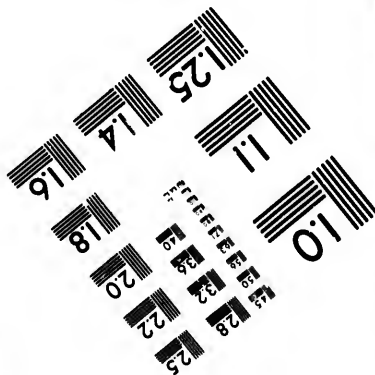
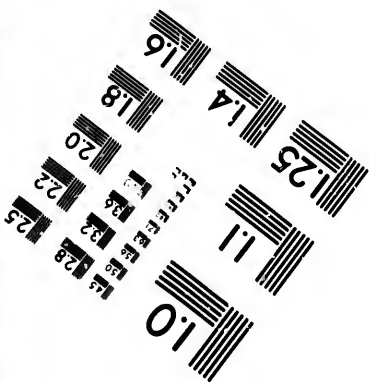
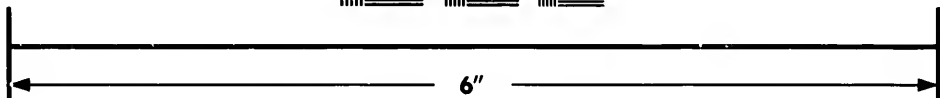
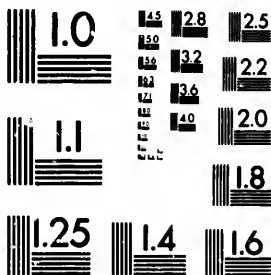


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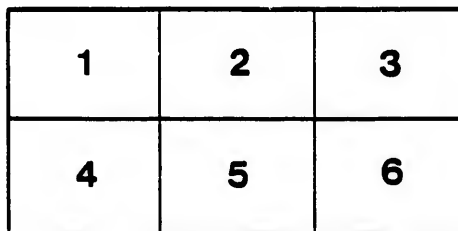
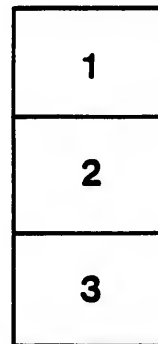
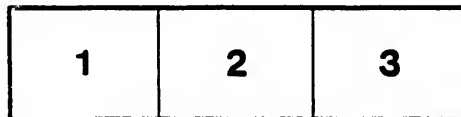
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ELECTIVE FRANCHISE;

OR,

9

Why Reformed Presbyterians do not Vote at Parli-
amentary or Municipal Elections :

A DISCOURSE

BY

Rev. J. R. LAWSON,

BARNESVILLE, N. B.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

SAINT JOHN, N. B. :

R. A. H. MORROW,

28 Charlotte Street.

1878.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The following discourse, not having been originally intended for publication, was very hurriedly written. A few friends, in whose judgment the author has more confidence than in his own, considering that its publication would be useful, the manuscript has been placed in their hands.

For a fuller vindication of the Covenanting position, drawn from the descending moral obligation of the British Covenants, the reader is referred to a small paper on "the Solemn League," put into circulation by the same author.

With confidence in the ultimate triumph of Truth, the present discourse is sent forth to accomplish its destiny.

BARNESVILLE,
2nd July, 1878.

DISCOURSE.

"I speak as to wise men : judge ye what I say."

1st CORINTHIANS, X. Chap. 15th Verse.

The right of private judgment is one of the great principles of Protestantism. Romanism withholds that right from its votaries. It makes the demand upon every one, that, from his earliest years, he surrender his understanding, will, and conscience to the priesthood, who claim to *think* for him, to *believe* for him, and to *direct* him in all his spiritual movements as a machine is directed.

How different is true Protestantism. It concedes the right to every man to think for himself, to judge for himself, to decide for himself. Nay, more, it makes the *demand* on every man that he exercise that right. It makes the solemn demand upon him that he will not receive his creed, or his rule of life from any man, or any body of men, but from God speaking in his word. It makes the imperative demand upon him that he study that word, compare doctrines and rules of life with it, and receive or reject according to his convictions as to their agreement or disagreement with that "infallible rule of faith and practice."

