

then the nation invariably suffers. Abundance of proof of this statement might be given, did our space permit, from several countries of Europe and of this continent as well. The principle set forth by God in His holy word is "his, "first pure, then peaceable."

If then we have any regard to the morality, liberty, peace and prosperity of our beloved country, let us all see to it, both as patriots and as Christians, that the Bible be daily read in our Public Schools, as the Bible itself declares "the entrance of Thy Word gives light and makes wise the simple." I think it well for the teacher to use "the Book of Selections," to prevent them taking up portions unsuitable for young persons of both sexes reading together. But let the children have their Bibles with them, and turn up the passages indicated by the teacher. Dr. MacVicar says that Romanism is such a compost of Judaism, Paganism, Christianity and modern civilization, that one can find in it anything he wishes, and by magnifying certain features and hiding or ignoring others, he can make it harmonize with almost any system of belief. Its power of adaptation to circumstances, social and political, is truly marvellous. It can fawn and flatter and use the entreating tones of the humblest supplicant, and then frown and fulminate without mercy. The late Archbishop Bourget, of Montreal, a man of sweet and smiling face, cursed the ground down six feet deep, where he was obliged to bury Guibord, the printer, by the decision of the Queen's Privy Council, and then with pious ceremony committed the whole cemetery to the care of the Virgin Mary. Guibord had ceased to believe in Rome, but owned a lot in the cemetery.

Nearly twenty years ago the site of St. Peter's Cathedral, Montreal, was consecrated with holy water and many prayers, and nearly two years ago the bones of the first Bishop of Montreal and of the late Archbishop were deposited within the walls of the cathedral; and yet last winter for the purposes of gain it was desecrated by raffles, lotteries, wheels of fortune, etc., so that the writers in the daily press did not hesitate to call it "a den of thieves." Yet with all this facility of self-contradiction; its history, its dogmas and decrees all prove that it is steadily intolerant and hostile to human freedom and progress. Dr. MacVicar says if Protestants think it is not right to meddle with their creed let them be consistent and abstain from sending missionaries to those of similar creeds, Mohammedans, Buddhists and Parsees. If we leave Rome alone she is ready to advance and exercise complete dominion.

She has run her course in many of the countries of the Old World, and by her many superstitions filled them with utter unbelief, so that the intelligent men generally—in Austria, France, Italy or Spain—are infidels or atheists. Here she is young and fascinating, and has a vastly stronger hold on the resources and institutions of Canada than on those of Italy, France or Austria. She not only collects tithes from her poor people—thousands of whom she has driven out of Canada to the United States by her exactions—but she owns besides a great part of the property and wealth of the Province of Quebec. It is probable that she owns property—all of which is exempt from taxation—to the extent of at least \$80,000,000 to \$100,000,000. The Sulpicians alone are by common consent regarded as wealthier than the Bank of Montreal, the second or third strongest institution of its kind in the world. The annual revenue of the Church of Rome from tithes, pew rents and Church dues of all kinds, baptisms and funerals, etc., cannot be less in Quebec Province than \$10,000,000; and her wealth is constantly and rapidly increasing. In 1887 the Jesuits—the sworn enemies of the rights of nations—were incorporated for the purpose of accumulating resources and possibly regaining their lost estates. The earnings of a large army of nuns form a vast source of income. Some of them are engaged in preparing charms, amulets and trinkets which are sold to advantage; and yearly hundreds of Protestant girls are trained and perverted at the convent schools. The nuns are the most successful collectors. Papists and Protestants alike yield to their persuasive pleadings. A Protestant merchant told Dr. MacVicar that he always gave them a subscription because they were such good customers; but he did not give more than \$100 at a time. As Dr. MacVicar says, there is need of plain talk in the pulpit and through the press on the folly and wickedness of thus supporting error and idolatry.

(To be continued.)

### THE LAW OF DIVORCE IN CANADA.

MR. EDITOR,—When Judge Gowan, of Barrie, was appointed a Senator, it was regarded by all parties as an excellent appointment. Having been engaged in the work of law reform for upward of forty years, it was expected that he would in his new position direct his attention to the removal of defects that exist in the laws of the land. For some time he has been studying the laws of divorce, and has found them in such a state as to call for some timely remedy.

There is no divorce court in Canada. The only remedy in the case of the marriage tie having been broken by adultery on the part of the husband or wife, is to apply to the Senate of the Dominion, whose prerogative it is to try all such cases. The plan has hitherto been for the applicant to entrust his case to one of the Senators. He named a committee for trying the case. The only guide which the committee had was a series of defective and antiquated rules. Counsel had to be employed, certain opposing interests required to be conciliated, and, from the constant change of the committees, the decisions were uncertain and inconsistent.

The expense, according to circumstances, varied from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Divorce was thus a luxury of the rich. To the poor, no matter how hard the case might be, it was a boon utterly beyond their reach.

The consequence has been that several cases of hardship have occurred in our Church. Many too have gone to the adjacent States, where a divorce can be easily and cheaply obtained. Unsatisfactory domestic relations have thus been established throughout all parts of the country, and Sessions find great difficulty in dealing with cases that are cropping up in not a few congregations.

The difficulty in this question has been aggravated by the conscientious scruples of our Roman Catholic brethren.

