

ous, even though the law renders it legal, so long there must continue in many minds a sense of insecurity, and a state of doubt in many homes. Must that Church give way? For my part, I can conceive of no greater national calamity than that of a body of Christian men taking a stand upon Christian principle, being defeated by an unthinking majority vote of the nation of which they form a part. The cry against "ecclesiastical tyranny" may be made to do duty for a rabble whose only will is "down with everything." Moreover, let honour be given to men who have the courage of their convictions, even in the face of overwhelming odds. We have too little of such moral courage that we should attempt to crush those who manifest it, though they do cross our way. The brave Horatius, even from those whose course he stayed, received admiration. Rome hailed him as its deliverer. Again, we are not yet a nation of agnostics; some of us have no desire to be; we own, in our laws, moral obligation, and rest that obligation upon the known will of God; therefore no legalized relation which violates the moral law can obtain, unless we destroy all sense of right, in which case we are in a sorry state. Still further, we are a Christian people, not Mahomedan, nor Buddhist, nor Pagan, and the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as a whole, are the acknowledged exponents of Christian faith and morals. It is, then, a perfectly legitimate course for a body of Christian men, or an individual, to refuse assent to legislation which is proved contrary to the general scope of Christian faith and morals. I purpose, therefore, to offer a few comments on the scriptural aspect of this question, as being an aspect we cannot well allow to be put out of sight.

Has the Christian Church a code of prohibited degrees? The eighteenth chapter of Leviticus has in general been assumed as such, but there is ground to challenge the assumption. Why should the seventeenth and nineteenth be passed conveniently by and the eighteenth retained? To this it is replied that Paul recognizes a law of incest—1 Cor. v. 1—and if this is not found in Leviticus, where else is it to be found? The pertinency of the question is admitted, but the fact that it is open to the rejoinder that the Levitical code, as such, did not obtain at Corinth, and that Paul appealed to that which was "among the

Gentiles," should keep us from very positive assertions thereon. Let it also be noted that the chain of argument has no strength beyond that of its weakest link. Nevertheless, the Christian Church has, in general, accepted this code as its own for reasons which it deems sufficient, and we cordially accept the same, as we do very much else in these old statutes, which modern society has neglected to its hurt, and is now discovering (?) by the aid of scientific research.

What says this code of marriage relations regarding the marriage in question? Lev. xviii. 18 must, in a brief article like this, be dismissed with only suggestive treatment. Given our English version, and the relationship is implicitly allowed by the expression "in her lifetime," the inference being fair that when the prohibited limit is passed, the prohibition ceases. There are, however, weighty considerations for accepting the rather the reading given in the margin, "one wife to another," in which case the verse is ruled out from the consideration in hand. The passage is one of extreme difficulty, and can hardly warrant dogmatic utterances. The exact Hebrew expression here translated "a wife to her sister," is found several times in the Scriptures, and elsewhere, translated "one to another," and thus we prefer to read it here. Leaving this on one side, we find the following blood relationship expressly forbidden: In Lev. xviii. mother, ver. 7; daughter, ver. 17; sister and half sister, ver. 9; granddaughter, ver. 10; aunt, vers. 12, 13. The grandmother and niece are omitted, yet it does seem that we are justified in assuming the general principle that the first and second degrees of consanguinity are, to say the least, gravely questionable, and "he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith."

If, again, we look at the degrees of affinity prohibited (we need scarcely stay to explain that affinity is the relationship of marriage, not of blood) in that same chapter, we shall find the following:—Mother-in-law, ver. 17; daughter-in-law, ver. 15; brother's wife, ver. 16 (except in the special case, Deut. xxv. 5); stepmother, ver. 8; stepdaughter ver. 17; and step-granddaughter, aunt by marriage, ver. 14, where again we find prohibition in the line of the first and second degrees of affinity. The marriage in question is manifested in the first degree of affinity; are we, therefore, jus-