

THE Canadian Union Messenger

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger."

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Religious Liberty in Danger

THE leading editorial of the *Toronto Daily Star* for Friday, March 16, is entitled, *The Lord's Day Act*. This article sets forth the danger which lies in the proposed legislation upon the Sunday question, in language which should startle every lover of liberty. No attempt is made to hide the *Religious Character of the Bill*. It says, "Behind this Bill are the aggressive advocates of the Lord's Day Alliance, the influence of Archbishop Bruchesi of Montreal and other Roman Catholic clergy, and the natural desire of the Dominion Government to see its own measures pass through Parliament unscathed."

The first two of the three influences "behind this bill" are "the Lord's Day Alliance," an organization of the various Protestant churches of Canada; and the influence of Archbishop Bruchesi and other Roman Catholic clergy."

We do not refer to this for the purpose of casting any reflection upon either the Protestant or the Roman Catholic churches as professed bodies of Christian worshippers; for we believe that many among these churches are sincere in using their influence to secure this Sunday law. But we make the reference for the purpose of showing that this Bill is purely a *Religious Measure*. Originating in the churches, urged forward by the churches, for the benefit of the churches, and introduced by the government at the suggestion of the churches, no one can fail to see that this Bill contemplates *Religious Legislation*.

It is not *civil* legislation in any sense of

the term, nor is it so considered to be by any of those who are so influential in advocating the measure. Even the editor of the *Star*, in the article referred to above, says, "The Bill, if adopted, will certainly limit work on the Sabbath to the most carefully proven necessities, and will shut the gates of pleasure altogether. This may be the will of the Canadian people. It undoubtedly is the will of a great many of them and of *Those Placed in Ecclesiastical Authority*. Whether this will should be imposed upon others is a fairly debatable question; but it must be debated before the Bill passes the two Houses."

Never was a truer statement. It is indeed "a fairly debatable question" whether "the will of others" in "ecclesiastical authority" should be "imposed upon others," especially so when "this will" is with reference to a known and admitted *Religious Ceremony*.

There is no right so sacred to the individual as the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and it is no wonder that the editor of the *Star* has sounded the alarm upon this important question, and declares it to be "a fairly debatable" one. It is high time for every true lover of liberty to take the alarm and sound the note of warning against this encroachment upon the people's civil rights and religious liberties.

The people have so long enjoyed religious and civil liberty that they seem to be oblivious to the awful fact that they could ever be deprived of these inestimable blessings which have been so dearly secured to them. It has cost the blood and treasure

of generations to secure the liberties which we enjoy to-day,—liberties which were lost to the world by an appeal to the government from the church for a Sunday law,—the first Sunday law that ever was enacted. And *Constantine's Sunday law*, enacted in 321 A. D., was the stepping stone which led to further religious legislation and its consequent attendant, religious persecution; and for more than a thousand years the civilization and progress which the true principles of Christianity would have given to the world, were buried in superstition and ignorance, until the voice of the *Great Reformation* broke the spell, and gave back to the human race its natural birthright of civil and religious liberty.

How many to-day are familiar with the *Protest of Spire's*? "This protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second, the arbitrary authority of the church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate; and the authority of the word of God above the visible church."

—*D'Ambigne*.

But this Sunday Bill proposes to do both of these things; for, as the editor of the *Star* says, "It is a fairly debatable question" whether the will of those "placed in ecclesiastical authority should be imposed upon others;" and secondly, this Bill proposes "the intrusion of the civil magistrate" in matters of religion by enforcing Sabbath observance which is wholly a *Religious Ceremony*, having no civil basis whatever. Every reason that has ever been given, or that ever can be given, for the observance of the Sabbath day, is a religious reason. All this talk about giving the laboring man his day of rest, and this law being enacted for his benefit, is the rankest hypocrisy. If these laboring men wanted the day for rest and worship, they could take it; and if those who are asked to labor on the Lord's

day were genuine Christians, they would take it whether there was a law requiring them to do so or not.

If there are those who doubt the fact that this Bill proposes religious legislation, let them read the following, clipped from the *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, of Feb. 21.

If there are those who doubt the fact that this Bill when enacted into law will lead to religious persecution, let them read it.

If there are those who have any influence with the government, however small, let them read, and then use their influence to prevent this foul blot from being placed upon the hitherto spotless pages of the Dominion Statute Books.

If there are those who can remember the days of American slavery, when these fair provinces of Canada became a safe and secure refuge for the colored man from the avarice and tyranny of those who professed to live under the sheltering folds of a flag that floated over a "land of the free,"—if there be such, let them read it, and before the mantling blush of shame has faded from their cheeks, let them lift up their voices in protest against this proposed Sunday law.

"Double Offense"

"Hebrew Baker Made Bread Saturday, Sold Sunday"

"Moses Richstone, baker, of York St. was fined \$3 and \$2 in the police court this morning for delivering bread to his customers on Sunday, and in convicting him Magistrate O'Keefe remarked that he would have dealt more leniently with Richstone if he had not broken the laws of his own faith also in baking the bread on Saturday, the Hebrew Sabbath.

These are his words: "You offended your own religious laws as well as those of this country. If the bread had been made Friday I might have been easier with you, but under the circumstances I fine you \$3 and \$2 costs and warn you not to repeat the offense."

What right has a magistrate who is sworn to administer the law impartially, to fine a man,—not so much for the awful crime of selling a loaf of bread on Sunday, as for the baking of it on Saturday!

