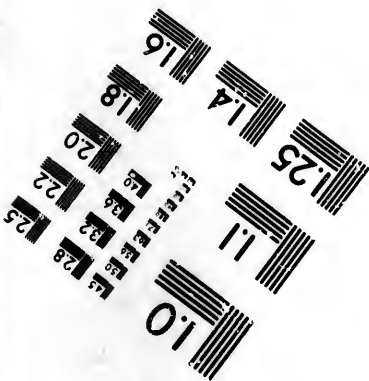
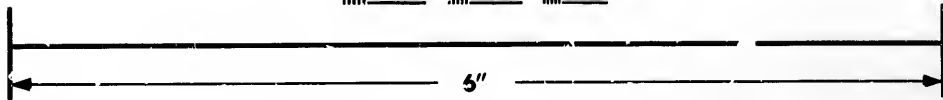
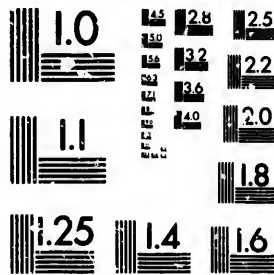


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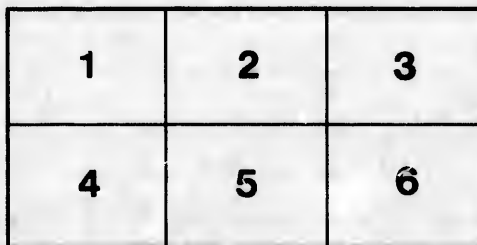
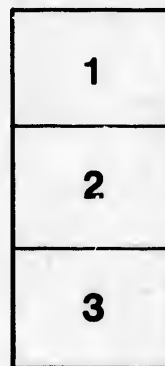
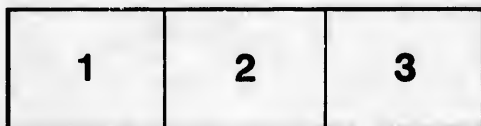
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THE BRITISH ELECTIVE FRANCHISE:

OR,

WHY REFORMED PRESBYTERIANS

DO NOT VOTE AT POLITICAL ELECTIONS.

A DISCOURSE

BY

REV. J. R. LAWSON.

SECOND EDITION.

Published by the authority of The Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick
and Nova Scotia.

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."—1 Cor. x: 15.

ST. JOHN, N. B.:

TELEGRAPH STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINT, CANTERBURY STREET.

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STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE

JANUARY 18, 1906

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1905

ALBANY: PUBLISHED BY THE STATE PRINTING OFFICE, 1906.

DISCOURSE.

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."—1 COR. x: 15.

The right of private judgment is one of the great principles of Protestantism. Romanism withholds that right from its votaries. It makes the demand on every one that he surrender his understanding, will and conscience to the priesthood, who claim to think for him, to believe for him and 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, 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 discuss a subject of great practical moment: and my request is that you will lay aside all prejudice, and every 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 reason. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

That there should be any people who have conscientious scruples to exercise the British Elective Franchise, in the present condition of the political society, is by many considered a strange thing. Reformed Presbyterians are a people "wondered at," and a "sect every where spoken against," because they assume a position of political dissent, and voluntarily

deprive themselves of those rights and privileges which others enjoy. Their position is strange to many, because the reasons are not rightly apprehended, and duly considered. Now, in the sequel of this discourse, I propose to state, as plainly as I can, some of the more prominent reasons why we, Reformed Presbyterians, have not voted at political elections in the past, and why we cannot do so in the future, until some very important changes shall have taken place in the constitution and administration of national affairs.

I.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

1.—*Our declining the Franchise is not because we consider voting at political 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 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. There is only one thing that can ever justify a person in declining to vote—it is the deep conviction on his mind, that there are certain circumstances connected with the case, which 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 to omit.

2.—*Our declining to vote is not owing to any want of interest in political 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 it may be safely affirmed, 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, and give as little trouble to the magistrates and police, 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 which is "a reproach to any people."

