marriage at all*." And this, though they have solemnly pledged themselves in the sight of God; and, in the name of the Holy Trinity, have been declared husband and wife by the officiating clergyman. Such persons the Church of Rome says *cannot receive the sacrament of marriage*. They can only receive the sacrament of marriage *when a priest of Rome officiates*. And yet, two Catholics *can marry themselves* and receive the sacrament of marriage WITHOUT A PRIEST OR ANY RELIGIOUS SERVICE WHATEVER. Section VIII in the decree reads as follows: "Should it happen that in any district the parish priest, or the Ordinary of the place, or a priest delegated by them, before whom marriage can be celebrated, is not to be had, and that this condition of affairs has lasted for a month, marriage may be validly and licitly entered upon by the formal declaration of consent made by the contracting parties in the presence of two witnesses." That is to say, if two Catholics happen to be living in a Protestant community many miles from a priest of Rome, they have the authority of the Pope to *ignore the civil law*, and repudiate the right of a Protestant clergyman to marry them. They can call in two friends and marry themselves. They are joined together by God and receive the sacrament of marriage. The sacrament of marriage therefore is something altogether apart from the priest, nor is he necessary to it. Surely in view of such strange teaching as that, no sane or intelligent person, Catholic or Protestant, should question the validity of a marriage between *any two persons* who have most solemnly, in the sight of God, and in accordance with the requirements of law and