

So that if the transgression of the law is to be adduced as an argument for its repeal, the most shocking abominations may be sanctioned.

The preceding reason is general in its application, but we maintain further that the restrictions, which it is proposed to annul, are divine. This was the judgment of the whole of Christendom for more than 1400 years, and is still maintained and acted upon by the Eastern Church. It was so also in the Western Church until, toward the end of the 15th Century, one of the Popes was induced to grant a dispensation for marriage with a deceased wife's sister; and we know that Henry VII. had much difficulty in obtaining from Julius II. a dispensation for the marriage of his Son Henry with the widow of his deceased Son Arthur. These marriages therefore were, and are, condemned by the Church of Rome, but she prefers having the power to give, or rather to sell, dispensations, this power being however denied by some of her greatest theologians, as for example, Thomas Aquinas specially approved by the present Pope.

In the 99th Canon of the Church of England it is affirmed that the degrees expressed in a table set forth by authority, A. D. 1563, are prohibited by the *laws of God*. And in Scotland the Confession of Faith, tied by Parliament in 1690, declares "Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own." Now the authority for these prohibitions, is formally and solemnly declared to be Levit., Chap. xviii, and it cannot be safe to annul any of them unless satisfactory proof can be adduced that all the ancient authorities, and the learned Divines of England and Scotland, whose views have been adopted and ratified by the State, were mistaken in their reading of Holy Scripture; and every member of a Legislature who votes in opposition to such *prima facie* evidence, incurs a heavy responsibility, unless he has previously examined it, and convinced himself that it is erroneous.

In the chapter on which the table is based, we have first a prohibition of marriage "with any that is near of kin," and then in v. 16 expressly "with a brother's wife," which the Bill now introduced would legalize. It is true that such a marriage was ordered, in one specified case, for a special purpose, under the Jewish dispensation, but only when there had been no issue of the first marriage, and the surviving brother was then so substituted for the deceased, that the first-born son was to be called the son of the deceased brother, and not of his actual father. Moreover, lest this command should be misunderstood, or encourage an infringement of the prohibition in other cases, God affixed a special token of his displeasure to the wilful disregard of the prohibition; "If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing; they shall die childless."

It cannot be pretended that this Chapter of Leviticus is of partial obligation, or contains merely ceremonial precepts, for of all the things prohibited it is written, "defile not ye yourselves in any