3.—*Our declining to vote 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 to be the result of any particular election. It is not a matter of indifference to us whether a Christian or an infidel, a Protestant or a Papist, a sober man or a drunkard, goes into office. We would like to see good men in the magistracy—men such as would be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. We would like to see good men in Parliament—men possessing such qualifications as the Bible prescribes, "able men, men of truth, men fearing God and hating covetousness." And when men of that character offer their services, it grieves us that the condition on which we are allowed to vote will not permit us to go forward and help them into office, and help to keep out those of an opposite character, of whom the Divine word speaks: "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted."

4.—*Our declining to vote is not owing to any secular advantage that we hope to reap from our position.*

It will not be denied that, in this age of selfishness, when almost every cause is looked at from the standpoint of worldly interest, it is something 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 something for us to be able to

say that it is not 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 or to worldly honour. We have no worldly advantages to gain by our profession. We have very much to lose. What fools then we would be to take 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 political honours and influence—if we had not reasons of the weightiest kind! To these reasons I would invite your earnest attention. “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.”

II.—GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

In determining the line of duty in relation to the exercise of the Elective Franchise, there are some general principles and facts to be duly considered.

1.—*The voter and the elected candidate are one in law.*

The latter is the representative of the former. The theory of representative government is that, as it would be impracticable 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 official acts of these representatives are, in law, the acts of those who choose them. Now, the very first thing that the elected candidate does when he enters parliament is to take a certain oath, called the *Oath of Allegiance*. 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.

2.—*The oath of allegiance is a pledge of loyalty to the constitution of the realm.*

When men form themselves into a society for any purpose, they adopt certain laws and regulations according to which the operations of the society are to be conducted. Everyone that joins the society is supposed to know these 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 what is called the British Constitution. Now, the oath of allegiance is a solemn expression of approval of that constitution, and a pledge to support it. As the coronation oath, which the sovereign takes on ascending the throne, is a pledge to govern according to the laws and customs of the realm, so the oath of allegiance is the pledge of the people to support the sovereign *in thus governing*. It will thus be seen, 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 which constitute the rule or standard, according to which all legislation is to be conducted. The truth is, it is the constitution that governs both the sovereign and the people. They are both, with the solemnity of an oath, committed to it, and pledged to its support.

3.—*The question in regard to the lawfulness of exercising the Elective Franchise hinges entirely on the moral character of the constitution which one is thereby pledged to support.*

To swear allegiance to a corrupt system of civil government, is an oath which no Christian should take, either personally or by representation. The members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, believing that there are great moral evils in the British constitution, feel bound to maintain a position of political dissent. They decline to place themselves in any position for which they would be required to qualify by a *personal* oath of allegiance, and they cannot take part in choosing representatives who would have to qualify for office, by an oath, in their name, to a political system which they believe to be unscriptural, unprotestant, and anti-christian. Their reasons shall now be more fully stated.

III.—GROUNDS OF OUR POLITICAL DISSENT.

Before entering on the consideration of these grounds of dissent, it may be desirable to premise that the position we take 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. Our objection to the oath of allegiance has no respect to the character of the Queen personally, but only to the moral character of the political system of which she is the head.

Neither does the position we take arise from any *disaffection to our country and its interests*. Let our country be invaded by a foreign foe, or be in danger from internal sedition, 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 among 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, honour 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 eight hundred 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." It is also the testimony of the most reliable historians, that to the Covenanters of Scotland the cause of civil and religious liberty in Britain is more indebted than any other party in the State. We claim to be patriots in the truest and best sense. There is not a drop of Fenian blood in a Covenanter's veins. The principles we hold, if generally adopted and acted on, 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 better security for life and property. Our objection to the oath of allegiance has chiefly a respect to the constitution in its *religious* aspect. By taking that oath, we would solemnly pledge ourselves to support what we consider to be 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 forego what we would in other circumstances regard as a privilege and a duty ; at the same time, endeavouring to live " quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and honesty," and waiting in faith and humble prayer, for that promised good time, 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."

