

**SHOULD BRETHREN
TO TAKE
PART IN
POLITICAL
ELECTIONS?**

And

**JURY SERVICE
AND THE
SAINTS**

OUGHT BRETHREN TO TAKE PART IN POLITICAL ELECTIONS?

This question comes from the American side of the Atlantic. Two fellow-servants with the apostles, without hesitation, answer as follows:-

In seeking to discharge acceptably our new-covenant responsibilities, and to qualify ourselves for inheritance in the kingdom of God, it will ever be necessary that we be careful in the matter of duty, not to take our cue from the practices current amongst our so-called Christian contemporaries. As in matters of faith, so in questions of practice, the law of Christ is our only safe guide. Forbidden or unwise courses of action are the natural outgrowth of a wrong faith; or where a right and Scriptural faith exists, they may and will result from a defective and incomplete view of the workings and general bearings of the truth. The objects contemplated in the gospel, and the nature of our high calling in Christ Jesus, involve our separation from the world, in an actual sense, as regards certain relations. This will be manifest, in a general way, from the following testimonies:-

"Ye are not of the world."

"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own."

**"I have manifested Thy name unto the men
which thou gavest me out of the world."
(John. 17 : 6.)**

**"Now we have received not the spirit of the world."
(1 Cor. 1 : 12.).**

**"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is
this - - -
to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1 : 27.)
"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the
world."
(1 John. 2 : 15.)**

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed."

**"The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches
and the lust of other things entering in, choke the Word,
and it becometh unfruitful."
(Mark. 4 : 19.)**

From these quotations from the apostolic testimony, it must be clear that our acceptance of the gospel subjects us to a well-defined severance from the course of this *aion*; and when we add to this Paul's description of the present position of believers, as "sojourners, and strangers, and pilgrims on the earth," the evidence is complete. Yet it is greatly strengthened by one or two considerations of a Scriptural character.

For what are we being taken out of the world? Is it not that we may take part in the administration of human affairs in the kingdom of God to come? And does not this involve that attitude of neutrality, in relation to the world's politics, expressed in the words of Scripture, "not of the world," "waiting for the kingdom of God." Cannot we afford to wait? Where is the profit or consistency of meddling with Gentile politics? Jesus expressed a principle of a very wide application when he said: "Let the dead bury their dead." Let Gentiles vote for Gentiles, and fight for Gentiles; but let those who, "Gentiles in the past," are now no

longer so, but citizens of Israel's commonwealth by the adoption of faith (Eph. 2 : 10, 21); let such give heed to make their own calling and election sure, instead of wasting their time with the election of sinners in a world that passeth away.

In this matter, of voting, some merely see the polling booth. They should look further. They should remember that a man commits himself to all that grows out of his vote. A vote makes Parliament, and Parliament makes war. Hence the vote is the hilt of the sword. The question at the polling booth should, therefore, be: ' Am I at liberty to take the sword? '

But, further: by voting for a political representative, a brother is building up that which he hopes to destroy, and which God has declared he will by him destroy if he walk faithfully. A brother might just as well vote for a parson as a politician, inasmuch as both parson and politician represent an order of things which is to be removed, as an obstacle to that universal blessing which has so long been decreed in the counsels of God.

But it may here be enquired whether, while the kingdom of righteousness tarries, we ought not to be doing all we can in conjunction with friendly aliens to mend the world? There are important reasons for answering this question in the negative. 1st.-There is no more important work on earth than spreading the knowledge of the kingdom and righteousness of God. Co-operation with sinners in the politics of sinners interferes with this work, both as regards moral fitness for it, and the time and energy that ought to be bestowed upon it. 2nd.-There are the very fewest men to do this work. 3rd.-If we do God's work on a scale commensurate with its importance (which is above everything else both to all classes of the community, and to ourselves, in the working out of our own

salvation) we shall have our own hands quite full and overflowing. 4th.-The work of the truth is real, practical, and non-

speculative, and more necessary to be done *to-day* than anything we undertake.

5th.-The very best way of mending the world is to seek to turn as many as we can to righteousness, by which we shall save souls from death, and help to build up a government that will, at the proper time, fill the world with blessing. Besides this, we earn for ourselves the blessing of Dan. 12 : 3.

