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CHURCH SCANDAL AND ITS RESULT

**Rev. Dr. Brown Gets in Serious
Trouble in the State of
California.**

In the wake of the recent resignation of the Rev. Charles R. Brown, one of the best known clergymen of this coast, from the pastorate of the First Congregational Church of Oakland, there has come to light the details of a story long whispered by members of his congregation, which is said by some to have been one of the contributory causes of the minister's withdrawal from his pulpit, says the S. F. Examiner.

The story has its foundation in the friendship of the Rev. Dr. Brown for Mrs. George H. Martin, wife of a prominent physician of this city, who resides at the Fairmont Hotel. Gossip seized upon this friendship, distorted it and then the whispering gathering in volume came to the ears of the principals.

The result was:
The Rev. Dr. Brown called upon Mrs. Martin, told her of the gossip and begged her not to tell her husband.

Mrs. Brown, wife of the minister, met Mrs. Martin at her husband's church and refused to speak to her. Mrs. Martin informed her husband of Mrs. Brown's action and of the statement made by the minister.

Dr. George H. Martin called upon the Rev. Charles R. Brown and asked him to take steps to put an end to the gossip.

And in the meantime the gossip increased until Dr. Martin felt compelled to have several interviews with the Rev. Dr. Brown, but without result.

Howard, Mrs. Martin Says.

Mrs. Martin, who is a woman with high intellectual attainments, asserts that the Rev. Dr. Brown acted in a cowardly manner in maintaining silence in the face of the gossip. She avers that their friendship could admit of no gossip and that Dr. Brown did not take any action whatever to protect against the reports that were about.

Reason for Resignation.

The Rev. Dr. Brown denies that his resignation from the Oakland church was prompted by any motive other than ill-health. He refuses to discuss the visits paid him by Dr. Martin or

to say what transpired at the interview.

Statement by Pastor.

When it was pointed out that a statement from him should be made, both in fairness to himself and to the church as well as Mrs. Brown, he wrote out the following:

There is absolutely nothing to all this. I have never been asked by any officer or member of my church to resign, nor has it ever been intimated to me by anyone that my resignation would be desirable. I am sorry if any outside gossip has tried to make it seem otherwise.

You ask about Dr. and Mrs. Martin. They are both good friends. They have the highest sense of honor, and the thought that there was anything evil in the friendship between the two families has never entered their heads.

The Rev. Dr. Brown yesterday afternoon prior to the conference in Dr. Martin's office consented to an interview with a representative of "The Examiner." The interview took place in the office and in the presence of Col. J. C. Porter, president of the Port Folio Club, who is a member of the Rev. Dr. Brown's church.

The pastor frankly admitted the existence of the gossip, avowed that he could do nothing to still it, and then went on to tell how absolutely groundless it all was and how it had unfortunately arisen.

"If I could have stopped any gossip about Mrs. Martin that was going on I would have done so," said the Rev. Dr. Brown, "but I did not see how in any way anything that I might do could put an end to the unkind and groundless things that were being said."

"I did speak to a woman member of my congregation about the matter when she came to me, and I told her there was absolutely nothing in it."

"It is true that there was a misunderstanding between my wife and Mrs. Martin. It is true that a letter written by Mrs. Martin to me was the cause of this misunderstanding. The letter which my wife read was a fine, good letter, such as any spiritual woman might write to a pastor."

"My wife is a sensitive woman. She misjudged the letter—the statements in it. She is a highly sensitive woman. She is sorry that she misjudged Mrs. Martin, as she herself has already stated."

"True, I corresponded with Mrs. Martin. A warm friendship existed between us. I have written letters to her and to many other members of my congregation, which, if taken apart, might be misconstrued."

"But under God I had no evil intention when those letters were written

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to Mrs. Martin.

"It is true that parts of the letters might be taken out in order to give them a special meaning, and an ugly construction might be placed upon them, but I never intended any evil construction in anything that I have ever written."

