

few. And why is the comfort and peace of a thousand homes to be thus sacrificed? "Why are sisters-in-law living with widowed brothers-in-law, as sisters, to be ordered either to quit the house or marry them? Why is distrust to be sown where perfect love, frank familiarity, sweet and pure affection were before unrestrained?" "As a general rule among decent persons of all ranks," said the venerated author of the *Christian Year*, "a law which would place the wife's sister in the same relation to the husband as any other unmarried woman, not only *might*, but *must*, in all cases, separate the wife's sister from the family, not only after the wife's death, but in case of her long illness or absence. She will require the same protection that any other young woman would in the like circumstances." So that the benefit of the law would be the enjoyment of their transgressions by the present law breakers, and its evils would be innumerable; among the chief of which would be great distress to the keepers of the Divine rule, great bitterness between families who keep and families who break the rule, great confusion and trouble among the clergy, and loosening of bonds of morality in various directions among the community at large. You may now ask of me, perhaps, what are we, the clergy, to do? I answer plainly, you are to decline to solemnize such marriages. If the State relax its obligations and pronounces marriage a civil contract only, the Divine law and the law of our Church is still binding upon you. You are to be guardians and defenders, not betrayers of public morals. Nor ought persons who live in incest to be admitted to Holy Communion. But there is more to be done. Between this time and the next session of the Dominion Parliament the clergy should endeavor to circulate among the laity sound and wholesome truth on this subject. I may mention such tracts as Lord Hatherly's "Vindication of the Law Prohibiting Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister," Mr. Keble's tract against "Profane Dealing with Holy Matrimony," the Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia's "Reasons for Rejecting the Proposed Marriage Law," and a very useful catechism on marriage, with an appendix showing the Divine authority for the table of prohibited degrees, by the Rev. J. J. Curling and Rev. J. F. Phelps of the Diocese of Newfoundland.

I think that petitions should be prepared in all our Parishes against the proposed Bill. And as Scotland always pronounced against such an alteration of the marriage law, I entertain the hope that the Presbyterian bodies here may stand with us in this matter, as well as others who wish to prevent the evil which will arise from an alteration in the law.

The opinions both of Roman Catholics and of Jews have been quoted in favor of the proposed alteration of the law. As regards the Roman Catholics, they must know that the Church of CHRIST for many ages condemned such marriages, and that a Pope, of whose evil deeds there can be no doubt, was the first to sanction them. Their present practice, to prohibit them in theory, but allow them by dispensation, on paying a competent sum of money, can never commend itself to us. Nor can we consider the Jews as such sound interpreters of the Old Testament, as willingly to acquiesce in their conclusions respecting the marriage law. Christians, one would suppose, would be the last persons to be guided by their authority, when our great Master so plainly condemned their customs in regard to divorce, tolerated only by Moses, "because of the hardness of their hearts."