

MONTREAL, February 27th, 1880.

DEAR MR. GAULT,—I thank you very much for sending me a copy of Mr. Girouard's Bill for legalising marriages with a deceased wife's sister, etc. For one, I heartily approve of its principle, and hope it will pass and become law.

It occurred to me that I would mention to you that, to the astonishment of most people, the United Presbyterian Body of Dissenters in Scotland declared, last year, that they could no longer regard such marriages as Mr. Girouard's Bill contemplated as un-Christian. Their ministers are permitted to solemnise these, and to admit the parties to them to the privileges of their communion. The importance and significance of this action on the part of a severely evangelical body cannot be exaggerated.

The attitude of your own Church and of mine, both national Churches and the only State Churches of the Empire, must necessarily be determined by the position taken up by the law makers. When Parliament sanctions marriages with deceased wives' sisters, so must we. I speak for the Church of Scotland, to which I belong, when I say that we are quite ripe for the ready performance of these marriages. In my first parish in Scotland, I had a couple who took that step in (ecclesiastically viewed) an irregular way "forth of the kingdom" and came back to live in the parish. I had no hesitation in regarding them as parishioners of mine in good standing.

The Church of Rome, of course, takes up a different position in this matter, but Mr. Girouard fully provides against any infringement of its rules and rights; and it is entitled to hold and assert its own opinions and views.

I would be very glad if you offered our mutual friend, Mr. Girouard, my warm and sincere wishes for the success of his measure. Its adoption and enactment by the Parliament of Canada will give wider and greater relief than any of us imagine, and would not in any wise conflict with the teachings of the Word of God as interpreted by either Roman Catholics or Protestants.

With repeated thanks for your courtesy in sending me a copy of this important Bill, and with kind regards, as also deep sympathy with you in your recent heavy affliction,

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

GAVIN LANG.

M. H. GAULT, Esq., M.P.

The Rev. J. Cordner, D.D., of the Unitarian Church, writes:—

MONTREAL, February 2nd, 1880

M. H. GAULT, Esq., M.P.

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for copy of Bill to "legalise marriage with, etc." In my judgment it would be in the interest of good morals and sound public policy to pass such a measure. I would omit the two provisos, however, as

likely to lead to complications. But rather than have the measure fail I would accept them.

Very truly yours,

J. CORDNER.

The Montreal Ministerial Association endorse the Bill, in the following letter:—

MONTREAL, 922 Dorchester street,
March 22nd, 1880.

DEAR SIR,—There is a society in this city called the "Montreal Ministerial Association," open to all the Protestant Ministers of Montreal, to which, moreover, a large number of them testify good will by attending its meetings. The Association met this morning, and discussed the subject of the lawfulness of marriage with a sister of a deceased wife. After an interesting conversation, it was resolved that those present could see no Scriptural inhibition against such marriages, and further, that the approved of the Bill now before Parliament for rendering them legal. This view was taken quite unanimously, as to those present at our meeting this morning, and the subject had been duly announced beforehand. Had the meeting been larger than it was, I have no doubt, a result substantially similar would have followed, although in that case there might have been one or two dissentients.

Among those present at the meeting and fully concurring in the view I have given, were the following clergymen:—Rev. Gavin Lang, St. Andrew's Church (Church of Scotland); Rev. J. S. Black, Erskine Church (Presbyterian); Rev. J. H. Wells, American Presbyterian Church; Rev. J. Roy, Wesley Church (Congregational); Rev. J. Nichols, St. Mark's (Presbyterian), and myself.

I am permitted and authorised to communicate this result to you.

One would think from the opposition raised to the proposal, that it was one to compel marriage with a former wife's sister. It is wonderful that people should be unwilling to leave a question on which the highest exegetical and ecclesiastical authorities are so divided, to the judgment and conscience of individuals who may be interested, and to the laws of the several Churches.

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I am, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

J. FREDERICK STEVENSON,

Emmanuel Church (Congregational).

M. H. GAULT, Esq., M.P.

The Rev. James Roy (Wesleyan), writes:

1464 ST. CATHERINE STREET,

MONTREAL, April 2nd, 1880.

M. H. GAULT, Esq., M.P.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you for a copy of the Ottawa Citizen, of Wednesday last, and for the printed letters enclosed.

The testimony of Dr. de Sala is very valuable. I hope you will be successful in removing from Canada all such obstacles to marriage