

to contract new alliances—and slip the facile bonds again in any fit or whim. No guarantee preserves us from such marriage laws, or from the simple abolition of all real marriage laws, all form of binding contract: a revolting prospect, surely, but not an impossible anticipation. It is inscribed in the programme of many and many a political circle elsewhere. It is possible here; any such possibility cannot be disregarded.

A false principle can be logically brought to a logical conclusion. We refuse to admit the false principle of State intervention. It is not without surprise that I, for one, note the part that non-Catholic bodies have taken in synods and assemblies in protesting against the position of Catholics in this question of marriage laws, and in petitioning the interference of the State. Astonishment is natural at this attitude of the official representatives of Protestantism. For if Protestantism stands for any principle or rests on any claim, it is that of liberty of conscience. This liberty of conscience must not be denied us. When a Catholic knows in conscience that his marriage is invalid, no law of the land can compel him to consider it valid, or bid him continue in that union. And when the Church perceives that her sons or her daughters have contracted invalid marriages, no law of the land can prevent her compel them to regularize the marriages or to