

in the official doctrinal standards of several important non-Catholic religious denominations in this Dominion. Such terms are nowhere to be found in the official laws and doctrines of the Catholic Church. But all alike necessarily (however regretfully) recognize the facts of the position created by the civil law in respect of such marriages." The pages Bishop Cleary cites contain no proof for his statements, and the extraordinary misrepresentation of the "doctrinal standards" of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand by the counsel for Bishop Cleary makes more vivid the foundation of sand on which the Bishop builds. Bishop Cleary and Sir John Findlay find in the statement of the Westminster Confession of Faith—published in London in 1648, nearly three hundred years ago—that "incestuous marriages" can never "be made lawful by any law of man," a declaration or war against the marriage laws of this Dominion! Bishop Cleary never made a more unhappy use of a document whose meaning he did not understand. The statement gleefully quoted by his counsel is a declaration of war against the Pope who, in the eyes of the Westminster divines, defied Heaven by making marriages "incestuous" in nature lawful. Popes in the sixteenth century had made themselves the scandal of Christendom by their nullification of marriages and by their permissions to marry again, and the "Confession of Faith" in its chapter on marriage fires all through at the Pope, and not at the Parliament who had summoned the divines to draw up the Confession. There are few blacker pages in history than those that deal with the Popish meddling with marriage condemned by the Westminster divines, and the blackness can be seen in "Historical Essays and Studies," pages 76 and 77, by Lord Acton, a Roman Catholic with a passion for truth and freedom. His shocking story is before me, but I cannot burden this letter with quotation. There is indirectly in the Confession of Faith of 1648 a condemnation of the deceased wife's sister marriage, but the Churches of the whole Presbyterian world have found this indirect condemnation to be inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture, and so to-day this condemnation is obsolete, and liberty of opinion and perfect freedom of action obtains in relation to this marriage in the Presbyterian churches of Christendom. The position with regard to the marriage laws of this Dominion taken up by the New Zealand Presbyterian Church is that of silent approval and not condemnation. The Clerk of the General Assembly writes me that the supreme court of the Church has not on its minutes a single protest against any of the marriages permitted by the State. As an officiating minister under the Marriage Act I have solemnized the deceased wife's sister marriage, and I have also solemnized the marriage of a woman whose former marriage was morally subverted by desertion. Such is the practice of the New Zealand Presbyterian Church, and in doing these things I realized I was faithful to the law of God and true to the law of a State whose Constitution rested on our common Christianity. Bishop Cleary's allegations about the *Ne temeres* of the Presbyterian and other Churches are simply a smoke-screen to make obscure the whole question. When this smoke-screen is blown away there is only one *Ne temere* to be seen that smites men and women and helpless children outside the Roman communion.

3. Bishop Cleary again asks you to believe that the Roman Catholic Church in New Zealand is a voluntary association, as football clubs and non-Roman churches are voluntary associations. The Roman Church in our midst is poles apart from these institutions. Football clubs and non-Roman churches have independence and self-government, and their rules are not imposed on them from Rome, or Geneva, or Canterbury. As regards Dr. Cleary's Church in New Zealand, laws are imposed upon it and upon him, and he is not consulted about the matter. Take this *Ne temere* decree as proof and illustration. Before Easter, 1908, Bishop Cleary believed and taught that a Roman Catholic and a Protestant married by a Protestant Minister contracted a true marriage—a sacramental marriage—and the couple were really husband and wife. But *Ne temere* was imposed upon him by the Vatican at Rome and he had to change his faith and practice. He was compelled after Easter, 1908, to believe and to teach that the foregoing marriage was, as his catechism says, "No marriage at all," and as the Auckland priest said, they were "bachelor" and "spinster" still. Such is the freedom Roman prelates possess in New Zealand.

4. Bishop Cleary closes his letter by quoting a Presbyterian "leader" who says that "No one questions the legal validity of whatever the State may enact, be it ever so contrary to morality and the revealed will of God." The Presbyterian Church has always questioned inequity set up by law, but it has seen no inequity in our Dominion marriage laws. The Presbyterian Church looks to the State to do the will of God in its own sphere as she seeks to do the will of God in her sphere.

I append baptismal certificate referred to above, and the explanatory statement of the United States *Protestant Magazine* of 1911.

I am, &c.,

W. Downie Stewart, Esq.,

ROBERT WOOD.

(Chairman, Marriage Amendment Bill Committee.

[Extract from U.S. *Protestant Magazine*.]

HOW LEGALLY MARRIED COUPLES ARE DEFAMED.

A case of much significance which involves the enforcement of the *Ne temere* decree in the United States has recently come to our attention. Having been able to secure convincing testimony to show that a Roman Catholic priest acting under the authority of this decree, has, in defiance of the law of the State of New Jersey, declared a valid marriage to be no marriage, and the child of a lawfully married couple to be an illegitimate child, we present the facts herewith, in order that our readers may know that Rome is already setting church law before civil law in this country, and, by declaring a marriage lawfully contracted to be no marriage, has put the stamp of shame upon persons whose relations were wholly honourable. The facts briefly stated are these: A Roman Catholic Hungarian, of Perth Amboy, N.J., named Stephen Dagonya, was married on the 4th August, 1909, to Mary Csoma, a member of the Hungarian Reformed Church of the same city, by the pastor of her church, Rev. Louis Nanassy. In November, 1910, they took their little girl, Anna Susanna, to the Roman