

Be Strong. Be strong to hope, oh Heart! Though day is bright, The stars can only shine in the dark...

A MIXED MARRIAGE. A Presbyterian Minister's Trial for Marrying a Nominal Catholic.

The Presbytery of Washington had a queer case before it last week. A marriage was had before it by fifty-nine members of the North Presbyterian Church...

After some statements pro and con, Mr. Ramsdell himself addressed the Presbytery. He gave a history of the connection with the church of which he is pastor, showing its gradual rise to prosperity under his ministrations.

Judge Drake, of the Court of Claims, who is an Elder in the Presbyterian Church, offered the following preamble and resolutions:

"The Presbytery, without meaning to express any personal censure upon Mr. Ramsdell or any personal reflection upon his wife, who is understood to be a very estimable lady, deem it their duty to make the following declaration and to take the following action:

"First—We do declare our solemn judgment that no Presbyterian minister has a moral right to marry a Catholic woman, because it cannot fail to weaken, and perhaps finally destroy his ministerial influence, to be so connected with one whose religious belief teaches her to regard all Protestants as heretics.

"Second—In our judgment it is an obstacle to the prosperity of any Presbyterian church for its pastor to contract such an alliance.

"Third—On this ground it is ordered that the pastoral relation between Mr. Ramsdell and the North Presbyterian Church, of Washington, be dissolved, and that a member of the Presbytery be appointed to declare the said vacant."

A sharp discussion ensued. Judge Drake said that there is a bitter antagonism in the Presbyterian Church to the Catholic Church that will not admit a compromise. Rev. Mr. Kelly thought it was not in the province of the Presbytery to say unto a man or woman he should marry; he should not marry. Rev. Mr. Little declared that Rev. Mr. Ramsdell had no moral right to marry a Catholic wife. Rev. Mr. Bittinger approved that declaration.

After several other speakers had ventilated their views, the Rev. Mr. Kelly submitted a motion signed by eighty-seven members of the North Presbyterian Church, narrating the pastor's work, eulogizing his worth and affirming that any attempt to expel him from his office would be unchristian and unwise.

The same clergyman proposed this substitute for Judge Drake's resolution: "Resolved, that this Presbytery hereby expresses its firm conviction that marriages should not be contracted between Presbyterian ministers and members of the Roman Catholic Church.

Yet, in the present instance, in view of the past self-denial and untiring labors of the pastor of the North Presbyterian Church, and in view of the expressed desire of a majority of its congregation for the continuance of the present pastoral relation, and in view of the fact that it appears that his wife does not oppose him in his office work, we recommend that the petitioners, seeking the promotion of peace and harmony in the church and endeavoring to advance the spiritual interests of all parties concerned in the matter, do, under existing circumstances, perform their duties in and yield to the church."

A lengthy controversy followed, which was participated in by the friends and opponent of Mr. Ramsdell. Dr. Sunderland asked Elder Salmon if he thought the pastor's marriage a sin, and was answered that the Elder would not like to call it a sin, but a great moral wrong. Judge Jones said that a pastor had married a Christian woman, who stands in the fear and love of the Lord, and declared that to send drift her husband would be an act of persecution.

Judge Drake obtained leave to alter one of his resolutions so as to make it read: "That no Presbyterian minister, in view of his conditional obligation as such, has the moral right to marry a Roman Catholic woman."

three resolutions were next put to the vote and lost. Mr. Kelly's substitute was also defeated. Drs. Sunderland, Noble and Chester, and Elders Ballantyne and Blackfan were then appointed a committee to map out a course of action for Presbytery. A majority and a minority report were made by this committee. The majority said:

"The special committee, appointed to draft a minute in the memorial from members of the North Church congregation, have respectfully to report that they have given the most earnest consideration to the subject matter of the memorial, which involves no less than the question of the expediency of the dissolution of the pastoral relation of the Rev. C. B. Ramsdell to said church.

"And, as the result of our deliberations, and in view of all the facts of the case and all the probabilities of the future in connection with this church and its pastor, we recommend that, until God in His providence shall indicate more clearly the duty of Presbytery in this case to interpose its authority in attempting to compose the difficulties existing in said church, the whole subject be postponed.

"E. SUNDERLAND, Chairman. "MASON NOBLE, "JOSEPH H. BLACKFAN."

The minority said: "The Presbytery, after having patiently listened to the statements of the memorialists and the counter-statements of those who are in favor of retaining Mr. Ramsdell, do hereby express it as their opinion that the peace and prosperity of the North Presbyterian Church would be promoted by a dissolution of the pastoral relation.

"JOHN CHESTER. "WILLIAM BALLANTYNE." These reports were both lost by a tie vote of 14 to 14.

A motion to discharge the committee and lay the whole matter on the table was in the end carried by 14 to 11 votes.

The original memorialists will take the case by petition to the Baltimore Synod which meets in October, and thence, if necessary, to the General Assembly.

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