

Manx Notes 620 (2023)

“THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHERS BROUGHT CANDLES WITH THEM” *

(1848)

The ordinary list of causes was unusually lengthy, and it appeared the Court was held principally for the hearing of causes connected with the estate of the late John Kelly, of that town, merchant. Several orders were granted by his Worship against parties. Many causes stood continued, and a few were contested by the defendants.

THE CHURCH V. THE DISSENTERS

The case of *Qualtrough v. Moore* occupied the attention of the Court, this being the second day, and terminated in favour of the defendant.

This suit was instituted by the Vicar of Lonan against a parishioner named Moore, for the amount of his Easter offerings,—some few pence for bread and wine!

For the defendant, it was argued, that he was a Dissenter, and did not frequent his church, nor partake of the articles charged for; that he was a member of the Primitive Methodist Society, and had been so during the last nine years, and communed with the members of that Society.

A correspondent, under date January 12, says—

“The defendant is a Primitive Methodist, and claimed exemption on the ground that he never took the Sacrament at church, and that the minister of the parish got all the bread and wine at the expense of the parish. This was produced by one of the church wardens; and that nine shillings or more was paid for bread last Easter. The clerk of the church proved that the money was paid to one of the wardens; but upon cross-examination said it was paid the week before; and that he had bought candles with part of it for Christmas Eve service, and the rest he had for cleaning the church, &c. The warden before stated that he had brought sufficient from Douglas for the occasion; and the Vicar informed the warden that he had no occasion to purchase candles, as it was the custom that the young people and others brought candles with them.

I understood the Vicar-General decided in favour of the defendant, as the law was plain in his favour. So much in favour of Deemsters. It is plain, by this, that those who do not take the Sacrament at church are exempt. The bill for the last year for wine is £3. I may safely say, three dozen communicants is above the average for the year, at the parish church. I was told by one that took the Sacrament at Christmas, that the number was twenty-four, and by another it was said to be nineteen, and the

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minister and clerk. Who must we blame for all this willful waste, and so many poor in the parish in woeful want.

Mr Moore was church warden ten or twelve years since, and he wished to cause a reform in that case, and bought two or three bottles of wine and sufficient bread, but the rev. gentleman would not take them; they locked them up in the poor-box, in the vestry, till the next time, but when they opened the box the bottles were broken.”

“[Law Intelligence] Vicar General’ Court, Ramsey, January, 7.” *Mona’s Herald* 19 January 1848: [3]d.

As ever, this was found by serendipity, ever that helpmate to research. Only the surname of the defendant is given—Moore—but he was successful in his refusal to pay the Easter Offerings due to him being a Methodist and not attending the services of the Church of England. Few others were present, judging from the number of communicants noted in the piece. The interest here, however, is the mention of the Oie’l Verrey, and the purchase of candles “for Christmas Eve service,” that was deemed unnecessary, “as it was the custom that the young people and others brought candles with them.”

Stephen Miller, RBV

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