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NE TEMERE DECREE

WAS STRONGLY DENOUNCED BY
DEAN RIDWELL.

If Present Rule is Allowed to Continue, It Will Mean Secularization of Marriage.

The "Ne Temere" decree, was strongly denounced in St. George's cathedral, on Sunday night, by Dean Ridwell. His remarks followed his reading of the pastoral letter of the bishops of Canada. He said: "The circumstances which have induced the bishops of our church, to issue the pastoral letter which I have just read to you are, I suppose sufficiently familiar to you all, and therefore I need not repeat them. I need only say that the facts are all that is required. The church of Rome has issued a decree, known from the words with which it commences as the 'Ne Temere' decree, Latin being the language employed for official documents by that church, respecting marriage, the gist of which is that no marriage, where one of both of the contracting parties are Roman Catholics, can be recognized as valid unless it is performed by a Roman Catholic priest. There are other restrictions and provisions; but that is the most important point. It is because the enforcement of this decree appears to be a most dangerous menace to the stability of an institution which is on the one hand, a divine ordinance, and on the other, as is rightly claimed in the bishop's pastoral, the very foundation of social and family life, that a wave of indignation and resentment has been aroused among all who recognize the mischievous results likely to accrue from this unfortunate decree."
"In considering this question, we shall be ready to admit, as indeed this pastoral letter admits, that any religious body has a right to make rules for its own members. But an important qualification must be added. These rules ought not to be allowed to be enforced if they clearly and obviously tend to produce results which are opposed to what the community as a whole believes to be essential to its highest ideals of justice, and as likely to affect injuriously its general well being, or if they impair or destroy the rights possessed by every citizen. The case under discussion is emphatically an instance where this qualification has not been observed, and for that reason, the enforcement of it must be resolutely opposed."

"Let us make it clear that this opposition does not arise from any low view of the marriage bond, such as that it is merely a human contract, a matter for the state to settle its regulations, quite apart from the church. It is more than that; as a divine as well as a human institution in Canada, the church has a perfect right to a voice in the matter as the state has always hitherto recognized. The Church of England does not allow its clergy knowingly to marry any divorced person during the life time of the former partner in the marriage. Now, the position maintained by our church, which is based upon Christ's own teaching on the subject, as we understand it, and is of complete accordance with the solemn pronouncement in the marriage ceremony, "Those Whom God Hath Joined together, let man put asunder," is supported by the moral sense of the community, because there are very few who would maintain that divorce is anything but an evil because it saps the foundation of the moral strength of any nation, which is family life. But to withhold the sanction and blessing of the church from such union is a very different matter from pronouncing them null and void, if legally performed."

What Marriage is.
"In order to understand grave and detrimental results to social well-being likely to result from the enforcement of the Ne Temere decree, it is necessary to have a clear view of what marriage is in its complete aspect. It is then, in the first place, a divine ordinance. But it was ordained for mankind, living not in isolation, but in communities, to be in fact, as we have seen, the great pillar of social life, the great source of moral strength to any society, kingdom or nation. From one point of view, then, marriage is being ordained by God, might be called a sacrament, though we ourselves prefer to limit that name to the two great sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, and that the church can rightly endeavor to maintain the ideal of marriage set out by our Lord. But it has to be recognized that as we do not live isolated lives, but as members of a community, there must also be a social and civil aspect of marriage which cannot be overlooked. From this point of view a marriage legally carried out, confers a certain social and civil status upon the two contracting parties, implying obligations which can be legally enforced, and this legal status affects not only the persons concerned, but their children. The rights of inheritance to property, for instance, is an integral part of the marriage contract. It is not possible that the well-being of any community must be endangered by a claim which tends to weaken the stability of an institution, the roots of which penetrate so deeply into the religious, social and moral sense of the people, and the interference with which involves such serious consequences to the domain of the legal and civil status of both parents and children."

"For observe what has already occurred. In the province of Quebec, a marriage between two Roman Catholics has already been annulled, under the provisions of the statute which is performed by a Protestant minister. It is claimed that in that province, such annulment is not only ecclesiastical, but also civil in its force, and consequently not only is the wife declared to be no wife, with no legal claim or support, on the part of the supposed husband, but the child of the marriage is branded with the stigma of illegitimacy. As I understand that an appeal is to be made to the privy council, as to the legality of this decision, the case is still apparently sub judice, no further comment upon it is warranted at present, except that it is very difficult to see how any such action on the part of those who have taken it, whether it be within their legal rights or not, can be justified in view of the deplorable results which have already resulted from the similar action, in Quebec, upon whom the state has conferred the right to perform marriages, without any such restriction as is implied in the decision above referred to, are placed in a most invidious position, and are in danger at any moment of being stripped of their rights in strict accordance with rights legally given them pronounced to be illegal."

"Of course, outside the province of Quebec there can be no question of any setting aside of the legal rights and obligations set up by a marriage performed in accordance with the law of the land. But where any mischief can be done by the enforcement of this decree, there is, in the first place, the imminent danger of the breaking up of the home. If one or other of the parties to a marriage, not performed in accordance with the law of the land, is told with all the tremendous force of a supposedly infallible announcement that he or she is living in sin, separation is likely to be the result, in many cases, with disastrous consequences to all concerned. I understand that this has already occurred in one well-known case in this province. Now to the plain man, or to the religious man, or to the man who desires in every way to uphold the morality of the law of the land, the recognition of the divine sanction of such morality, it appears to be nothing less than the most complete misuse of language, characteristic unions which have been entered into with the blessing of religion and the fullest compliance with the law of the land, as being sinful unions, simply because the officiating religious minister is not a Roman Catholic. It seems to me that such a contention is far more likely to drive men away from religion altogether than to attract them to it, for they cannot but see that the results it produces are clearly contrary to those notions of duty and justice which are amongst man's highest possessions and must be believed to be divinely implanted in his heart. Nor is it right that in the case of a mixed marriage performed by a Protestant minister, either in the past or the future, one of the contracting parties should know that he or she can repudiate it at any time, as far as its most solemn obligations are concerned, even if legal rights and claims remain unimpaired."

