

provided that in that party-strife which is inevitable in a country endowed as ours with a parliamentary system of government, they render not themselves guilty of any fault against God, against neighbor or against society itself. In political as in other warfare, loyal and lawful arms are alone allowed; and the end in view must be the public weal.

Not more in election-time than in any other, is any one free to avoid the law of God and His holy will. Not more in matters politic or civil than in any other, the constitution ordering you to freely give your vote to the men of your choice allows you any unjust or dishonest means to assure their triumph or that of your own opinions. Even were such the will of the constitution, it would not be possible. The law of the land might add to the obligations which God has laid upon us either by the natural law or by His commandments, or by the precepts of the Church, but it is powerless in any case to free you therefrom. The civil law will not, therefore, at the judgment-seat of God, absolve you of the transgressions of the divine law of which you may be guilty. On the contrary, it will accuse you and render your condemnation more dreadful; for the faults committed in your public life always involve more or less scandal, and injure not only a few private individuals, but the entire commonwealth.

II

Should we, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren, warn you against the faults into which you may be more easily led during election-time?

One of the most grievous, assuredly, is *perjury*. You become guilty of that enormous crime against God and society, not only when, under oath, you tell a falsehood or disguise the truth but each time that you are wilfully the cause of a false oath.

Beware, therefore, lest, by violating the just laws made to ensure honest elections, you expose yourselves or others to perjury. Respect the holiness of the oath by asking or commanding it only when absolutely necessary to save important interests or for the efficacious protection of justice; for if it is a shameful and