1.—*We cannot acknowledge the constitution, or swear to support it, because, as professing Christians, we have sworn allegiance to Christ our King.*

A Christian is one who has, if not verbally yet mentally and heartily, taken on oath of unqualified allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Enthroned Redeemer. " The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king," is the hearty confession of the redeemed in every country and age. He who bought them with his blood is the " King of saints." How then, can they swear allegiance to any thing that is in opposition to Christ, or that is a usurpation of his Crown and Dignity ? The British oath of allegiance is an acknowledgment of every prerogative which the sovereign assumes. The constitutional 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 were only an acknowledgment of the supremacy in *civil* things, there is no one in our fellowship who would object to 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 the Constitution of the realm assigns her the headship over the *National Church* also ; thus making her supreme in all causes relating to its doctrines, worship, discipline and government. The final court of appeal on all questions *ecclesiastical*, is the Queen in council. Such a claim we dare not sanction. The Lord Jesus Christ is the sole Head of the Church which He purchased with his own 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 in 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 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 "the Head of His body the Church, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." 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 fallible, mortal creature in wearing that crown that ought to be on no head but that of God's Anointed. "This is the Magistracy," said the dying martyr, Cargill, "that I have rejected, that which is invested with Christ's power. Seeing that power taken from Christ which is his glory, and made the essential of an earthly crown, seemed to me as if one were wearing my husband's garments after he had killed him." How could we pledge ourselves, with the solemnity of an oath, to support such an authority as that, and be true to Him who is "the head of all principality and power," the sole "head of his body the Church," and "in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fullness shall dwell?"

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

It is not necessary here to enter upon an examination of the relative merits of Presbyterianism and Prelacy. Let it suffice to say that these two systems are diverse in their nature,

operation and effects. They are diametrically opposed to each other. They cannot, then, both be right. If Prelacy be right, Presbyterianism is wrong. If Presbyterianism be right, Prelacy must be wrong. To think of acknowledging both systems is absurd. Well, how does the case stand under the British Constitution? Prelacy is the religion of the State. It is established by law. The British nation once abolished that system and established Presbyterianism. The National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of England, Ireland and Scotland were sworn and subscribed by King and Parliament, and by all ranks of the people, with the special view of checking the advances of the Prelatic system, and of promoting the Presbyterian Reformation. In the days of Charles the Second these Covenants were cancelled. An act was passed, declaring null and void all the national deeds of former years in favour of Presbyterianism. The Covenants that had been nationally sworn to and subscribed, and ratified again and again by Act of Parliament, were cast away as unlawful transactions. 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 religion. The Act of Parliament by which Presbyterianism was nationally set aside, is still unrepealed. Now the question comes up, how could we, as honest Presbyterians, give our consent to such an Act as that? If we believe that Presbyterianism is a scriptural system, how could we swear to support that national act, still on the Statute Book, that abolished it—that declared all legislative acts passed in favour of it to be null and void—that condemned all the National Covenants entered into on its behalf, as treasonable transactions? If we believe that Prelacy is an unscriptural system of ecclesiastical policy, how could we swear to maintain it? For a Presbyterian to take the oath of allegiance in the present condition of things, or to send another to take it for him, is to compromise his Presbyterianism, and to enter into a confederacy with Prelacy. He abandons the great principle of Presbyterianism, the exclusive headship of the Redeemer over the Church, by swearing allegiance to a political system that invests the sovereign with that headship.

3.—*We could not acknowledge the constitution or swear to support it, because we are Protestants.*

It is an undoubted fact that, in the present day, Britain, as a nation, is in league with anti-Christ. That supremacy over the national Church which belongs to the sovereign, is one of the great essential principles of the anti-christian 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 English Church. But what did he do with it? Did he restore it to "the Blessed and only Potentate" to whom it exclusively belonged? No. He took it to himself, 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, in things pertaining to the church, not less anti-christian than that formerly claimed by the Pope of Rome.

And then, to what a melancholy extent, legislation has been going on during the last few years, in favour of Romanism! Hundreds of thousands of pounds out of the national treasury are annually expended in 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, in its Parliament, its church, its 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? A Protestant is *one that protests*; that protests against Romanism, and every thing that promotes its interest. But, how can one protest against Romish idolatry, who gives his sanction to a political system that supports it? What is the 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 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 faithfully denounce Rome in the pulpit and on the platform. Protestant leagues are formed to resist its aggressions. 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 consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming."

