

of their transgressions by the present law breakers, and its evils would be innumerable; among the chief of which would be great distress to the keepers of the Divine rule, great bitterness between families who keep and families who break the rule, great confusion and trouble among the clergy, and loosening of bonds of morality in various directions among the community at large. You may now ask of me, perhaps, what are we, the clergy, to do? I answer plainly, you are to decline to solemnize such marriages. If the State relax its obligations and pronounces marriage a civil contract only, the Divine law and the law of our Church is still binding upon you. You are to be guardians and defenders, not betrayers of public morals. Nor ought persons who live in incest to be admitted to Holy Communion. But there is more to be done. Between this time and the next session of the Dominion Parliament the clergy should endeavor to circulate among the laity sound and wholesome truth on this subject. I may mention such tracts as Lord Hatherly's "Vindication of the Law Prohibiting Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister," Mr. Keble's tract against "Profane Dealing with Holy Matrimony," the Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia's "Reasons for Rejecting the Proposed Marriage Law," and a very useful catechism on marriage, with an appendix showing the Divine authority for the table of prohibited degrees, by the Rev. J. J. Curling and Rev. J. F. Phelps of the Diocese of Newfoundland.

I think that petitions should be prepared in all our Parishes against the proposed Bill. And as Scotland always pronounced against such an alteration of the marriage law, I entertain the hope that the Presbyterian bodies here may stand with us in this matter, as well as others who wish to prevent the evil which will arise from an alteration in the law.

I must ask your indulgence, dear brethren, for having detained you longer than I had at first intended, but the importance of the subjects referred to, will, I hope, be my justification. And in regard to the other important topics for consideration and discussion at the present Synod, I pray that we may be guided by that heavenly wisdom promised to those who ask it, and follow its guidance, and desire to live by its wise and salutary rules.