

general result that the representatives returned to sit in Parliament would collectively represent the nation and fairly embody the reason contained in the whole community.

There is one peculiarity of the system suggested which may be noticed; in every case the election of a representative would be effected deliberately and without conflict. It would be accomplished in fact with unanimous assent. Each individual voter would contribute towards a common result—a result which would be reached on principles equally just and fair to all, and thus command general acquiescence.

These results are attainable only by bringing to bear, on matters of doubt or difficulty, the principle of settlement adopted by the Apostles. That principle cannot be objected to on scientific grounds, and those who hold the belief that mundane affairs are over-ruled and directed, should have no difficulty in accepting it as a means of promoting harmony and advancing the common good. The belief in a Providence, who takes cognizance of the affairs of men, is the foundation of all religion; communities therefore the social fabric of which is based on Christianity should have no hesitation in leaving matters of the highest moment to the arbitrament of an infinitely wise Providence rather than to the settlement of men with all their individual interests and selfish views, all their prejudices, all their passions, and all their errors of judgment.

I have so far, for the purpose of the argument, assumed hypothetical cases; it remains to be considered how the principles laid down may be applied practically. Let us take for example the election of a single representative in a constituency of 2,000 voters. It is desirable in the first place that each voter, or group of voters of one mind, should have perfect freedom of choice in the nomination. Suppose, in order to accommodate every shade of opinion, it be arranged that each hundred voters of one way of thinking name the person whom they would wish to represent them. This would separate the constituency into twenty groups of voters, who would each nominate whomsoever they most favored. It does not necessarily follow that there would be twenty persons nominated in the constituency, as two or more groups might nominate the same person; a circumstance which would increase the probability of his selection exactly in proportion to the number of groups making him their nominee. On the twenty nominations being made, the next step would be for the persons nominated to proceed, on the principles above set forth, to select one of themselves.

If unable to make an unanimous choice, they might, as in the case of the twenty electors choosing a representative, sort themselves into smaller groups and, by the application of the principles set forth, proceed to reduce the number of voting units, and finally, by the apostolic method, determine the selection of one person. The person so chosen would be held to be the common choice of the whole 2,000 to represent the constituency in Parliament.

In the carrying out of such a system, there would be, as in every system, a number of possible contingencies for which provision would have to be made; these I have not deemed it necessary at present to enter into. My object has been briefly to suggest leading principles by which, as it appears to me, the central idea may be realized. If the principles submitted be sound, I venture to think that it is not impracticable to devise proper machinery to elect representatives who, when brought into one deliberative gathering, would, so far as such a thing is possible, be a mathematical concentration of the whole electoral body—would in fact constitute an assembly which would closely approximate to the ideal Parliament.