In this discourse, I propose to bring before you a subject of great practical moment. And my request is that you will lay aside all prejudice and preconceived opinions—that you will lay aside all consideration of worldly interest, social position, and every other consideration that would tend to hinder the right perception of truth; and that you will compare what I have to say, with the great principles of the Bible, and the teachings of enlightened, Scriptural reason, “To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this rule, it is because they have no light in them.” “I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say.”

It is by many, considered a strange thing, that there are any people, who do not exercise the “Elective Franchise,” or vote for Members of Parliament, or Municipal Councillors. It is well known, that all persons in the fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church decline the exercise of that right, and the enjoyment of that privilege. It is well known that no person can enjoy the Communion of that Church, who holds office under the Crown, or votes for Members of Parliament, Imperial, Dominion, or Provincial. Many questions have oftentimes been asked, and many curious answers have sometimes been given—regarding the reasons. Now, I propose to bring before you, as plainly as I can, some of the more prominent reasons, why we have not voted in the *past*, and why we cannot vote in the *future*, until some very important change shall have

taken place in the constitution and administration of National affairs.

In the first place, it is not because that we consider voting at elections to be wrong *in itself*. Civil government is an ordinance of God. It is his will, as well as a dictate of reason, that there should be rulers in every land. It is the right of the people to choose their own rulers. Every man, therefore, should vote, if he can do so in a scriptural way. For any one to decline voting without a very important reason, is sinful. For any one to decline voting for any reason but one derived from conscience, is sinful. For any one to keep at home on an election day, simply because of the badness of the weather, or the roads, or through the pressure of business, or for any other reason of a worldly nature, is sinful. There is only one thing, that can ever justify a person in declining to vote: it is the deep conviction resting on his mind, that there are certain circumstances connected with the case would make it *morally wrong* for him to do that which, in other circumstances, he ought to do, and which it would be sinful in him not to do.

And in this connexion, I might call your attention to the little regard that is shown to the rights of conscience, in the present day. You know that if one stays home on an election day, and assigns as his reason, want of interest in the result of the political contest, hurry of private business, or some other selfish, worldly cause, there are usually very

few to blame him for it. But if one stays away from the Hustings on the plea of *conscience*, almost every tongue is raised against him as a narrow minded person, entitled to be regarded in no other light than an enemy to his country, and deserving to be treated as an outlaw. Such is the small regard that is shown, even in Christian communities, to the rights of conscience. Now, let me ask you this question: Which of the two men is better entitled to the confidence of the community, the man who would not sacrifice his own petty worldly interest for his country, or the man who would sacrifice every thing for his country, save and except the rights of God and his own conscience?

In the second place, if we do not vote it is not owing to any *want of interest in public affairs*. He is not a christian who is not a patriot. Every one ought to love his country. Public interests ought to lie nearer his heart than his own private affairs. He ought to pray for his country's welfare. He ought to desire to see good men in office, good laws administered, and that "righteousness" set up which the Bible declares "exalteth a nation." Every one ought to be willing to bear his due part of the financial burdens of his country, and if need be, to shed his blood in its defence. And, I think, I may say, that those who conscientiously decline the exercise of the elective franchise in the present condition of things, are not less patriotic than others are. They are as ready with their taxes—they give

as little trouble to the magistrates and police, and are as seldom in courts of law, for breaches of the peace, as those that claim to be peculiarly loyal. They belong to no secret revolutionary society. No disturber of the peace, known to be such, would be received into our communion. If we desire changes in the administration of national affairs, they are such as would strengthen our country, and not weaken it. The only weapons we use in our warfare against national evils, are scripture, enlightened reason, and prayer. Our only aim is the establishment of that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and the removal of that sin that God declares is "a disgrace to any people."

In the third place, if we do not vote, it is not because it is a *matter of indifference to us whether good or bad men are advanced to office*. We are not unconcerned as to what is the result of any particular election. It is not a matter of indifference to us whether an infidel or a christian, a papist or a protestant, a drunkard or a sober man goes into office. We would like to see good men in the magistracy; men such as Paul describes: "a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well." We would like to see good men on the Judges' bench; men that will decide righteously between man and man. We would like to see good men in Parliament, men possessing such qualifications, as the Bible declares they should possess:—"able men, men of truth, men fearing God and hating covetousness;" and

when men of that character offer their services, it grieves us that such is the condition, on which alone we are allowed to vote, that we cannot go forward, and help to put them in office, and help to keep out those "vile men" of whom the Psalmist speaks, "The wicked walk on every side when vile men are exalted."

