

(SECOND EDITION.)

**MARRIAGES BETWEEN PROTESTANTS
AND ROMAN CATHOLICS.**

BY

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Marriages Between Protestants and Roman Catholics.



It ought to be known to our people that when such a marriage is performed by a Roman Catholic priest, the following restrictions are commanded to be observed :

1. It is forbidden to perform the marriage in a Church.
2. The priest is forbidden to wear any sacred vestments.
3. He is forbidden to offer a prayer.
4. He is forbidden to give a blessing.
5. He is to assure himself that the Catholic party shall have no obstacles placed in the way of his or her practice of the Catholic Religion.
6. And that there shall not be any probable danger of the Catholic party's perversion.

7. The Catholic party is to pledge himself or herself to earnestly try to convert the Protestant to the Roman Faith.

8. The priest is to exact a pledge that all children that may be born of the union shall be baptized and trained up in the Roman Faith.

This statement is made after examination of the Rubrics in the form of mixed marriages in "A Manual of Prayers for the use of the Catholic Laity," set forth by order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, under the certificate of Cardinal Gibbons.* (The Catholic Book Exchange, 120 W. 60th St., New York.)

Said service is very short, being comprised in just fourteen lines of a small manual. The name of Christ does not occur in it, nor does that of God.

Can this be called a Christian marriage?

Recently the Church of Rome has taken the ground that she will absolutely refuse permission for even this bald and mutilated service

*See Rubrics, on p. 449.

to be used, if a Protestant service has been previously held or is to follow. Yet in England since the time of Henry the VIIIth she has consented to a double ceremony, because *property rights* were involved. And in France to-day she perforce submits to the Civil marriage preceding her own service. She respects the rights of property, but she has no respect for the conscientious convictions of Christians outside her own pale. She treats our people as if they were heathens or worse, since she refuses them the privilege of a prayer, or a blessing, or any single Christian feature of the marriage office. And after such an unchristian ceremony she presumes to speak of marriage as a holy sacrament!

Ought the sons and daughters of our Church to yield to such tyranny by consenting to forego the service of their own Mother at such a solemn moment of their lives?

I subjoin a letter on this subject addressed to me by our Bishop nearly two years ago.

R. H. McK.

BISHOP'S HOUSE, 1407 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE,

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 24, 1898.

REV. RANDOLPH H. MCKIM, D. D.,

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MY DEAR DR. MCKIM:

In response to your letter regarding mixed marriages of our Church people with Roman Catholics, I would say that while our Church acknowledges the validity of Roman Catholic marriages; and, also, unites with Romanists in acknowledging the validity of a civil marriage, we feel most strongly that over and above the validity of the said civil ceremony itself, marriage is an institution blessed by God "in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee." We hold, therefore, that, following New Testament precedent, there ought to be a religious ceremony in which holy matrimony is sanctified by the Church and re-

ceives her blessing. Now, when Protestants marry Roman Catholics, it is the rule of the Roman Catholic Church that the service shall be distinctly civil, and not at all religious, and the Priest is directed to perform it without a prayer or a blessing. This is treating the members of our Church as heretics and unbelievers. Those of our Church people who submit their Christian freedom and Christian convictions to Roman Catholic rule are deprived of a religious ceremony. Not only is their union unhallowed by a single prayer or blessing, but they themselves are, as I have said, treated as heretics, whom the Roman Catholic Church cannot bless.

Therefore I strongly disapprove of any of our Church people submitting to such a service. They dishonor their confirmation vows and betray their Church in so doing.

Faithfully yours,

HENRY Y. SATTERLEE,

Bishop of Washington.

It ought also to be known to our people that the Roman Church lays down certain ANNUL-ING IMPEDIMENTS which, without special dispensation, make a marriage null and void from the beginning.*

Accordingly the following alliances are forbidden:

1. Marriage between third cousins or any nearer degree of relationship.
2. Marriage with the third cousin, or any nearer blood relation of a deceased husband or wife.
3. Sponsors may not marry their godchildren.
4. Parents cannot marry the sponsors of their child, or the person who baptized it.
5. Marriage with the parent, child, brother, or sister of a person to whom the party has been validly engaged.

It follows that a marriage contracted in violation of any one of these five impediments may be set aside as null and void, and the parties would then be free to marry again.

*See same Manual, p. 433.