What is such a protest worth? Will God ever honour it to weaken the power of Rome? Such a protest has been going on for many years. Yet, what has it accomplished? Nothing. The Church of Rome is growing in numbers and advancing in political influence, throughout the British dominions. Now, let Protestants try another plan. 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." 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, a truly Protestant nation. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

4.—*We cannot acknowledge the constitution or swear to support it, because we are Covenanters.*

We assume that designation because of the distinctive ground we take in relation to the British Covenants, commonly called the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of England, Ireland and Scotland. These Covenant transactions we believe to be still binding on the British Nation, and will be so until the objects contemplated in them shall be accomplished. This we believe for the following reasons:—

First.—They were truly *moral* and *scriptural* deeds. This

will be seen by an unprejudiced comparison of them with the great principles of the Bible. In regard to the Solemn League, the impartial Free Church historian, Hetherington, declares that "it was the wisest, the sublimest, and most sacred document ever framed by uninspired men, * * * the noblest in its essential nature and principles of all that are recorded among the international transactions of the world." If it can be demonstrated, as most assuredly it can, that the pledges of these Covenants are based on the pure and indestructible principles of the word of God, it follows that they must remain in full force, unaffected by lapse of time, and undisturbed by any subsequent legislation, designed to render them null and void.

Second.—They were truly *national* deeds. They were not the transactions of a party in the nation, but were as truly *national* as any that ever occupied a place on the Statute book of the realm. The Scottish Covenant was the deed of the *nation*, hence called the *National* Covenant. The Solemn League was first taken by the Lords and Commons, legally assembled in Parliament, then by the generality of the people of England. It was sworn and subscribed by Charles II, on his ascending the throne, and was placed on the Statute book, as British law throughout all future time.

Third.—The ends contemplated in these Covenants have not yet been accomplished. It is one of the common objections to the present obligation of these national deeds that, "whilst they were very necessary and useful in their day, they have served the purpose for which they were intended, and are now no longer needed." No assertion could be more contrary to facts. The British Covenants are as much needed now as they were in the day that gave them birth. The same evils against which they were intended to be a national testimony still exist. Therefore, Covenants that aimed at their removal, are no less needed in the nineteenth than in the seventeenth century.

Now, let these three facts be duly considered by any intelligent, unprejudiced person, viz: that the Covenants referred to were Scriptural in their nature—that they were truly national deeds—that the objects contemplated in them have not yet

been accomplished ; let him study the whole subject in the light of the great principles of the Bible, touching Covenanting and Covenant obligation ; let him study God's past dealings with nations and churches for breach of their fathers' vows, and he will find the conclusion irresistible, that the British Covenants are still binding morally on the British nation, and will be so until the great and glorious objects aimed at shall be accomplished.

But what is the present attitude of Britain in relation to these national vows ? It is that of national repudiation. A very few years after they became law, they were effaced from the Statute book. On the restoration of Charles II, an act was passed by the legislature, declaring these Covenant deeds null and void, and without any legal force in any part of the realm. They were even branded as treasonable documents, and ordered to be burned by the common hangman. That act, commonly called the Act Rescissory, is still on the Statute book. It is a portion of that national constitution which the sovereign swears to support in the coronation oath, and which the people swear to support in the oath of allegiance. It is an act that has involved the nation in the guilt of national perjury, by repudiating solemn engagements sealed by an oath with uplifted hand to God. Can any one swear to support such an act as that and be guiltless ?

To such an act still unrepealed, Reformed Presbyterians cannot give their consent, either personally or by representation. For nearly two hundred years our church has occupied the position of dissent from the British constitution. We have never sought to conceal that position. We have never been ashamed of it. Our testimony is before the church and the world. We have earned a large measure of reproach by our attitude of political isolation. We are sometimes accused of hair-splitting, magnifying trifles, being righteous over much, etc., by adopting a position of such singularity. It is generally considered that the moral issues involved in our political dissent are not of sufficient value to warrant the sacrifice of such political privileges as others enjoy. To all such reproaches we reply in the language of the son of Jesse to his elder brother

Eliab, when taunted with impertinence and self-conceit in proposing to fight the vaunting Philistine of Gath: "Is there not a cause?" If Britain has vilely cast away her Covenants with her God—if she has the guilt of national apostacy and national perjury resting upon her—if she has set up and established systems solemnly abjured in these Covenants, and has shed the blood of thousands for no other crime than that of adhering to them—if the constitution of Britain at this day, in relation to religion, is founded on the entire subversion of national engagements once entered into, and sealed with an oath to the Majesty in the Heavens—engagements moral and scriptural in their nature, and just as needful now as in past ages—is there not a sufficient cause why we should stand aloof, lest we should be partakers of the nation's sins? "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

IV.—COMMON OBJECTIONS TO OUR POSITION CONSIDERED.