In the fourth place, if we do not vote it is not because of *any secular advantage that we hope to reap from our position.*

Now I do think that in this age of selfishness, when almost every cause is looked at from the stand point of worldly interest, it is a great thing for us to be able to say, that in the position we take in relation to national affairs, we are not seeking our own things. It is a great thing for us to be able to say that it is not worldly influence, social position, or pecuniary gain, that we have an eye to in the stand we take. The covenanting profession is entirely the wrong road to wealth, social status, and worldly honor. We have no worldly advantages to gain by our profession. We have very much to lose. What fools then we would be to take up a position of political isolation—a position that exposes us to much reproach, that hinders the growth of our church numerically, that stands in the way of our attaining worldly honors and influence—if we had not reasons weightier far than all "the gold of Ophir," or the honors of a fading world. To these reasons I would now call your attention. "I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."

At the outset it will be necessary to consider the general principle that the voter and the elected candidate are *one in law*. The one is the representative of the other. The theory of representative government is, that as it would be inconvenient for all the people of a city or county to meet together in one assembly to do their own legislation, they choose two or three persons as their representatives, to take their place, to do their work, to make their laws for them; and the sayings and doings of these representatives are, in law, the sayings and doings of those who choose them.

Now, the very first thing that the elected candidate does when he goes to Parliament is to take a certain oath. That oath he takes as the representative of his constituents. He takes it in their name, and hence it is as much *their* oath as *his*. That is what is called the *Oath of Allegiance*, and it may be desirable that I should make a remark in regard to what that oath is—what it imports and what it binds to.

There is what is called “the *Coronation Oath*,” or that which the Sovereign takes on ascending the throne—a solemn pledge to govern according to certain fixed principles and laws embodied in the statute book. Then there is what is called the *Oath of Allegiance*—a solemn pledge on the part of the people to support the Sovereign *in thus ruling*. The coronation oath is the Sovereign’s pledge to rule according to the laws and customs of the realm, and the

oath of allegiance is the people's pledge to support the Sovereign in ruling according to these laws and customs. Thus you will see that it is not so much an oath to the Sovereign *personally* as to the *constitution* of which he or she is the head. It is an acknowledgment of those principles and laws commonly called the *constitution* of the realm, or the rule or standard according to which all legislation is to be conducted. The truth is that both the Sovereign in the coronation oath, and the people in the oath of allegiance, are both firmly bound to that constitution in all its parts and principles. They are both, with the solemnity of an oath, committed to it and pledged to support it.

Hence I affirm that no one can vote, in the present condition of things, on *any other condition than his giving his sanction to, and solemnly pledging himself to support, the constitution in all its parts.* And, perhaps, it may be desirable that I should define more fully what is meant by the *constitution*. When men form themselves into a society for any purpose, they adopt certain laws and regulations, according to which the society is to be carried on. Every one that joins the society is supposed to know these laws and regulations and to approve of them. These are what is called the *constitution* of the society. Now the British nation is a great society, formed for certain great purposes, and, as such, it has its laws and regulations, on the acknowledgment of which one is entitled to membership. These are

called "the *British Constitution*." Now, my proposition is, that no one can enjoy the privileges of the national society, or is allowed to vote for members of Parliament or municipal councillors, on *any other condition* than that he will take an oath to that constitution and swear to support it. He may not be required to take that oath *personally*, but he is required to take it by his representative, which, in law and morals, amounts to the same thing.

The members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church have decided objections to take such a pledge as that, and it may be desirable that I should say—and I have great pleasure in saying it—that our objection does not arise from any personal disaffection to the Sovereign. We love the Queen personally, and desire that she may be happy in time and eternity. We regard her as a model wife, a model mother, and a model queen. If she were driven as an exile from her throne and palace, there is not a door, in all her wide dominions, that would be more cordially opened to her than the door of a covenanter's humble dwelling. If, in the public prayers of the sanctuary, we do not make such explicit mention of Her Majesty the Queen as some others do, our reasons are not drawn from *herself personally*, but from the character of the *constitution* of which she is the head. That she may be greatly blessed as a *woman*, as a *mother*, as a *christian*, we most heartily desire and humbly pray; but that she may be prospered as a *queen*, the head of what we consider, in some