In their authorized version of the Scriptures, Eph. v. 32 reads thus: "Sacramentum hoc magnum est." "This is a great sacrament." These words they apply to marriage, which is one of their seven sacraments. By them, therefore, marriage is regarded as a spiritual union, which can only be dissolved by the Pope.

Of course, any scholar knows that the real translation of the passage is not "This is a great mystery," the rendering of our excellent authorized version, but that of the Revised: "This mystery is great." The reference, it is evident, is not directly to marriage, but to the union between Christ and His Church. Still, in a question such as divorce, the views of our Roman Catholic legislators have to be considered and respected, though we believe them to be mistaken.

Now, what Judge Gowan is seeking to accomplish is the erection of what is practically a Court of Divorce without any cost to the country.

His bill provides for the appointment of a permanent committee on divorce by the Senate, to consist of seven members. It also amends and simplifies the rules. The court will be composed of the leading legal minds of the Senate. Its decisions will have all the weight of a court of justice. The expenses will be so reduced as to put its services within the reach of the poor. It will not be possible for the rich to obtain an unjust divorce by means of their wealth, and the poorest wife, who desires to be separated from an immoral husband, will be permitted to plead her cause in *forma pauperis*.

It will also be impossible for even the most wealthy to obtain a divorce, except on the ground of adultery. And it will not be necessary for parties to repair to the States in order that an undesirable bond may be dissolved.

The following illustrative cases will place this matter in a clearer light. Let our readers turn up the Minutes of the General Assembly of 1880, and look at the case of Mrs. Phillips.

Married to an immoral husband, she was obliged to leave him. Going to the States, she obtained a divorce with the consent of her husband. Soon afterward she married Mr. Phillips in Canada. A person, who did not like the minister who married her, objected to her being a member of our Church. The case was referred to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, and by it to the Assembly at Ottawa. The Assembly, by a majority, decided she could not continue a member of our Church unless she got a divorce from

Ottawa. This she was willing to obtain, but she had not the means. And when it was stated that the Church was really legislating against poverty, Principal Caven, in very eloquent terms, pledged himself to use all lawful means to get this state of matters remedied. He will be pleased to learn that the bill of Senator Gowan takes away this reproach.

Some of our readers may remember the famous Winnipeg case, where an unprincipled wife eloped from her husband with a leading politician of Manitoba, and after getting a divorce and residing for some time in the States the wicked couple returned to Winnipeg and lived there. And the injured husband had to live alone, unable to marry again, because he had not money enough to enable him to procure a divorce at Ottawa.

We know of a third case, in which a husband deserted his wife and children, and married another wife in the States. She procured a divorce in the States, but not satisfied with it, she went to Ottawa before marrying again for the purpose of procuring a divorce there. She found that the expense was altogether beyond her means, and, therefore, with the advice of leading Senators at Ottawa, she had to cross over to the States and get married there.

Now, the bill of Senator Gowan meets such cases, and will prevent much domestic evil as well as magnify at the same time the sacred bond of husband and wife. The reproach is now taken away that, in the matter of divorce, the law of Canada makes a distinction between the rich and the poor. And there is now a court, without any expense to the country, before which the unprincipled will find no relief, but where the poor and the suffering can find deliverance from an unequal yoke that was fast bringing them to the grave.

OBSERVER.

### PRESBYTERIAL OVERSIGHT.

MR. EDITOR,—A somewhat lengthy experience and observation of the work of our Presbyterian system of Church government prompts me through your columns to ask the following questions: 1. Do our several Church courts serve the ends for which they are supposed to exist? 2. What is the practical use of that court from which our Church takes its name—the Presbytery?

I am aware there is a fiction abroad, that Presbytery exercises "oversight," or supervision of all the congregations within its bounds. This fallacy has, I am convinced, worked much mischief in the past and will continue to do so in the future, until the Church as a body awakes to the conviction that Presbyterial "oversight" is a myth. We never hear of a Presbytery taking the slightest notice of any congregation or using any diligence to ascertain how matters stand until some trouble arises and then the interference comes too late to effect any good purpose. It is a fact which cannot be controverted that a congregation may plod along in a sort of humdrum dead and alive way for years, while all the time the canker of dissolution is slowly working its doom; yet Presbytery takes no notice until actual dissolution or some explosion takes place. The writer knows a congregation over which a pastor was settled some seven or eight years ago, and though almost from the first matters have gone badly and are yearly becoming worse, yet the Presbytery seems entirely ignorant of the fact, nor has that court even once in these years taken any steps to ascertain whether said congregation progressed or retrogressed. The history and experience of this congregation are, I doubt not, the exact counterpart of scores of others throughout the length and breadth of the land. The idea then that Presbytery exercises any kind of beneficial control or "oversight" over any of the congregations within its jurisdiction is simply absurd—the whole history of the Church proves the contrary.

Now, sir, if this indictment be true, and we challenge contradiction, it will be legitimately in order to inquire the reason for this supineness and indifference. The writer is of opinion that to the composition of our Church courts this unsatisfactory state of affairs is largely due. If the people, the ordinary members of the Church, had a voice or influence in her courts, I doubt not many of the evils which afflict the Church would be speedily removed, but as now constituted the Presbyterian Church in Canada as a matter of fact is entirely governed by and in the interests of the clergy. Let any observant person spend an hour or two in any of our Church courts, and he will