

[Third Universalist Society, New York City]

PASTOR M'CARTHY'S TRIAL
CONTINUATION OF THE RELIGIOUS WARFARE—THE COURT HOLDS THAT
RUNNING IN DEBT FOR LAGER BEER IS NOT NECESSARILY IMMORAL—
THE "SKELETON" IN THE BLEECKER-STREET CHURCH

The lecture room of the Third Universalist Church, in Bleecker-street, was filled again yesterday with a large audience, mostly ladies, to witness the continuation of Rev. C. P. McCarthy's trial. The morning session was devoted chiefly to an examination of the reverend defendant's grocery bill at Albany, a number of which had been industriously collected by Rev. Mr. Sweetser, and were by him read for the information of the court in detail. Much disapproval was manifested by the audience at this singular species of ecclesiastical warfare, and though Mr. Sweetser endeavored to find something "immoral and unministerial" in the fact that the defendant had bought his lager beer, bacon, &c. on long credit, the sympathy of the spectators was plainly against him, and even the committee ruled that such evidence was not necessary [sic] proof of total depravity on the part of Mr. McCarthy.

The first witness was Mr. Samuel Hall, who swore that the defendant had told him that he had received a call from Nassau, N.H.

The ninth charge—"that the defendant had neglected to pay his debts in this City and elsewhere"—was then read, and the most remarkable scene of the entire trial followed. Mr. Sweetser unfolded a formidable roll of papers, and proceeded to read therefrom the following evidences of Mr. McCarthy's "immorality."

Rev. Charles P. McCarthy to Joseph J. Price Dr.:

Jan. 5, 1875,	To 1 quart brandy.....	\$3 00
Jan. 5	To 4½ pounds bacon.....	90
Jan. 14	To 2 dozen bottles lager beer....	2 50
Jan. 14	To 1 bottle Angelica.....	1 50
Jan. 22	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Jan. 29	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Feb. 5	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Feb. 10	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Feb. 10	To 1 bacon.....	90
Feb. 15	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Feb. 20	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Feb. 25	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Mar. 3	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Mar. 8	To 2 dozen lager beer.....	2 50
Mar. 8	To 1 quart cider.....	1 50

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Chairman Saxe (with surprise)—Are you sure that is correct—\$1 50 for a quart of cider?

Mr. Shook—I object to the cider unless it is proved to have been champagne cider. [Laughter]

No one being able to solve the problem, Mr. Sweetser continued:

May 10, to one bottle of gin.....\$2 00
May 28, to one bottle of gin.....2 00
March 13, received cash.....20 00
Balance due.....32 00

During the reading of this bill Mr. Sweetser was frequently interrupted by hisses and cries of "shame."

Another bill from a Mr. Sutcliffe for \$ 378 19 for carpets was presented, Mr. Sweetser stating that he had taken the trouble to go to Albany and get Mr. Sutcliffe to swear to it. Several other bills were present but ruled out as not properly authenticated. A letter was read from Mr. Oscar Hawley, Treasurer of the Albany church, stating that, among other things, the bill of Mr. Whitney for carpets, and several other bills, amounting to an aggregate of \$1054 18, had been assigned over to the society, and by them paid out of the balance of salary due to Mr. McCarthy. The Treasurer added that the balance due by McCarthy to the society was \$154 18.

Chairman Saxe—Then Mr. Whitney's bill appears to have been paid.

Mr. Sweetser—Ah! but it never would have been unless Mr. McCarthy had been forced to take that course.

A sworn statement was submitted from one Joseph Petty, to the effect that Mr. McCarthy had collected \$60 for the church, and expended the same in the purchase of canary birds. [Laughter and hisses.] The "canary bird" charge was promptly squelched by the court.

Mr. McCarthy explained that the bills for brandy and beer had been incurred for his wife, at a time when that lady was in delicate health, and when those stimulants had been prescribed for her by a physician. "I drink lager beer myself," added Mr. McCarthy, "and what is more, I have drank [sic] it in company with members of this court, and when one of the same members was drinking wine in an adjoining bar-room. [Laughter.] I don't see anything 'immoral or unministerial' in that." The speaker also animadverted severely upon a young bachelor like Mr. Sweetser, with a round \$3,000 a year, digging up the grocer's bills of a poor minister with a large family, who was compelled to run in debt because he had to live from hand to mouth. Ministers were poor, but he had yet to learn that running in debt, with an honest intention to pay, was a crime. [Applause.]

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At the evening session Mr. Shook, for the defense, moved to strike out all the charges, and supported his motion in a speech in which he insisted that no evidence had been produced sufficient to sustain them. The counsel alluded humorously to Mr. McCarthy's engagement by the church while their "beloved" Pastor was "meandering by the flowery banks of the Jordan, and climbing the green hillsides of Carmel." [Laughter.]

Mr. McCarthy then addressed the court on his own behalf. He said that when he first came to this Bleecker-Street Church he found a great deal of disorder in it. [Cries of "Oh! Oh!" from Mr. Sweetser's supporters.] He had tried to open a prayer-meeting, but one old lady said she wouldn't have it unless her dear young Mr. Sweetser was there to conduct it. [Laughter]. In fact, it was a hard church to manage. The angels in petticoats in it were both good and bad angels, and some of them would create disturbances in spite of his best efforts. It was to these gadding women that much of the trouble was chiefly due. Then there were members who were practically infidels, and others who objected to his preaching about the miracles of Christ, and said they "didn't want any of that miraculous nonsense." The old ladies insisted on running the church just as they had years before, when they drove out a minister who had the audacity to marry a lady younger than himself without consulting them. [Here several venerable ladies looked daggers at the bold defendant.] Mr. McCarthy related in detail the nature of the difficulty between himself and the Trustees, disclaiming in the most emphatic manner any feeling of disloyalty toward Mr. Sweetser, and concluding with an eloquent peroration amid general applause.

The hearing was then adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday morning.

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Transcribed on 2 Oct 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY