

agreeable to His will. That, under these considerations, whatever God has not prohibited, he has allowed; and while we do not deny the right of the civil power to limit marriages in any way which may be required by the civil convenience, as to the age of the parties, for example, we deny its right to invoke the name and will of God as prohibiting that which His Word has left open."

Passing over the consideration of the primæval state of mankind, and the universal liberty of marriage which then necessarily existed, and which was restricted exactly as the necessity for its existence ceased—passing this over, inasmuch as no one has ever contended for its revival, we may take our stand on the authority for or against the proposed legislation, as such authority is contained in the Bible.

Though the prohibited degrees are many, yet, for all the purposes of argument—we believe we might say, for all the practical purposes which the advocates for the proposed bill have in view—the change of law in respect to one degree only, and in that degree to one sex only, is the real object.

We contend that it is prohibited by Scripture.

It is remarkable, but it is incontrovertible as a fact, that there is not in the whole volume of Scripture any one prohibition or restriction of any kind in respect to the marriage relation, except in the Book of Leviticus.\* Even polygamy is not in express terms forbidden by the Gospel; yet, on that point, inference is as strong as any direct prohibition, and a formal veto is not required to exclude polygamy from Christian society, so long as the words of our Lord are heard—"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his

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\* Repeated in part in Deuteronomy, xx. and xxvii. There is a strong passage in the late Rev. Thomas Scott's *Miscellaneous Letters*, an authority, which to four, at least, of the Five Divines will appear worthy of some attention. "If we reject the laws of Leviticus, we have no law of God on the subject: no, not against marrying sisters or brothers, or any relation. Now, can we think that God intended to set aside these laws in Leviticus, and to give no other in their stead? Can we suppose that He meant to leave the Christian Church *without law* in this most important matter? But, if not *without law*, the laws in Leviticus, in all general cases, are in full force."—*Scott's Letters and Papers*, 8 vo., 1844: "*Letter on Marrying a Wife's Sister*," p. 271.