

[Third Universalist Society, New York City]

THE CASE OF REV. MR. M'CARTHY

Rev. Charles P. McCarthy, who was recently suspended from fellowship in the New-York State Convention of Universalists, has begun a proceeding in the Supreme Court for a mandamus to compel his reinstatement, and his counsel, Hermon H. Shook, obtained from Judge Barrett an order, returnable on the third Monday of the present month, directing the Convention Committee on Fellowship, Ordination and Discipline to show cause why a mandamus against them should not be issued. Mr. McCarthy recites the proceedings begun against him by Rev. E. O. Sweetser, of the Bleecker-Street Universalist Church. The charges were brought to trial before the committee referred to. Four sessions were held, when it became evident, according to Mr. McCarthy, that Sweetser and the committee were engaged in a conspiracy against him. It also became apparent, he says, that they were making out a very weak case, and "they found it necessary to call in the assistance of witnesses whose consciences were somewhat flexible and easy." There was no difficulty, Mr. McCarthy says, in procuring such testimony, but when he informed the witnesses that he would prosecute, legally, all who slandered him, he was asked by the committee to sign a paper to the effect that he would not sue any witness. On his refusal, he was expelled from fellowship, but Judge Donohue, of the Supreme Court, compelled his reinstatement. He was again summoned before the committee for trial. "It is due," he remarks, to two of the former members of the tribunal, to wit, Messrs. C. G. Lippencott and Henry H. Darling, laymen, to say that, profiting by their past experience, they had the good sense to decline to serve on the second trial; but the remaining three, to wit, Revs. Asa Saxe, Almon Gunnison, and Eben Fisher, not being possessed of like good sense, but being blinded by their hatred and jealousy, did not follow the wise example of their lay associates." Mr. McCarthy says he objected to the three sitting because of their prejudice against him. They ignored his objection, and, finding him guilty of certain charges, passed a resolution reprimanding him. Within a few days, however, the State Convention has been in session at Watertown, and there, on the motion of Rev. Mr. Sweetser, the committee was ordered to change their verdict from a reprimand to a resolution suspending Mr. McCarthy from fellowship. The latter says he was not notified of this, and only learned of it through the newspaper reports. He says that both verdicts were against the weight of evidence, and that he committed no offense.

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Transcribed on 1 Oct 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY