

jects, especially upon divorce. The laws concerning divorce as enacted by the several State Legislatures have been regarded as of binding authority, and as amply covering the whole subject. To a certain extent this is true.

They do bind in all questions of civil law and jurisdiction, and make legal relationships, established under, and protected by these laws. But, even in this legislative aspect of the question, who does not see, in the laxity of the laws, in the evasion of these laws, in the inviting facilities which these laws offer to dissatisfied parties, in the injustice which marks their administration, one of the most serious evils of the day? An evil all the more serious because it enters stealthily into so many households, relaxes the sacred bonds of marriage, and thus saps the very foundations of family life and peace, upon which is based the whole superstructure of the domestic constitution as established by God Himself.

A community whose social life is vitiated by such legal privileges to break asunder the bonds of matrimony, and re-form them with new partners, will soon show a moral leprosy that must make it loathsome and unclean, in the sight of God and man. But leaving this part of the subject, there is another aspect of the case with which we are more nearly concerned—I mean how the Church as a Church should deal with this wide subject.

As ministers, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, and bound in our ministration by the precepts of the Gospel, which allows but one cause for divorce, we are often placed in embarrassing positions between our duty, as defined by civil law, and as dictated by a Christian conscience bound by Canon law. Our Church has distinctly legislated on this subject, in Title 2, Canon 13, "Of Marriage and Divorce." Here, in the forefront of the Canon, she postulates the underlying principle which she finds in Scripture, and which she incorporates into the law: "If any persons be joined together otherwise than as God's Word doth allow, their marriage is not lawful." What must logically follow from this fundamental statement? Simply this: "If any persons are divorced otherwise than as God's Word doth allow, such divorce is not lawful."

By the provisions of section 3 of this Canon, "The Sacraments are to be withheld from persons married otherwise than as God's Word doth allow." What is the correlative of this? Why surely this: *that the Sacraments should be withheld from persons divorced otherwise than as God's Word doth allow.*

Yet here, the law of the Church and the law of the land often come in conflict. The law of the land permits marriages which the Church cannot permit. The law of the land permits divorces which the Church, with due loyalty to her Divine Lord and Head, cannot recognize, and the clergy are often placed in a strait between two opposing interests, and are sore perplexed.

Feeling that the whole system of divorce legislation, not only here but in most of the States of the Union, is vicious, and works only to the benefit of designing knaves, and to the destruction of the family constitution; and feeling further, that wise and Scriptural legislation can be secured only by and through a wholesome tone of public sentiment; and feeling yet further, that *this is a grave moral, as well as social, question, I regard it the duty of the Church of Christ to plant herself on the decision of Christ, and educate public opinion in the right direction.* I therefore venture to suggest to this Convention the propriety of taking some definite action, and of giving expression to some definite opinion on this grave and Scriptural question.

I suggest, further, that whatever action shall be taken looking to any modification of our laws by the Legislature, that the same be communicated to each of the Conventions of the dioceses of Pittsburgh and Central Pennsylvania, so that, by concurrent action of the whole body of our Church in this Commonwealth, we may be able to do something to correct wrong opinions, to teach right views, to shape wise legislation, and to abate in some measure the fearful evils under which both Church and State are being burdened.

A committee of this Convention, authorized to meet with, and act with, similar committees from each of the other dioceses, with power to formulate a line of action to be submitted to each Convention for final approval, will, in my judgment, be promotive of the best results, and secure unity of action throughout the whole communion of our Church in this great Commonwealth.

Having thus brought the matter to your notice, I leave it to your wisdom as to what course of action you will pursue.—*The Church.*

THE *Church Review* (London) has an excellent article on the way in which the Roman Church does not observe the sacred seasons of the Christian year. Some few great days, such as Christmas and Easter, are not overlooked, but the grand series of commemorations, as arranged by Catholic antiquity, are a dead letter. Though the clergy may mutter through the Breviary offices for all days, as a matter of obligation, the people do not get any knowledge of the seasons from the service in an unknown tongue, and the only intelligible commemoration they are permitted to have is of the various saints' days with which the calendar is overloaded. The great commemorations of the Church's Year are superseded by fancy devotions of various kinds. Advent may pass without emphasis, for at the end of November begins the "Novena of the Immaculate Conception." This feast is followed by the octave, so that the doll and artificial flowers are hardly cleared away before Christmas comes, with more dolls and other trinkets. Even Lent is not exempt from the distractions of these fanciful feasts; March is the month of St. Joseph, and devotions suitable to this "pious fad" must take place every evening. During Lent, every Church must have its "Forty Hours' Adoration" of the Holy Sacrament, which is a little feast of Corpus Christi. May is the "Month of Mary," and naturally Ascension and Rogation Days have to suffer oblivion. The festivals of the Apostles, held in such veneration by the primitive Church, are scarcely brought to the notice of the lay people in the Roman obedience. Minor saints' days and ecclesiastical fancies take the precedence in popular celebration.

### Freedom, Faith, Reason.

The exclusive possession of three divine gifts gives man his supremacy in this world. These endowments are, freedom, faith and reason.

God only has perfect freedom, and, in Him, freedom co-exists with perfect knowledge and perfect love.

With partial knowledge and small love, man could not, with safety, be allowed full freedom. Yet, man must have somewhat of freedom, else he would not be "in the image of God." So freedom comes to men supplemented by reason and faith. By the help of reason man is to use his freedom according to knowledge, and, once beyond the boundaries of his knowledge, he must regulate his freedom according to faith.

Thus the profit and pleasure of freedom are to be realized through the exertions of the power of self-control—through being a law to one's self, and acting without external restraint and compulsion. There is nothing in this world which men dislike more than to be controlled, and, would they but control themselves, they might neither need, nor ever be conscious of, any external control, and this would be the highest possible realization of liberty.

The practical difficulty in all cases is to give reason and faith, as elements of self-control, each its place and priority according to circumstances. The substitution of one of these for the other can only result in a faithless reason or an irrational faith, both of them unspeakably bad. Within the limits of personal experience faith and reason coincide, and neither is the more authoritative and constraining. But, outside of experience, there is a proper primacy of faith. Faith always goes in advance of reason, when we push outward

into the ever-enlarging area of knowledge. Reason cannot bridge the chasm between the known and the unknown. But faith, waiting for no bridge, confidently steps on the other shore and keeps a foothold until reason can come over and take possession of the new joint conquest. Thus ever faith leads the way and reason follows.

It may be well to note, also, that there is a very common predisposition to *indiscriminate faith*, which it is the office of reason, appealing to experience, to modify and shape into a well-grounded confidence or faith, which can give a reason for itself, a faith which can say at last, "I know in whom I have believed." And this consideration may suffice to show that the priority of faith is only a precedence in order, not a relative superiority. Faith being in order to knowledge, and knowledge being required to supply material for reason.

There is, indeed, a common impression otherwise. People suppose they must apprehend the spiritual before they can become spiritual, which is just as sensible as to hold that one must have a knowledge of this physical world before being born in it; or, that a hungry boy must be able to analyze the food his mother has provided for him, applying all the principles of physiology, chemistry and dietetics, before he can eat a mouthful of the dinner. The boy's reason, fresh from its divine Giver, would spurn any such restraint.

God has revealed Himself to us as an *object of faith*, that we may, in time, come to know Him, "The only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent," which "is eternal life." Faith, for the time being, answers the purpose of knowledge, and leads to knowledge, operating in the same way as the boy's faith in his mother. So we trust, and, after awhile we know. We believe and, in due time, we see. J. W. B.—(*Church and Home*.)

### Editorial Notes.

The collapse of the rebellion in the North-West consequent upon the defeat and capture of Riel, appears to be complete, and our gallant citizen-soldiers are already indulging in pleasing visions of the homeward march. That they will receive a right royal welcome home, goes without saying, but we hope that the Government will bestow upon them some mere substantial token of the country's gratitude.

This sad internecine war is not without its compensations. Valuable lives have been sacrificed and happy homes made desolate, and heavy financial burden laid upon the people of the Dominion, but, on the other hand, it is no slight gain to have demonstrated to ourselves and to the world, our ability to put down a formidable insurrection by our own resources. Canada will henceforward, hold a higher place among the nations than she ever held before, and Canadians will love their native soil more than ever, now that it holds the dust of her citizen soldiers who died in its defence.

News comes to us by cable "on the highest authority," that Russia has accepted England's proposals on the Afghan question, which is thus practically settled in a manner satisfactory to both countries. Mamchak and Zulfiyar remain in possession of the Ameer. The main features of the work of delimitation have been fixed, the details being left for the consideration of the boundary commission. We sincerely trust that this intelligence will be confirmed by later advices, and that the way has thus been prepared for a lasting and honorable peace.