respects, an iniquitous constitution, appointed to administer laws that are dishonoring to God and injurious to the nation, we dare not pray, for that would be to pray for prosperity to laws and measures which the Governor amongst the nations could not sanction, and which He could not bless. I am persuaded, that if Her Majesty knew our principles and our position, she would value our prayers, offered on her behalf, more than she has a right to value those that are offered as a token of loyalty to her crown and dignity. For, how does the case stand? If she should happen to be dethroned by some revolutionary storm, or abdicate in favor of some one else, those prayers would at once cease, her name would be erased at once from the Prayer-book and some other name, far less honorable, perhaps, would be substituted. But the loss of her crown and sceptre would not involve the loss of *our* intercession on her behalf. We would remember her as the woman, the mother, the humble christian, still, and would not cease to pray that in her darkest hours on earth she might be illumined with the light of heaven.

Neither does our objection to the oath of allegiance arise from any disaffection to our country and its interests. Let our country be invaded by a foreign foe, and if Covenanters would not be amongst the first to shed their blood in its defence, they would belie their past history. There was a time when the Covenanters of Scotland raised amongst themselves a whole regiment of soldiers for their

country's service. It was called the "Cameronian Regiment." The distinguished free church historian, Hetherington, thus writes: "The generous Covenanters stood forward in defence of their native land, and offered to raise a regiment for public service, stipulating only that the officers should be men of conscience, honor and fidelity, and unstained by the persecuting proceedings of the late reign, and that their service should be for the defence of the Nation, and the preservation of religion against Popery, Prelacy, and Tyranny. These terms were gladly accepted, and in one day, without beat of drum, or the expenditure of levy money, they raised a regiment of 800 men, commonly termed the Cameronian regiment. Such indeed was their loyalty and zeal, that they even offered to raise two more regiments, if their services should be required, for the protection of their country's liberties. Sufficient that they were neither the narrow minded fanatics, nor the miserable handful, which their enemies and persecutors pretended, but in reality, a powerful body of high hearted and patriotic men." The editor of a religious journal, published in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in a late issue thus writes: "It would be hard to estimate the services that the Covenanters have rendered to the cause of religion, liberty, and humanity, the wide world over, from the first day until now. And it cannot be denied, indeed by our best historians, there is no attempt to deny it, that

to the Covenanters of Scotland, the cause of civil and religious liberty in Britain is more indebted for the high position that to-day it enjoys, than to any other party in the State, than to any other section of the community." We claim to be patriots in the truest and best sense. We utterly repudiate allegiance to any foreign power. There is not a drop of Fenian blood in a Covenanter's veins. The principles we hold, if generally adopted and acted upon, would be the life, the strength, the glory of our country.

Neither does our objection to the Oath of Allegiance arise from any opposition to the laws that relate to *civil* things. All these laws, so far as I know, are just and right. In no nation under the sun is there the same security for life and property. And we have reason to bless God that we live under a flag that secures our safety so that we can go out and come in without any to legally molest or make us afraid. Our objections to the oath of allegiance has principally a respect to the Constitution in its *religious* aspect. By taking that oath we would solemnly pledge ourselves to support what we consider great *moral evils*, and as we are not allowed to vote on any other condition than that of swearing to support what we believe to be *morally wrong*, we must forgo what we would, in other circumstances, regard a privilege, at the same time endeavoring to live as good members of civil society, "living quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and hon-

esty," and waiting in faith and humble prayer for that good time coming when all the evils that afflict society shall be done away, and great voices shall be heard in heaven proclaiming: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

I. We cannot acknowledge the Constitution or swear to support it, because *we are professing christians.*

A christian is one that has token an oath of unqualified allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, the enthroned redeemer. How then can he swear allegiance to anything that is in opposition to Christ, his crown and dignity? The British oath of allegiance is an acknowledgment of every prerogative that the sovereign assumes. The prerogative of the crown is twofold, *head of the State* and also *head of the National Church*, or in other words supreme in all causes civil and *ecclesiastical*. The oath of allegiance is an acknowledgment of both. It is a pledge to support the royal supremacy over the National Church as well as over the State. If it was only an acknowledgment of the supremacy in *civil* things, there is no one in our fellowship who would object to do it, at least so far as the present sovereign is concerned. She has a legitimate claim to the cordial allegiance of all her subjects as *head of the State*, and long may she live to be such! But here the unscriptural, unchristian element comes in. She claims to be head of the national *church* also. Supreme in

