us part," and that the union so blessed with the prayer of the priest and the declaration that "whom God hath joined together, let not man put assunder," it is a bond indissoluble. Upon every marriage certificate is printed in prominent letters that phrase. But without an idea of the sacred character of the contract this saying and other "for better or for worse," become empty nothings. Sometimes when this relation is regarded as merely a civil one, danger may lay ahead whenever difficulties arise to be impatient of the bond and the grave consequences incidental thereto. The only reason in the world for continuing the association of the clergy with the performance of the ceremony is because of its having always partaken of the sacred character of a religious ceremony. The civil law of marriage has grown out of the canon law upon this subject. Marriage in its origin is a contract of natural law. It is the parent and not the child of society. The common law of England and America considers marriage in no other light than as a civil contract or a status resulting from a contract. In Roman Catholic countries and in some of the Protestant countries of Continental Europe, it is treated as a sacrament. It is a contract sui generis and differs in some respects from all other contracts, so that the rules of law which are applicable in expounding and enforcing other contracts may not apply to it. It differs from other contracts in this, that it cannot be dissolved by mutual consent and the rights, duties and obligations which arise out of it are matters of so much importance to the well-being of the state, that they are regulated, not by the private contract of the parties, but by the public laws of the state. And as a general rule the validity of a marriage is to be decided by the law of the place where the marriage is celebrated, and if it is not valid there, it is not valid anywhere. The tendency has been growing towards a laxity in regard to marriage and divorce and modern ideas prevade clerical opinions, and we are gradually letting go, one by one, those strongholds which have always made for the stability of the home and fireside and kept the family as the training school for the young idea which maintained a respect for sacred institutions. As a church, it is not a consistent position to take that marriage is a merely civil contract. If it were so, then must follow the right to dissolve it as surely as the right exists to enter into it. Many reconciliations have taken place that owed the happiness of the family to the fact there was no easy way to set each other aside.

In the year 1563, the famous Council of Trent passed this decree for the reformation of marriage, declaring that matrimony should not be valid unless duly celebrated in facie ecclesiae and in the presence of the Parish Priest and two witnesses; this decree was known as the decree Tametsi. All decrees of the Church being in Latin, they are characterized by some prominent word in the Encyclical, forming perhaps the key to the subject; the word Tametsi was the first word of that decree and so it obtained its name from it. This decree was the law of the Church on the subject of marriage wherever the decree was promulgated. At that time the facilities for communication and travel were not so perfect as at the present day, and therefore in many remote districts the decree never was promulgated and was not therefore binding upon parties in those parishes. The decree Ne Temere was promulgated at Easter, 1908, and is now the