1.—*It is alleged that other people, just as pious and conscientious as we, vote at political elections. They see nothing wrong in it.*

Now it is freely admitted that many people exercise the right of suffrage 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 morally right. Many good men defended slavery in the United States, a few years ago, yet that did not prove slavery to be right. If many wise and conscientious men use the Franchise, may it not be because they have not duly considered what is involved in it? Worldly interest, too, tends to dim the perception of even good men.

"When self the wavering balance holds,
'Tis rarely right adjusted."

2.—*It is objected that if all were like Reformed Presbyterians, then there would be none to vote: there could be no government and anarchy would be the result.*

Now, in reply to this objection, it would be enough to say that, in determining our line of moral action in any case, we

have nothing to do with any supposed consequences. Obedience is our's; results are God's. We are responsible for our duty; God is responsible for the consequences.

But is it really so, that, if the whole or a large body of the community were to adopt and act on these principles, there would be none to vote, and consequently no government? Most certainly it would not be so. The very opposite would speedily be the result. If the whole community were to adopt our views and practically apply them, the national evils of which we complain would soon be constitutionally removed, and then all would vote, because they could do so in a scriptural way. If even a considerable portion of the people throughout the realm were to unite with us in our political dissent, 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, but 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 the 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 privilege to do so, because we could exercise that right without yielding ourselves to sinful conditions. Such changes will be effected, and in the way to which I have adverted. It will be by men having their eyes opened to see the national evils, and earnestly and unceasingly protesting against them. 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 amongst the first at the polls.

3.—*It is objected that if all Protestants were to keep away from the polls, Papists would get into power, and the whole fabric of our Protestant institutions and liberties would soon 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 us in doing evil to prevent it? We are not in any case to "do evil that good may come"

But what have the elections done in the past to keep Papists out of power? Protestants have been voting almost universally for many years, and yet Romanism has been advancing in political influence. In England, Popery is rising to still higher power. In Scotland, the land shadowed by martyrs' monuments, where all classes of Protestants vote, with the exception of a few Reformed Presbyterians, Romanism is still advancing to higher power. In our Dominion where almost universal suffrage is the rule, Papists are still advancing higher and higher in the scale of political influence. The polls, as at present constituted, have no power against Rome. How could they? Here is a candidate for Parliament. He is considered a staunch Protestant. Listen to all his speeches. Mark all his votes. Measure his influence, and in the majority of instances, Protestantism is a loser by him and not a gainer. What is the reason of this? Look at that man on his entrance into the Legislature. What is the pledge that he takes at the very threshold of his political career? The very first thing he does is to take an oath, by which he is committed to a legislation that, in many important particulars, is favourable to Rome's pretensions. He commits himself to a political system that is in league with it. He swears allegiance to a constitution of government that, in its most essential particular, is Romish, viz: the anti-christian 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? All the influence he exerts against a

measure favourable to Romish 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? Romanism is more likely to be a gainer by him than a loser. And just so 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 against the anti-christian system than balls of wax would have against the fortress of Gibraltar.

4.—It is again 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."

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 send him to do that for us, which we would not do 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 will set himself to seek their removal. He would swear to support them to-day that he may get into a position for seeking their repeal to-morrow. Such would be the position

of our honourable representative. He would adopt as his rule of political action, the 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 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 such a sacrifice of honest principle. Even the assurance that a national millenium 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."

I have thus considered all the objections to our position that are worthy of notice. Of course, I can afford to leave unnoticed the common cry of the more ignorant portion of the community, that we are "anti-government men," "enemies to the British throne," "bigoted fanatics, &c." We earnestly solicit, from friend and foe, the most searching investigation of our history, our principles, and our aims. There is nothing that is so hostile to our cause as ignorance and prejudice. There is nothing that we so ardently desire as prayerful close examination. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

"Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again,

The eternal years of God are her's;

But error, wounded, writhes in pain,

And dies amid her worshipers."



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