all causes relating to its doctrines, worship, discipline and government. The final court of appeal on all questions ecclesiastical as well as civil is the Queen in Council. Such a claim we dare not sanction. The Lord Jesus Christ is sole head of his own church which he purchased with his blood. He is so by the appointment of God the Father who set him "King on his holy hill of Zion." The Redeemer never appointed any one either in earth or heaven to represent him in that office. In all *spiritual* things, the church is accountable to no one but Christ speaking in his word—and for any human being, Pope, Prelate or Potentate to claim supremacy over the church in general or any section of the church in particular, is an invasion of the sovereign prerogative of Him who is "King of Saints." To take the oath of allegiance therefore, in its present form, would be swearing to support that which is a usurpation of the prerogative of Christ. It would be swearing to support a worm of the dust in wearing that crown that ought to be on no head, but that of Christ. It would be a solemn pledge to support an authority that the Redeemer never gave to man or angel, and which he will never sanction or bless. How could we do that and be true to Him who is "the head of all principality and power," the sole "head of his body the church, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all."

II. We could not acknowledge the Constitution or swear to support it, because we are *Presbyterians*.

It is not necessary now to enter upon an examination of the relative merits of Presbyterianism and Prelacy. Suffice it to say, that these two systems are diverse in their nature, operation and effects. They are diametrically opposite to each other. They cannot then both be right. If Prelacy is right Presbyterianism is wrong. If Presbyterianism is right Prelacy is wrong. If one be a Prelatist he must be opposed to Presbyterianism. If one be a Presbyterian he must be opposed to Prelacy. To think of acknowledging and supporting both systems of ecclesiastical policy is irrational and absurd. Well, how does the case stand? Prelacy is the religion of the State. It is established by law. The British nation once abolished that system, and entered into solemn covenants in favour of Presbyterianism. In the days of Charles the Second these covenants were cancelled. An act called the "The Act Rescissory," was passed, declaring null and void all the national deeds of former years in favor of Presbyterianism. That "Act Rescissory" remains on the statute book still. Prelacy was again set up. The Sovereign in the Coronation oath, and the people in the oath of allegiance swear to support it as the established national religion. Now the question comes up, how can we as Presbyterians take such an oath as that? If we believe that Presbyterianism is a *Scriptural* system, how could we give our consent to that national act that abolished it, that declared all legislative acts passed in favor of it to be null and void,

that condemned all the national covenants entered into for its support as treasonable transactions? If we believe that Prelacy is an unscriptural system of ecclesiastical policy, how could we swear to maintain it? Most certainly the man who personally takes the oath of allegiance in the present condition of things, or votes to send another to take it for him, virtually abandons his Presbyterianism and takes up with Prelacy. He gives up the great principle of Presbyterianism, viz: the exclusive headship of the Redeemer over the church by swearing to support the Sovereign in claiming that headship. He renounces his Presbyterianism by acknowledging a system that is in plain and palpable antagonism to it in its interests and its object.

III. We could not acknowledge that Constitution or swear to support it, because we are *Protestants*.

It is a melancholy fact that for a lengthened period, Britain has been in league with Antichrist. That supremacy over the national church which belongs to the sovereign, is just the great leading essential principle of the Antichristian system. Before the Reformation in England, that supremacy was claimed by the Pope of Rome. Henry the VIII. abolished the Papal power in England. He stripped the pretended occupant of St. Peter's chair of his jurisdiction over the National Church. But what did he do with it? Did he return it to "the *blessed and only Potentate*" to whom that jurisdiction exclusively belongs? No. He took it to him-

self as Sovereign of the State, and ever since it has been an element in the prerogative of the British Sovereign whether male or female. The oath of allegiance is, therefore, a pledge to support a supremacy not a whit less Antichristian than that formerly claimed and possessed by the Pope of Rome.

And then, to what a fearful extent legislation has been going on during the last few years in favor of Rome? Hundreds of thousands of pounds out of the National treasury are annually expended to promote the interests of "the Man of Sin." There is scarcely a session of Parliament that is not marked by some fresh concession to "the mystery of iniquity." England is getting rapidly to be Romish England,—its Parliament a Romish Parliament—its Church a Romish Church—its laws Romish laws, and if the Romeward tendency continues much longer, a Romish King may sit upon England's throne.