"I can not compose verse and have a spirit of friendship.

never attempted it. I did write spiritual poetry to Mrs. Martin, but it was quoted poetry, dealing with spiritual things—about religion."

"Throughout my acquaintance with Mrs. Martin our friendship has been of the best. What I have said to her or written to her has always been in

"I have lived a good Christian life in this and in all matters. All I have is my reputation and my family. That reputation belongs as much to my family as to myself. It has always been clean, and in this unpleasant affair I can take oath that it is equally unsullied."

Dr. Brown was asked if he thought the public would place a proper interpretation upon the letters written by him to Mrs. Martin. His answer was: "I don't think the public would. They would probably distort the real meaning I intended. The letters, of course, were different from letters which would be written to the public, and the true, honest purport might be misinterpreted."

Mrs. Martin yesterday admitted that she had in her possession fully a score of letters from Dr. Brown written during the period of their friendship. She positively refused yesterday to discuss their contents nor would she disclose the nature of the poetry contained in the epistles.

"I trust that the report of the committee will put an end to this gossip," said Mrs. Martin. "It has all been very distressing to me. I must refuse to comment further upon the Rev. Dr. Brown's attitude during the time the gossip was being bruited about. I hope that nothing more will be said about the whole miserable affair."

Dr. Martin was reticent yesterday when asked regarding what he had told the committee that had called upon him.

"There is nothing to be said in addition to the statement issued by the committee," said Dr. Martin. "I think that explains the situation. I approved of it as it was framed, and we all agreed to make no further comment in regard to the matter."

Interview Brought Admissions.

It became known yesterday that the first interview had by Dr. Martin with the Rev. Dr. Brown, following the affront offered Mrs. Martin by Mrs. Brown, developed some interesting admissions from the minister. The pastor is reported to have told Dr. Martin that he had a very high regard for the latter's wife and that that regard, intended in the most friendly spirit, might have been misinterpreted.

Following the gossip that ensued the Rev. Dr. Brown called repeatedly at the home of Dr. Martin and asked for an interview with Mrs. Martin. On each occasion, it is stated, Mrs. Martin refused to see the pastor, and since his return from Japan the families have not visited.

It has been given out that the Rev. Dr. Brown will depart soon for the East to accept one of the many positions that have been offered him. Among others it is stated that he

has received an offer to act as a member of the board of arbitration of the Carnegie Institute.

Resolutions Praise Pastor.

The final conclusions of the committee of churchmen were embodied late yesterday afternoon in a statement which was approved by Dr. Dr. Martin and by the Rev. Dr. Brown.

The statement follows:

To the Trustees and Deacons of the First Congregational Church of Oakland.

Gentlemen:
Your committee appointed to call upon Dr. George H. Martin relative to the recent articles appearing in the public press alleging rumors as to the relations between our pastor, Charles R. Brown, and Dr. Martin's wife, beg to report:

That we have called on Dr. Martin in company with Mr. Brown, and a full and complete statement was made to us.

"Simply Warm Friendship."

Inasmuch as the articles appearing in the newspapers did not assert that there were in fact any improper relations between Mrs. Martin and Mr. Brown, but merely set forth that there were rumors or gossip of such current in the church and community, and the articles contained along with these rumors positive statements as to their falsity, it hardly seems necessary for your committee to report on their truth or falsity.

Nevertheless, so that there may be no question about the matter, we beg to report that the statements made to us make it wholly clear that the only relation that existed was simply warm friendship.

We find that in May, 1909, there was an estrangement between Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Martin, that there was a feeling of jealousy on the part of Mrs. Brown, the manifestation of which became the occasion of a natural gossip; but we believe Mrs. Brown's statement of her regret at misjudging Mrs. Martin should set this matter right.

"A Great Injustice."

While we would add that we are convinced that a great injustice has been done Dr. and Mrs. Martin by this gossip, we make this statement in the hope of putting a stop to it.

(Signed) C. Z. MERRITT,
WARREN OLNEY JR.,
S. M. DODGE,
R. H. CHAMBERLAIN,
WILLIAM C. CLARK.

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