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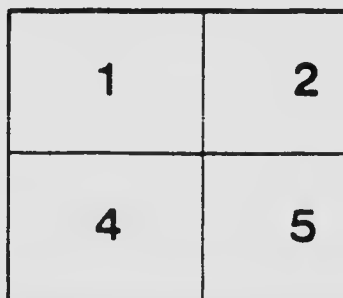
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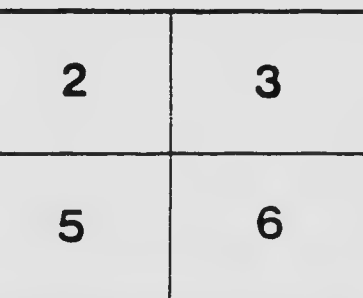
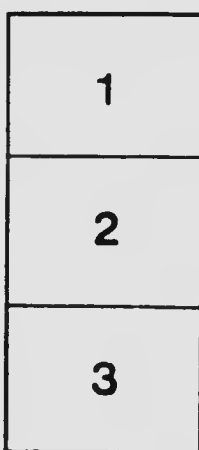
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Rev. F. C. Simpson's Third Sermon on the Ne Temere Decree

The following sermon in reply to Rev. P. W. Dixon's third letter on the "Ne Temere" decree was preached by Rev. F. C. Simpson in St. Mark's church, Douglastown, on Aug. 27th, 1911:

"What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder."—Mark X-9.

In my last sermon on the "Ne Temere" decree, I intimated my purpose of dealing further with the subject. Father Dixon has spoken again and claims that I have steered clear of the main issue in discussion; that I "have not answered, not even attempted to answer," his letter. If he can find consolation in such self-delusion he is entirely welcome to it. I certainly did not *exhaust* the subject, nor shall I do so on the present occasion: but it is equally certain that I did not evade "the main issue;" and others can judge as to whether I answered his letter or not. In Father Dixon's own letters there is a strange evasion of "the main issue," and a deliberate attempt to turn the discussion from it. Why did he introduce Luther, Henry VIII; the early Catholic missionaries, and the Jesuits? Why did he go out of his way to indulge in indecent and insulting personalities? Why did he drag in, the question of Christ's Divinity, making such slanderous statements in connection with it? Of course his purpose is easily discerned, but what had these things to do with "the main issue" in discussion? And yet he says, "As Mr. Simpson has steered clear of the main issue in discussion, preferring to indulge in vulgarity, I shall adhere to my resolution to take no further notice of his sermons." That is very amusing. I can say with regard to the "vulgarity" what I said of "rushing into the limelight." Father Dixon has had it all to himself. And we shall see whether he adheres to his resolution or not.

If, in his first letter, Father Dixon had given a fair presentation and exposition of the "Ne Temere" decree, couched in

respectable language, he would have done something commendable; even though his view might have been a prejudiced one. But, his "statement" was *deceptive and misleading*. He said "the decree *Ne Temere* does not deal with Protestants, encroaches upon no rights or liberties of theirs. It is expressly declared that this new law has nothing to do with those who are not Catholics." I have here in my hand this famous decree and an exposition of it bearing the imprimatur of a Catholic Archbishop. It is abundantly clear from this book that the Church of Rome claims the right to legislate for all Christians; and if Protestants are "not bound" by the new decree, it is because of the pretended grace of the Pope. His claim is that *he might have bound them if he had chosen to do so*. Let me read a little from this wonderful book (this is not "Fox's Book of Martyrs"): "The part of the *Ne Temere* that deals with mixed marriages brings into bold relief the doctrine of the Catholic Church and of Christ, that the origin and fountain source of religious and civil Christian society is a sacramental one—the great Sacrament of Matrimony—and not a mere contract between individuals, dependent upon the whims and fancies of those who make it; not a contract that the State can ratify or annul, but a contract that the hand of God Himself has sealed and signed—a contract on which He has written, 'What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.'" The Church in terms that cannot be mistaken announces to the world: "I and I alone, know the power that Christ communicated to me, and I now reiterate the declaration to the world that among Christians there is no distinction between the marriage contract and the Sacrament of Matrimony, and I declare that I alone can impose the conditions under which Christians can or cannot receive this sacrament. I declare that the State can no more administer the Sacrament of Matrimony, or impose conditions for its administration, than it can administer any of the other sacraments entrusted to my keeping. I now decree for the universal Church a certain form absolutely essential which will give every marriage publicity. I decree that this form is necessary for Catholics among themselves, and for Catholics who marry non-Catholics, whether the latter are baptized or non-baptized. I decree every other form, whether approved by the State or by any schismatical or heretical sect, to be invalid. I further declare that every such form is as worthless as a form invented by the parties themselves, and as useless as if no form whatever were observed. By Catholics I mean everyone who has ever been received into the Catholic Church. I declare that I have the God-given power to bind refractory