In view of all these ruinous concessions, what is it that consistency requires of all true Protestants? Is it not to protest against them? What is the meaning of the word Protestant? Is it not *one that protests*, that protests against Romanism, and every thing that promotes its interests? But, let me ask, how can one protest against Romanism who gives his sanction to a political system that supports it? What is that man's protest worth who, one day, in the pulpit or on the platform, lifts up his voice against Romanism, and on the next day swears that

he will support a society that is in league with it, a parliament that upholds it, and laws that were framed for the very purpose of conciliating it, and that are operating effectually for its advancement? Yet, that is the very position of the great body of, so called, Protestants. Ministers cry out lustily against Rome in the pulpit and on the platform of the Bible and other societies. Protestant leagues are formed to resist its aggressions. On the 12th July and other occasions, a thousand throats will vociferate "Down with Popery." Yet these very people, ministers and others, will glory in their connection with a political system that is helping forward the interests of that "Man of Sin," that God will destroy "with the spirit of his mouth and with the brightness of his coming."

What is such a protest worth? Will God ever honor it to weaken the power of Rome? Such a protest has been going on for a lengthened period. Every year it is getting louder and louder. Yet, what has it accomplished? Nothing. Romanism is growing in numbers and advancing in political influence throughout the British dominions. Now, let Protestants try another plan. Let them go beyond the domain of mere sound, and try something more effectual. Let them take up a consistent position. Let them say to the "higher powers" that are at the head of National affairs, "we will withdraw our allegiance from you unless you withdraw your allegiance from Rome." "We will not support

you unless you withdraw your support from Antichrist, and every thing Antichristian." Let Protestants generally take up the position which the small body of Reformed Presbyterians has taken—but without any political influence, because so small,—and in a short time their influence will be felt. The throne and cabinet and parliament will soon feel the power of their practical protest. National concessions to Rome will soon cease, and England will become, what she ought to be, truly Protestant England. "I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."

Waiving some other important topics, for want of time, I shall now briefly advert to some of the common objections to our principles and position.

It is sometimes said to us: "*Other people just as good and as conscientious as you, vote at elections. They see nothing wrong in it.*"

Now, I will freely admit, that many people exercise the Elective Franchise who are just as wise and conscientious as the most devoted members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. That circumstance, however, is no proof that voting, in the present condition of things, is right. The *conscienc*es of even wise and good men are not an infallible rule, either to themselves or others. Many good men upheld slavery in the Southern States, but that did not prove slavery to be right. If many wise and conscientious men vote, may it not be because they have never studied the subject? May it not be because

they have never duly considered what is involved in it? I am persuaded, that if they would sit down and prayerfully consider the whole question, they would tremble at the very thought of pledging themselves to the support of a system and laws so dishonoring to the enthroned Mediator, so detrimental to the interests of true religion, and the wellbeing of the nation.

Sometimes *worldly interest* darkens the perceptions even of good men. This was once illustrated in a very simple way. One took a guinea, and placing it on a letter of the alphabet, asked a friend with whom he was reasoning, if he saw the letter. No, was the answer. He then took away the guinea, and asked if the letter was visible. O yes, was the reply. The moral of the story is, worldly interest tends to obscure the mind, and hinder the right apprehension of truth. It is hard to see through the guinea. Even good men cannot easily see the badness of a system that they gain by, or the goodness of a system that they lose by.

“When self the wavering balance holds,
’Tis rarely right adjusted.”

Again, it is sometimes said to us “If all were like you, then *there would be none to vote. There could be no government, and everything would get into confusion.*”

This is not merely the cry of the more ignorant portion of the community, but sometimes men of

learning and intelligence are so blinded by prejudice, that they can see nothing but anarchy looming up as the result of the general adoption and application of our principles. It is amazing that such a man as the Lord Ordinary of the Court of Session in Scotland, in his late decision in "the Ferguson bequest case," should have so ignorantly set his seal upon an objection to our position that has been a thousand times triumphantly refuted. His words are: "Were the whole or a large body of the whole community to adopt and act upon these principles, anarchy would be the result."