Place against this that the utmost result of a whole lifetime of world-mending by means of human politics, would be absolutely homoeopathic in the amount of good secured (if any), and momentary as regards duration, while we should, all the while, be submitting ourselves to corrupting and demoralising influences, enough to unfit us for the recognition of Christ at his coming. The policy we are recommending is the only one consistent with the objects and character of our probationary calling in Christ Jesus, and it does not at all interfere with what, on the other hand, is our scripturally enjoined duty towards all men. We can do good to all men as we have opportunity, without uniting ourselves with the world in its unholy enterprises. We can feed the poor and clothe the naked; we can render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and be ourselves subject to the powers that be, in all things that require no compromise of our faithfulness to God.

If we vote in political elections, we lay ourselves open to be troubled for our vote in municipal elections; and, indeed, in quite a number of petty local matters, in which it is found necessary to take the pro and con of the public mind. A brother having committed his vote to paper, in a parliamentary direction, would find it very difficult to furnish the canvasser with a reasonable and satisfactory objection for refusing his vote in other matters of local or general interest, in which it might be solicited; and thus would expose himself to obligations of a kind likely to draw him

from Christ.

More than that, if a brother votes, what reasonable objection can he have to take part in political and town meetings? And if he has the necessary leisure and ability, what objection to publicly advocating the claims and merits of the man or the cause he intends voting for? Or what demur to being a canvasser? Or can he even close his purse against the necessary expenses incident to the public ventilation of that to which he thinks it worth while to lend himself in various other ways? There is only one consistent answer to these questions, viz., a brother who allows himself to vote at all, can have no scruple against doing public duty in any of the ways already indicated, or in himself standing as a candidate, or acting as a general in an army.

Again, in voting for whom we may conceive to be the man for the situation, how could we be sure that we were not fighting against God, who putteth down one and setteth up another, according to the ever-changing requirements of His daily-developing purpose? If any brother thinks he would be doing well in so doing, let him think again, that he might be doing better. We are not our own in these things; we are bought with blood-the blood of the covenant, in which God has already made provision for the righteous government of the world, he is now busy gathering out the necessary materials preparatory to its inauguration on the earth in power and great glory. Wisehearted brethren will not feel themselves at liberty to waste their time or consume their energies in the filthy channels of Gentile politics. A right understanding will direct the stream of their vigour into the ways of the Lord. The Lord's work is the best work that is going on at present on the earth, and will eventually be the most remunerative to all concerned. Because the kingdom delays, we must not think that time is being lost. There is assuredly no time being lost; the work of the truth is going on as vigorously as the incessant building of a ship; there is no delay, in the strict sense,

only in the comparative sense; it is only the unbelieving servants who say "My Lord delayeth his coming." If we would be pure and prepared for the coming of the Lord, we must consecrate our entire being to his interest during his absence. . Faithful servants have no leisure for carnal hobbies. they will not allow such things to steal their heart; whatsoever their hand findeth to do, they will do it with all their might; but they will be careful what they set their hands to. Many things may be even lawful, but, for a variety of reasons, not expedient; and what may be lawful in a sinner of the Gentiles, who is without hope in the world, may not be lawful for one who has been purchased from the service of sin for the service of righteousness and true holiness. Let one and all wake up to the dignity and sobriety of their calling; let our motto ever be "Jesus *versus* Caesar." The only political claimant we can consistently vote for is Christ; the only champion of true religious liberty is Christ; and the only hope for the world, either nationally or individually, is Christ Jesus.

Let us then, brethren, more and more concentrate our whole endeavour upon the things which belong to Jesus Christ and him crucified; let us determine, in fact, to, know nothing else which would, in any wise, cripple our usefulness and power for good in his service. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."-(2 Tim. 2 : 4.) "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

(1 John. 2.: 15.) "Abstain from all appearance of evil."-(1 Thess. 5 : 2), "Here we have no continuing city; we seek one to come."-(Heb. 13 : 14). "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:" -(Phil. 3 : 20).

The Christadelphian, July 1st 1873: Page, 312.

JURY SERVICE AND THE SAINTS.

A number of brethren regret that the advice concerning jury service in the the “Christadelphian.” January 1947 was not more definite and robust. However we know that the Editor says “If there is clear evidence today that the discharge of the office of jurymen is not in keeping with the Lord’s teaching, there can be no doubt where duty lies.” we would briefly indicate the evidence against jury service for saints, that the principles of our calling may be honoured by men and women who “tremble at the word.”

THE OBJECTS OF A JURY

When the state requires a servant of God to serve on a Jury, he is expected to fulfil the citizens duty of maintaining law and order by assessing the guilt of one who is accused of breaking Caesar’s law.