subjects, and all who have ever been validly baptized in any form or expression of Christianity." Again, under the head of those affected by the decree, the following are included: "All Catholics baptized as infants but who have fallen away from the Church. These irrespective of age at the time of baptism, or subsequent relapse into heresy, schism or infidelity continue to be bound by the decree as long as they live." We read further, "there will be many of this class amongst us. Baptized children falling into the hands of Protestants, growing up as Protestants, knowing nothing of the law of the Catholic Church which declares their marriage invalid unless celebrated before a duly authorized priest, will be living in concubinage, and not in lawful wedlock." Is not this a monstrous interference with the civil and religious liberty of the individual? All Protestants who happened to receive baptism at the hands of a Catholic, whether a priest, a nurse, or an unduly officious doctor; and who have been married according to the requirements of the civil law and the rites of their own Church, are declared by the Pope to be living in adultery. The Church of Rome "does not allow one baptized to transfer his or her allegiance from one religion to another, or rather from the true religion to so-called religion." And yet Father Dixon says in his "statement" that "the Decree *Ne Temere* does not deal with Protestants, encroaches upon no rights or liberties of theirs, has nothing to do with those who are not Catholics." And what an audacious slur it is to speak of Protestantism as a "so-called religion." No wonder that Bishop Mills in opening the Anglican Synod of Ontario last June said in reference to this decree: "We certainly as a Church and as British subjects, cannot be silent when we are not only assailed by insulting words, but our liberties, and the laws of the land are openly attacked and set aside. The Pope's proclamation that a marriage by a Protestant minister, is no marriage, is grossly insulting and audacious, opposed to morality, opposed alike to the laws of God and of Christian nations."

I cannot refrain from giving you another quotation from this authoritative statement of the Catholic Church: "Many Protestants may think the Church presumptuous in decreeing their marriages valid or invalid accordingly as they have or have not complied with certain conditions. As the Church cannot err, neither can she be presumptuous. She alone is judge of the extent of her power. Any one validly baptized either in the Church or among heretics, becomes thereby a subject of the Roman Catholic Church." You see very clearly that what I

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

religion, given themselves to each other. And no man has the right, not even the Pope himself, to attempt to put asunder what God in this way has joined together. We cannot accept the preposterous claim that the Pope "can of his own authority change or dispense with all legislation purely ecclesiastical." He is bound by the laws of God just as any other man is bound; and Father Dixon could not shew where the Pope received his authority to tamper with and change the Levitical impediments.

It is somewhat strange that the *Ne Temere* decree nowhere discourages or disapproves of mixed marriages: indeed it distinctly makes provision for them. One cannot help wondering why the Church of Rome, with its boasted power and independence, does not forbid Catholics from marrying *heretics* altogether, under pain of excommunication—that would be a consistent position: but of course it would not be profitable for the Church. In providing for mixed marriages the rights of Protestants, and especially of Protestant clergymen, are rudely ignored. If the Protestant party will not change his faith, he must at least promise that all his children shall be "baptized in the Catholic Church and brought up in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic religion." The Protestant clergyman is not supposed to have any right to object to this arrangement, much less to interfere with it.

It is clearly taught in this same book that a Catholic is not bound by any promise made to a Protestant who is not willing to be married by a priest: and it is very evident that extreme pressure is employed to win unwilling converts. I shall not deal any further just now with this decree, except to say that it is unquestionably being employed to bring into subjection to the Pope of Rome those over whom he has no jurisdiction whatever. Let us not make any mistake with regard to the avowed purpose of the Romish Church. Cardinal Manning in his own day voiced the policy of the Church with regard to England. And his words have their application here. He said: "It is yours to subjugate and subdue, bend and break the will of an imperial race, the will which, as the will of Rome of old, rules over nations and peoples, invincible and inflexible. Surely a soldier's eye and a soldier's heart would choose by intuition this field of England for the warfare of faith. It is the head of Protestantism, the centre of its movements, and the stronghold of its powers." He was quite right, but had a very mistaken idea of the British people if he thought they could ever be brought into subjection to Rome. The Rt. Rev. Archbishop

Bourne of London labors under a similiar delusion; he said in Toronto last summer: "What a power for true civilization would England be if it only had the guidance of the Holy Catholic Church." *Where are the nations to-day that have been blessed with that guidance?* You see in all this the lust for temporal power; and it is against this we must WATCH! The perfect equality of every citizen of this fair Dominion, civil and religious, must be maintained *at any cost*.