Now, in reply to this objection, I will not dwell upon the fact that in determining our duty in any case, we have nothing to do with consequences. *Duty is ours, results are Gods.* We are responsible for our duty. God is responsible for the consequences. I will not dwell upon that great moral principle, but inquire: "Is it really so, that if all the people were to become Covenanters, there would be none to vote, and consequently no government?" Most emphatically it would not be so. The very opposite would be the result. If the whole community were to adopt and act upon our principles, the result would be that *we would all vote*, because we could do so in a Scriptural way. If even a *considerable portion* of the people throughout the realm were to adopt our views, and act upon them, we would have an influence that would be felt in the councils of the nation. Our voice would be heard in high

places. Petitions from two or three millions of people, setting forth the great national evils, and respectfully and earnestly asking a repeal of them would be listened to. The remonstrance would be felt. As the petitioners would grow in numbers, they would advance in influence. Thus, in a short time, through the growing power of public opinion, great and glorious changes would be effected. The government would be established on a Scriptural basis. Then we would all vote. We would feel it to be our duty and our privilege to do so, because we could exercise that right without yielding ourselves to ensnaring, conscience debauching conditions. Such changes, we are assured, will be effected, and in the way to which I have adverted. It will be by men having their eyes opened to see the natural evils, and earnestly, uncompromisingly, and unceasingly protesting against them. It will be by men—not one here and another there, but men in great numbers, and men of influence—embracing the principles, and adopting the position that I have this day enunciated. As the number of such shall increase—and increase it will when God's time for enlargement shall come—their influence shall be more and more felt. Evils of long standing shall melt away before a wholesome and growing public opinion. The institutions of the country shall be thoroughly christianized, and then those who now sorrowfully feel it to be their duty to stand aloof, lest they should be partakers of the

nation's sins, will be amongst the first to pledge their allegiance, and the first at the polls.

Again, it is frequently said to us, "If all Protestants were to keep away from the polls, as you do, *Papists would get into power, and the whole fabric of our Protestant institutions would be completely demolished.*"

Well, even if they should get into power, as the result of a general adoption of our position, would that feared result justify our *doing evil* to prevent it? Fearful is the woe that the Bible pronounces upon those who "do evil that good may come." "Their damnation is just."

But, not to dwell on that thought, I would ask, what have the elections done in the past to keep Papists out of power? What are the facts? One fact is that Protestants have been voting, almost universally, during the years that are past. Another fact is, that instead of being weakened by Protestant votes, Romanism has been advancing in political influences. Witness *England*. Popery is every year rising to higher power there. The Popish party hold the balance of power in Parliament. They can control the government and wring from it almost every boon for which they clamor. Witness *Scotland*, where all classes of Protestants vote with the exception of a few Reformed Presbyterians. Even there in the land shadowed by Martyrs' monuments, Romanism is advancing to higher power. A Romish Hierarchy has been recently

established, and the land of Knox and Melville and Renwick, has been taken possession of in the name of the Pope. Witness *our own Dominion*, where almost universal suffrage is the rule. Even here Romanism is rising higher and higher in the scale of political influence. No, it is not at the polls, as at present constituted, that the rising tide of Romish influence is to be driven back. The polls at the present day have no power against Rome. How could they? Here is a candidate for Parliament. He is a staunch Protestant. He makes a flaming speech on nomination day, promising great things that he will do for the vindication of protestant rights, and to resist the aggressions of Rome. "He is just the man we want," is the protestant cry all over. He is elected by protestant votes. Follow that man to Parliament. Follow him during his whole course in Parliament. Listen to all his speeches. Mark all his votes. Measure his influence, and in the great majority of instances Protestantism is a *loser* by him, and Romanism a gainer. How is this? I will not now dwell on the influence exerted over that man, when in Parliament, by Popish members and by lukewarm and unprincipled Protestants; by whom the locks of many a Protestant Sampson are shorn ere he is long in the Legislature. But I would say, look at that man on his entrance into Parliament. What is the pledge that he takes at the very threshold of his political career? The very first thing that he does is to take

an oath by which he is committed to a legislation that, in many important particulars, is favorable to Rome. If he does not *swear, directly*, that he will promote its interests, he swears *indirectly* that he will do so. He commits himself to a political system that is in league with it. He swears to support a Constitution that, in its most essential particular, is Romish, viz: the antichristian supremacy over the national church that is vested in the Crown. He swears to support laws, framed for the very purpose of conciliating the "man of sin," and that are most effectually promoting its interests.

