

mer ten per cent. legacy only while the latter is charged only three? To evolve this identity of relationship from the Pauline passage, "they *twain* shall be one flesh," is to wrest language from its ordinary and natural significance in a way known only to polemical ecclesiastics. St. Paul perfectly well understood the importance of being precise, but as if to leave no shadow of excuse for misapprehension or wilfully erroneous inferences, he gives his testimony, in presence of men "who knew the law; that if a woman's husband die she is loosed from the law of her husband," and in face of that text Mr. Roe's theory of consanguineous-affinity, preposterous and monstrous in itself, becomes a defiance both by knowledge and inspiration. Is he prepared to accept the consequences of it? If a man be joined to a harlot she virtually becomes his wife. Does Mr. Roe in this case also insist on the harlot's sister's "rights" of inheritance and succession and on those thousand endearments which are a sister-in-law's one?

In regard to the reverend gentleman's second point—the construction and grammatical meaning of Lev. xiii, 18, I do not propose following him over these heaps of strictly modern hypothesis, peculiar to the district of Lennoxville, upon which he sets himself that his case is completely and irrefragably made out. I will deal only with his main proposition, that the reading in the margin, supported, he says, by the best authorities, is fatal to the received interpretation of the text. Why does not this gentleman tell us who it was who first suggested that reading, the date at which it originally appeared, the translations of the Bible in which it was ever honored by being taken out of the margin and put in the text; why does he not name the period in the history of his own church when that marginal passage was ordered to be read publicly before the congregations as the authorized interpretation, the verse to which it is attached; why not tell us whether Archbishop Parker, the author of the table of prohibitions, himself, in his own translation of the Bible, gave a preference for this note, and why finally does he not give the names of the eminent authorities said to support his views? The answer to these questions simply is—he dare

not. Let me suggest to him that very distinguished authority on the analysis and meaning of words, Dr. Trench, the Archbishop of Dublin. Dr. Trench does not like to legalize the wife's sister for fear she should be deprived of those thousand endearments, &c.; but what does he say of Mr. Roe's marginal words? That "readers of Scripture acquiesce for the most part, and naturally acquiesce, to the verdict of the translators about them; who, by placing them in the margin, and not in the text, evidently declare that they consider them not the best." This is the view of one of Mr. Roe's friends! with whom I may leave him.

But your correspondent, who had many days before prepared us to expect some overwhelming fact or argument, which, while rendering all critical examination of texts superfluous, and all references to the identity of sisters and sisters-in-law unnecessary, would annihilate opposition, comes at last to hurl the threatened avalanche, it is not a mountain but a mouse. The great master argument is simply this: that it is the solemn duty of the Legislature to refuse absolutely any relaxation of the law until not one atom of doubt remains regarding the interpretation of the text! If the novelty of this doctrine would give it force, we might at once acknowledge Mr. Roe a victor. But it is not sufficiently mundane; it has not a practical look about it. Legislatures act very much upon the theory of probabilities, and there is a force they are bound to obey—that of the majority. Does not Mr. Roe see that it is the "faith" of the great mass of the people which must settle this question; that the case is one in which it may truly be said the *vox populi* is the *vox Dei*, and in which the unnaturally fostered doubts of a few sacerdotalists must not be allowed to override the unsophisticated and ingenuous belief of the nation at large. The generous principle of the law is that, if doubt exists, the verdict should incline to liberty. In the gospel of Bishop's College, it is written that such generosity is "sin."

Thanking you, sir, most cordially for your courteous publication of these letters,

I remain your obed't servant,

R. D. MCGIBBON.