I must refer now to Father Dixon's infamous slander on Protestant ministers which he repents without the slightest particle of proof. You will notice however that he "modifies" his statement somewhat. He says, "I asserted that Protestant ministers are losing, and in many cases have lost faith in the divinity of Christ and the fundamental truths of Christianity." What he really asserted was that *all* Protestant clergymen "*with a few honourable exceptions*" had lost faith, &c. Now he aggravates his charge by saying "Mr. Simpson appears to be very ignorant of current events. Does he not know that the young men who have been for the past few years ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church have absolutely refused to make a profession of faith in the divinity of Christ, for the simple reason that they did not believe in it." No! I certainly do not know it. NEITHER DOES FATHER DIXON! He is possessed of abnormal gullibility if he has heard and swallowed any such scandalous story, and is stupidly "ignorant of current events" to think for a moment that it is true. After my emphatic denial, "the man on the street would naturally conclude" that he would either retract, or substantiate his statement with some proof. Mere assertion is not enough, even though it is Father Dixon that makes the assertion.

In connection with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, we have Theological Colleges at Halifax, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Now I will challenge Father Dixon to give the name of a single graduate from any of these Colleges, in recent years, *or at any time*, who "absolutely refused to make a profession of faith in the Divinity of Christ, for the simple reason that he did not believe in it." I will challenge Father Dixon to name one of our Presbyteries, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which at any time ordained a man to the ministry who "absolutely refused to make a profession of faith in the Divinity of Christ." If Father Dixon cannot prove his statement, and does not withdraw it, he stands before the whole community CONVICTED OF A WILFUL, MALICIOUS AND SLANDEROUS LIE.

I have here another little book, and it is not "Fox's Book of Martyr's" either, for it bears the imprimatur of several Catholic Archbishops and Bishops. In this book I find something which might well and profitably engage Father Dixon's attention for a little while:

Q—What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A—The eighth commandment forbids all false testimonies, rash judgments and lies.

Q—What is commanded by the eighth commandment?

A—It commands us to speak of others with justice and charity, as we would be glad they did speak of us; and to witness the truth in all things.

Q—What must they do who have given false evidence against a neighbor, or have spoken ill of him, or injured his character in any respect?

A—They must repair the injury done him, as far as they are able, and make him satisfaction by restoring his good name as soon as possible, otherwise the sin will not be forgiven him."

If Father Dixon *could* shew that in some solitary case a man had been ordained to the ministry who had repudiated the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, or if he *could* prove that some particular College had transgressed in this direction, *even that* would not justify him in making his sweeping and unwarrantable charge. I might here quote from a Catholic paper recently published which makes a very refreshing admission: "If they read but the names of a few unworthy Popes, why be silent with regard to the great majority of St. Peter's successors who have been the most potent religious and moral forces of the world?" A very fair proposition indeed. Father Dixon rolls his abominable slander under his tongue as a delicious morsel but he forgets the words of the wise man, "the bread of deceit (lying) is sweet unto a man, but afterward his mouth shall be filled with gravel." He can however hurt no one but himself by his false statements. I could not help thinking, in this connection, of the experience of a Canadian clergyman in London, when making his first visit to the Old Country. One Sunday afternoon he heard a man in Hyde Park denouncing the King, the Monarchy and the government generally. Turning to a gentleman standing near, the clergyman expressed surprise that such damnable treason could be tolerated; with a smile the gentleman replied, "Oh don't you know, it does him a lot of good and it don't hurt the Empire."

Father Dixon's statement is just as unfair as it would be for me to judge the whole of the priesthood of the Church of Rome by what he has shown himself to be in this controversy. I know them well enough to be able to say that, as a class, they are not "as deficient in learning, in good judgment and the proprieties" as he is.

We ought to feel exceedingly grateful to Father Dixon for his admission that our CATECHISM is quite Orthodox--you will now have full confidence in your Catechism since he approves of it.

It appears that Father Dixon "cannot open his mouth without putting his foot in it." He speaks in his last letter of "the dark ages." In his former epistle he denied that there were any "dark ages." He said that the archives of London, Berlin, Paris and Rome are being searched and the discovery is being made that all the history of those dark days is "a conspiracy against the truth." Much more honest is the Catholic article from which I have already quoted :

"We have no hesitancy in admitting that the Church has seen dark days. There have been in high places clerics of reprehensible conduct. Prelates and rulers of the Church have been guilty of grave offence against the moral law. Sins have abounded in the ecclesiastical state. All this has been chronicled and may be viewed as proof of how far men, forgetting principle and duty, may go away from the path of rectitude."

In closing let me say that I have no quarrel whatever with Catholics as such. As I said in my first sermon, I believe that the Catholic people themselves desire the things that make for peace. I cannot but admire the piety and devotion manifested among them. I am sure that many of them believe that though in forms of worship we do not agree, we are all the children of one Heavenly Father; servants of the same Divine Master, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that we are being guided by the same Divine Spirit; that we have the same glorious hope of a blessed immortality, through that faith in Christ which is the present and eternal triumph over death; and that at last we shall find ourselves in the everlasting home which Christ has prepared for all them that love Him and wait for His appearing.