What concern was it to this precious magistrate whether a criminal observes any form of religious worship or not. He holds his office as a minister of the law of the land to punish criminals, not sinners. But selling a loaf of bread to a needy customer is not a crime on any day of the week, much less the baking of it. But when a magistrate takes it upon himself to impose a fine upon one because his only offense is the disregard of a religious practice in which he does not believe, and then to double the fine because he disregards another religious practice in which he does profess to believe, but which the magistrate does not believe in, it is high time for the people to take alarm at this travesty upon justice, and use their influence to the utmost in opposition to the enactment of a law which places the control of other men's liberties in the hands of such men.

This baker was a sinner because he violated the law of God, but he was not a criminal, because his sin injured no one but himself. This baker was a Jew and believed in circumcision, which is just as much a part of the Jewish law as is the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. This honorable magistrate does not believe in circumcision any more than he does in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. But he has just as much right to impose a fine upon an uncircumcised Jew because of his uncircumcision, as to fine him for not observing the Seventh-day Sabbath!

Knowing that such things exist, is it not high time for the people of Canada to enter an emphatic protest against the enactment of any more such laws?

The editor of the *Star* says, "If the country does not want this Bill, it should speak now." And again, "It must be debated before the Bill passes the two Houses." The question which arises in our mind is, where can this question be debated? The platform and the press are the mouthpieces

of the public. But are the columns of the press open to a thorough discussion of this question? If so there has been a remarkable change in the attitude of the leading papers within a very recent period. And if the *Star* imagines that the platform would be effectual in reaching the ears of the Canadian people upon this question, it is much mistaken. Even those who have been so strenuous in advocating this measure have been unable to reach the ears of the people through the platform. Will the *Star* suggest some means by which this question can be discussed in a way in which the people will listen to it; or must it be that the Canadian people will have to learn by experience the sad results of religious persecution?

Report of the Spring Council of the Ontario Conference

At the recent Committee meeting of the Ontario Conference it was voted,—

1. That the next annual camp-meeting be held from August 23 to September 2.
2. That the Canadian Union Conference be invited to hold their next biennial session in connection with the next annual camp-meeting.
3. That a committee be selected and instructed to look over the territory lying south of the Grand Trunk Railway between the cities of London and Hamilton for a suitable place to hold the camp-meeting, especially the cities of Simcoe, Tilsonburg, and Brantford.
4. That we maintain two tents in the field this summer, to be manned as follows,—A. L. Miller and Roy Hadcock, H. D. Carr and John McEachern.
5. That the summer school at Lornedale Academy begin April 19 and continue until about Christmas.

That a committee of five be selected to study the question of the organization of the medical work, and to report at the next

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annual camp-meeting. The committee was chosen as follows,—A. O. Burrill, chairman, A. L. Miller, Dr. W. J. McCormick, Mrs. W. J. McCormick, and B. B. Noftsgger.

From Ottawa

MARCH. 16.—The Minister of Justice, Mr. Fitzpatrick, introduced the Sunday observance Bill Monday, March 12, and it had its first reading.

The Bill provides that no sales or business can be done on the Lord's day (Sunday) except in the province of Quebec, where sales at church doors of country parishes are permitted.

What are regarded as works of necessity and mercy are defined and are not prohibited. Games and performances where an admission fee is charged are prohibited, as well as excursions, by conveyance to where a fee is charged. Shooting at targets is also prohibited. The penalty for each offense ranges from one to forty dollars.

This Bill does not embrace all that was asked for

by the promoters of Sunday laws; but it is religious legislation nevertheless, and would prepare the way for more stringent and oppressive Sunday laws.

Our petitions were presented Wednesday, Mar. 14, by the Hon. N. A. Belcourt, M. P., of Ottawa, and were received by the House. A statement was presented with the petitions, protesting against the passing of any bill concerning the Lord's Day, or any other religious rite, ceremony, or observance, which would in any way interfere with the rights of religious freedom of any of His Majesty's subjects.

These petitions contain the signatures of 13,832 persons twenty-one years of age or more, as follows: British Columbia, 1200; Alberta and Saskatchewan, 884; Manitoba 1508; Ontario, 7136; Quebec, 1547 New Brunswick, 551; Nova Scotia, 1006.

Respectfully submitted by the
Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

The next day the Ottawa papers, especially the *Citizen*, gave good reports of the protest presented and the reasons for protesting against the Sunday Bill.

More information will appear later.

W. H. THURSTON.

Religious Liberty Notes

Many valuable letters and other matter are necessarily laid over until next week on account of the religious liberty articles which should be gotten before the people.

We received a letter from Sister Crackel, Chatham, Ont., enclosing another letter which she had received from the Member of Parliament representing the district in which she lives. The letter was very friendly, but rather noncommittal.

The Bill has passed the first reading. Just how long it will be before the second and third readings take place we cannot say, but in the mean time our friends should still be active in circulating petitions in opposition to the Bill.

“There is a higher law than the Constitution.”

Report of the Canvassing Work for Week Ending Mar. 9, 1906

Name	Place	Book	Orders	Value	Value Miscellaneous	Orders	Delivered
G. W. Sowler,	Toronto, Ont.	B. R.	5	10.50	1.20		14.80
Lorne Pengelly,	Beeton, Ont.	C. K.	25	30.	12.50		108.
Thomas Brown,	Lorne Park, Ont.	C. K.	2	2.50			
Earl Spencer,	Toronto, Ont.	B. R.	4	8.			
H: D. Carr,	Lorne Park, Ont.	P. P.	3	7.50		3.	
John McEachern,	Lorne Park, Ont.	D. R.	4	10.25	1.25		
Howard Patchett	Lorne Park, Ont.	C. K.	1	1.25			
Totals,	6 Agents,		44	\$70.50	\$14.95		\$125.80