

OUR PROPHECY FULFILLED—A JUDGE CONDEMNS THE SCOTT ACT.

THAT the Scott Act would prove unworkable; that it would create greater evils than the one it was passed to remove, we long ago prophesied. Some well-meaning, but over-enthusiastic friends of temperance, whose principles we honor and whose support we prize, regarded our forecast with disfavour. Some few, indeed, censured our judgment, as they most unjustly imagined it to indicate a prejudice against the temperance movement. The truth was and is that because we hoped to see this movement steadily and permanently advance, we feared that the Scott Act would prove not helpful but obstructive to that progress. It is too much forgotten that human nature to-day is the same as in past days. If history teaches any lesson at all, it is this, that while mere physical force has no power to create moral energy as an ally, it has a wonderful tendency to stir up moral energy in its defiance. Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough, said "he would rather see England free and drunken than sober and enslaved." The saying sounds strange from a Bishop, but it is eminently inspired by Christian philosophy. A drunken freeman may be raised to the highest moral freedom; but a slave in body and mind is in a hopeless position, his very sobriety is only one sign of his humiliation. Mr. Justice Rose, than whom a more upright Christian-minded man exists not, nor a brighter ornament to the Bench, has felt it to be his duty to condemn the Scott Act from his judicial seat. In his charge to the Toronto Grand Jury he said:

"I am not going to say whether or not the Scott Act is a failure, or whether or not there should be a prohibitory law. I have during the past three years given the subject much consideration. I have been in every county town in the province except two during that time, and have made enquiries as to the working of the Scott Act. I have found that the Act is not enforced; that there is open violation of its provisions, and in one town in which I was on my last circuit the proprietor of the hotel at which I was lodging openly sold liquor," etc.

Now we believe that no more severe condemnation of an Act passed by direct vote of the majority in a district, can be conceived than the fact that such Act is not enforced; that it is openly violated in that district in spite of the vigilance of officials and in spite of a public verdict in favor of the Act. We heard the Mayor of Toronto—Mr. W. H. Howland—say in public that an Act of Parliament of this character not enforced produced the greatest possible mischief, as the young came to treat all law with contempt when they saw one law treated openly with contempt. Such mischief is now being caused by the Scott Act where ever it is nominally in force.

We can testify from personal observation while recently passing through several Scott Act counties, that this law is a mere dead let-

ter. The Hotels keep open their bar-rooms without let or hindrance or scandal. These places being now under no such restriction as a license imposed, *are kept open up to very much later hours than they were prior to the Scott Act being passed, thus seriously aggravating the very evil against which the Act is aimed.* It is, of course, affirmed that the Act is paralyzed by political dodgery. The liquor interest has votes; has a solid vote we may say, like the Roman Catholic one, and it would seem that this solid vote is being courted by both political factions. The temperance party vote and the liquor party vote seem at present likely to go cheek by jowl together in loving companionship to the polls. Recently the ultra-Protestant vote and the ultra-Roman Catholic vote went like new Siamese twins, two hearts beating like one, and showing a brotherly unity which so far from being "good and pleasant" was a gross offence against public morality and decency.

Associations of corporate votes such as Temperance party with Liquor party, Romanist with Protestant, whose only bond of union is akin to the tie between two footpads; whose companionship is as disgraceful as that of a harlot and her victim, are evidences of deep cancerous corruption at work in our public life, which has in it elements fatal to national development by paralyzing the patriotism which vivifies and sapping the righteousness which exalteth a nation.

A PHENOMENAL BLUNDER.

FROM all parts of the Province of Ontario, evidence is flowing in that although a Minister of Education may declare that the Ross biblical scrap book shall be read in the Public Schools, yet there is enough reverence for the Bible still left, and enough public spirit also, to cause a general revolt against the attempt to eject from the schools, God's Holy Word, in order to make room for a man's wicked substitute. In the city of Guelph the parents have requested their children to be released before the Ross Bible is read. In many other places in open defiance of the law the Bible has been replaced and teachers at the peril of official censure and punishment are using God's Word instead of the mutilated edition thereof, which the government has declared "shall be read."

One of the most able and influential papers, published in the eastern provinces, the Halifax *Presbyterian Witness*, thus declares its objections to the Ross Bible.

"When the Churches officially, or semi-officially, set to work *cutting and carving the Bible*, even with the sanction of the Civil Government, we beg to record our humble but most earnest protest. All Scripture is profitable in school as elsewhere; the very sections you have cut out as "immoral, indecent and unfit to read" may be those that are most urgently required. We think the responsibility of the action taken in Ontario rests upon the Churches; but we think the Churches would have decided more wisely

had they left the New Testament as a whole, or even the Bible as a whole, in the schools. No legislature, no school board, has a right to exclude the Old or the New Testament from the Public schools, and it appears to us extremely perilous for ministers of the Gospel in their individual capacity or as organized bodies to connive at the virtual exclusion of the Bible. To *prescribe* the book of selections is to *proscribe* the Book of God in its integrity. We are perfectly certain they have acted with a view to the greatest good of the country, and without any sinister motive whatever. None the less do we think the experiment a phenomenal blunder."

The *Week*, which is equally removed from religious as it is from political partisanship, has an article from the pen of probably the most scholarly Biblical and literary critic on the continent, who says the Ross Bible is a thing of shreds and patches, that it is almost impossible to find a connected reading of any one of the Epistles, that thus their real intent, meaning and teaching, are so obscured as to be unintelligible. Another independent paper, the organ of the Wesleyans in the eastern provinces, takes the *Christian Guardian* sharply to task for being "caught napping," and for surrendering Protestant privileges and principles to carry out the astute policy of a Papal Archbishop. We quote the *Halifax Wesleyan*, and ask careful attention to its utterances, *as being precisely what a Wesleyan newspaper must say whose editor is not controlled by a political party, as the paper is which the Wesleyan condemns.*

"The *Christian Guardian* of last issue has an elaborate article on "The Scripture Readings." We cannot help thinking, that the editor of the *Guardian* fails to reach the real inwardness of the matter. The merits of the selections bring up a side issue. Behind all explanations, as looked at from this distance, is the disturbing thought that an astute archbishop has caught the representatives of other Churches napping, and that there has been a surrender of Protestant principle and privilege. Does anyone believe, except in deference to Ultramontaniam, that any change would have been made in the order for reading the Bible as it stood under the regime of Dr. Ryerson? Was it through the same ecclesiastical interference that "Marmion" was put under the ban, and excised from the text books of English literature? Is it pretended that any scheme for selections from the Scriptures would have been thought of but for priestly pressure? Concessions were made to the Roman Catholics in Ontario, in the grant of Separate schools, and there compromise should have ended. To our mind a question of religious right is a vastly more serious thing than any manœuvre of political party. It may be well to remember the maxim of Chillingworth:—"The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is the religion of Protestants." We ask our Protestant contemporaries who have been "caught napping" by Archbishop Lynch, who have made "a surrender of Protestant principles