After having taken such a pledge as that, with what consistency can he set himself, like an honest man, to resist Romish aggressions? Every word he speaks, every vote he gives, all the influence he exerts against a measure favorable to Rome's pretensions is out of line with his initiatory pledge. Such a man must go through Parliament, hampered by the consciousness that his original oath and all subsequent legislative efforts in antagonism to Romish interests, do not lie in the same plane, or tend in the same direction. What is that man's Protestant influence in the Legislature worth? Protestantism is more likely to be the loser by him than a gainer. The truth is, Rome has gained more by Protestant votes than ever it has lost. The polls, in the present day, have no power against that system. And just as long as men enter parliament pledged by oath to support a political system that is helping on

the interests of the man of sin, all their speeches and votes and influence will have no more power in weakening the power of the Antichristian system, than balls of wax would have in demolishing the fortresses of Gibraltar.

Again, it is sometimes said to us, "Why do you not vote to send *good men* to Parliament, that they may help to rectify these evils of which you complain? You are always testifying against national evils, and yet you are taking no practical steps to have them rectified. You are a do nothing people. Why do you not try and get hold of good men and send them to the Legislature, that they may exert themselves to bring about those changes which you desire?"

Such a mode of reasoning looks plausible, but when weighed in the balance of Scripture and right reason, it will be found wanting. Be it so, that there is a good man who offers his services, one who in his place in Parliament would seek a thorough moral reformation in national affairs; what would be the position that we would ourselves assume by voting for such a man as our representative? We would just vote to send him to take up a position that we would not take *ourselves*. We would send him to swear an oath for us that we would not swear *personally*. We would send him to qualify himself for his parliamentary career, by swearing allegiance to that which we believe to be morally wrong. Such would be *our* position.

Then look at the position in which we would place *our representative* and in which he would voluntarily place *himself*. I affirm that it would be a most Jesuitical one. He would swear to support great moral evils, purposing that after he has done so, he would set himself to seek their removal. He would swear to support them to-day that he may get into a position for repealing them to-morrow. He would pledge his support to them to-day as great excellencies, resolving to raise his voice against them to-morrow as great evils. He would justify certain laws to-day, that he may get into a position for condemning them to-morrow. Such would be the position of our honorable representative. He would adopt as his rule of political action the great principle of Jesuitism, "The end justifies the means." The best friend to our cause in the community, we would not send on such a commission. Even if we were assured that all the changes which we desire would be accomplished through the parliamentary influence of such a man, we dare not assume the responsibility of putting him into a position that would involve, on his part, such a sacrifice of true honest principle. Even the assurance that a natural millennium would break forth as the result of his exertions, would not justify us in sending him on such a Jesuitical commission as to "do evil that good may come."

Now, I have endeavored to bring these things before you as plainly and as scripturally as possible,

and I would say with Paul "I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."

To those who have *professed* the principles that I have endeavoured to expound, I would say, seek to be better acquainted with them. A time of political excitement is drawing near when all sorts of arguments and influences will be used to persuade you to swerve from your Scriptural position. Beware of all such as would thus endeavor to persuade you. They may come to you with honied words, but they are not your true friends. Be assured that the man, whatever may be his professions of attachment and promises of favor, is in reality your enemy, who would tempt you to violate solemn engagements to Christ and his cause. No advantages of a worldly nature, even though crowns and sceptres should be laid at your feet, could ever compensate you for the sacrifice of principle, and the abandonment of your solemn profession.

To those who have not embraced these principles I would repeat the words of the Apostle, "I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say." Earnestly look into these matters. Examine them in the clear light of God's word. There were men and women "of whom the world was not worthy," who regarded these principles worth living for, and worth dying for, and on many a scaffold and in many a dungeon they blessed God, that they were counted worthy to suffer in such a cause. And if so many intelligent and holy men and women thought the Covenanters'

testimony worth suffering and dying for, surely you ought to think it worth examining. There is nothing that is so antagonistic to our cause as ignorance and prejudice. There is nothing that we so ardently desire and earnestly solicit as prayerful close examination.

Finally, let us all realize our personal responsibility to Christ. Soon we must stand before the Judgment Seat, that every one may give an account of himself to God. I will stand there to give an account of how I have spoken to you to-day, and you will stand there to give an account of how you have heard. I am willing to appeal to the Judgment of the Great Day to decide the question, as to whether or not what I have presented before you is proper for me to say, or proper for you to receive. May the Lord give us all minds to know what is right, wills to choose what is right, and the devotion of heart to do what is right, that so we may give in our account at the last "with joy and not with grief." Amen.