Family Life Endangered.
"Now, I imagine that our Roman Catholic brethren desire as ardently as we do, to maintain the sanctity and integrity of marriage and family life. Surely, then, they must see that this decree, if enforced against those who have contravened its regulations, cuts at the very roots of the institution which must beyond all others be preserved intact. Something more than an ecclesiastical rule is needed to justify a pronouncement producing such grave and far-reaching effects. It is one thing to maintain at all costs, that marriage is a divine institution, which once entered into is indissoluble till the death of one of the parties, for that teaching is based upon the teaching of Christ. It is quite another to assert that a marriage contracted between two persons is null and void, because one or other of them being a Roman Catholic they have been married by a Protestant minister, with due religious observances, and in accordance with the law of the land. To such a contention we are bound to offer, in the interest, as we believe, of religion itself, and of the moral and social life of our nation, the most strenuous opposition."
"For if the present state of affairs is allowed to continue, there can only be one inevitable result, and that is the complete secularization of marriage. It will be enacted that only those marriages will be considered legal by the state, which are contracted before a state official without any religious ceremony at all, it being left to the free choice of the contracting parties whether they will ask for the recognition of their marriage by their church in a special religious service or not. Such civil marriages are already in vogue in some countries, being legal even in England, though this

method is far less often resorted to there, than marriage by a minister of religion. Now all who believe that holy matrimony is a divine institution cannot but see a very grave danger to the high position it holds, and to the great value in maintaining the integrity of family life, if it is reduced to a mere civil formality before a registrar. There cannot under those circumstances be, at least for the majority of men, the same sense of the sanctity, high claims, responsibilities in the sight of God, as well as of men, belonging to the union to which they have listened to nothing but a dry legal formula, as is naturally produced by the solemn religious service reminding them in the most emphatic and emphatic terms that it is God who has bound them together, and made them one. The complete secularization of marriage is for this, and many other reasons therefore a contingency much to be deprecated. But the fact that it has already been proposed, in some quarters, as a solution of the present difficulty, shows the acute stage the question has reached."

"In conclusion we ought never to forget that a high ideal of marriage and family life is absolutely necessary if a nation is to be sound at the core. We hear little of divorce in Canada. God grant that it never may become common, for it is bound to create far worse evils than it is likely to relieve. No effort should be spared, and no labor be considered too great, to preserve inviolate and unviolated the sanctity of the home. It is that which must be defended at all costs, and whatever be the outcome of the widespread opposition aroused by this unfortunate and ill-timed decree, at least we may be thankful that it has brought before men's minds, in a forcible and striking manner, how closely interwoven in the last resort, is our religious, moral and social life, how the divine sanctions of the one enter into, unite with, and influence the rest, and how our well-being as a nation depends upon these divine sanctions for our social and family life being by God's grace and mercy maintained unimpaired and uninjured in full and lasting vigor and vitality, church and state uniting in harmonious effort to preserve the high standard in this direction which under God our country has hitherto enjoyed."

MARRIED AT WEBBWOOD.

George A. Toland and Miss Winnifred Patterson.
Webbwood, New Ontario, May 20.—A quiet wedding was solemnized in Webbwood on May 16th, when George A., third son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Toland, Pleasant Valley, and Miss Winnifred, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Patterson, were united in marriage. The dainty little bride looked very becoming in her travelling suit of navy French broadcloth, with navy hat to match. The bridesmaid, Miss E. J. Toland, sister of the groom, wore a suit of brown satin cloth, with hat to match. George L. Patterson, brother of the bride, assisted the groom, and came to this country fifteen years ago.
The groom's gift to the bride was a gold watch and chain, and a magnificent brooch set in pearls; to the bridesmaid was given a sunburst brooch and to the best man a monogram set of gold cuff links. The ceremony was performed by Rev. A. Wallace, pastor of the Webbwood Methodist church, after which a sumptuous repast was served at the bride's home, the table being handsomely decorated with pansies and pussy geraniums. The gifts received were both costly and numerous, showing the high esteem of many friends from far and wide.
A farewell reception was given the succeeding evening, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Toland, where a large circle of their most intimate friends met to bid them good-bye and wish them success before they left for their new home in Saskatchewan.

Mark Twain's Works.

If you are interested in obtaining a complete set of all his books at one-half the former price on the easy payment plan it will cost nothing to get full particulars and a new thirty-two page book, "Little Stories About Mark Twain." Address Box 409, "British Whig office."

Rev. A. E. Rennells, pastor of the Protestant Methodist church, has been invited by the Alberta conference to go to Edmonton to live and devote his time to evangelism in that conference.

At St. Vincent de Paul hospital, on Friday, Mrs. Thomas Patterson succumbed to a stroke of paralysis, contracted several days ago.

The council of Iroquois has decided to pass a by-law prohibiting the sale of cigarettes after June 1st, except by licensed persons.



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**Seal Brand
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Packed in cans. 1 and 2 pound only.

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Regal IT'S pure — ask your Doctor about the beneficial qualities of **Regal Lager**
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The "Hecla" has other safeguards against gas. The cast iron Combustion Chamber will not burn through and allow fumes from the fire to pass into the house. The air jets in the door assure proper burning of any surplus gas. The Automatic Gas Damper prevents danger from gas puffs. There is a special dust flue to carry the ash dust up the chimney.

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