It is said that he only assesses facts – but he assesses facts with an object in view—to declare the defendant guilty or not guilty. The object of this declaration is to see that the libeller, thief, debtor, smuggler, child neglecter, sexual pervert, conscientious objector (!) or murderer receives the “just” reward for his crime against society.

Such work is undoubtedly a work of JUDGING. The dictionary defines the word clearly :-to judge: “To hear and determine as in causes on trial; to compare facts perceive their agreement or disagreement.” Also a jury is defined as a “certain number of men selected according to law and sworn to inquire into and to determine facts and to declare the truth according to the evidence legally adduced.”

Thus in view of these definitions there can be no escaping the conclusion that to serve on a jury is a work of judging. Yet in such matters as are dealt with by the courts of law, we are scripturally told not to become a judge of the alien. Paul says: "for what have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without. God judges." (1Cor.5 : 12,13).

Christ himself refused to become a judge for men in things pertaining to this life. We read that one came to Jesus saying: "Master, speak to my brother that he divide with me the inheritance" and he said unto him. "Man, who made me a judge and divider over you"? (Luke.12 : 13). Is not this sufficient guide?

OUR CITIZENSHIP

The reason for this position lies in our separation from the world and our new citizenship of ZION. Surely to sit on a jury is an anomalous position for one, separated by the Gospel of the Coming Kingdom—a Kingdom which is to sweep out of existence present arrangements, both for government and "justice". Surely, it is an entanglement with the affairs of this world. inconsistent for those called out of it (Tim. 2 : 4 ; John 17 : 14 ; Acts 15 : 14), having here no continuing city, but seeking one to come (Heb. 11 : 13-16; Heb.13 : 14) whose citizenship is in the heavens (Phil. 3 : 20).

To sit on a jury is to engage in upholding laws made by man and essential to the continuance of the State. The Christadelphian position is not to participate in making these laws; either by voting or being elected to the legislative; nor do we use the law on our own behalf. We regard ourselves as under a different law, the Law of Christ, and in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, we suffer evil. It would be inconsistent to apply Christ's law to ourselves and help to administer another law for others, which does

not conform to Christ's law in letter or spirit. How can we obey the command to “resist not evil”, and assist the State in its legal enforcement against the evil doer.

The laws, and the arrangements for their enforcement, may be just enough, from a human point of view, but they are NOT based upon the fear of God, but rather upon a sense of human self sufficiency. Our only business is to obey them (where they do not conflict with what God requires of us), thankful to God in that he has ordained the powers that be to keep some form of order, which is preferable to anarchy (Rom. 13).

BRITAIN - A PART OF THE KINGDOM OF SIN

Nevertheless this sense of thankfulness should not blur the correct scriptural estimate of the character of the World and its institutions (including Britain). The apostle John tells us that “the whole world lieth in wickedness,” being built up for the gratification of the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life (1 .John 2 : 15-17 and 5 : 9). As a body we tend to grow too tolerant of the present system: we do not think it is so bad now in its British section. A spirit of patriotism, other than for Zion, is abroad. Maybe we have now become a respectable sect “everywhere spoken well of”, and many of our leading brethren are too much involved in the business and social affairs of this world. Hence it is easy to fail to realise that the legal system of Britain has for its object, the preservation of a country which with all others is to be overthrown by Christ and the saints. We should reject all alliances with it and should respectfully decline to be absorbed into the system, bolstering up that which is ready to pass away.

NEW CREATURES

We have in the grace of God been made the subjects of a complete break with the things of the flesh. We are new creatures (Romans 6; Romans 3 : 1-14; 1 John 3 : 1-3; Col. 3 : 1-10; Gal. 2 : 20; 3 : 24; 6 : 14; 2 Cor. 5 : 15-18). Why then should we repeat the mistake of Lot by “sitting in the gate” of a city, whose builder and maker is assuredly not God. The whole teaching of Christ and the apostles (especially of the Sermon on the Mount) is that we are called to sojourn here in patience, waiting and preparing ourselves for the day of perfect justice: but meanwhile leaving the “potsherds of the earth” to arrange their affairs as best they can. It is *not* part of our duty to keep the (gentile community free of the more grossly evil elements. that the rest may pursue their lusts unhindered.

Surely there is evidence enough that those called to the Commonwealth of Israel, to be fellow citizens with the saints, cannot “be yoked together with unbelievers” on a jury to judge the guilt of citizens of the world by the standards of the present system, in order that the evil doers may be punished with the carnal weapons of the State. The consequences of refusal matter not. The prize for faithfulness will outweigh all else.

Yet by the experience of a number of brethren it is found that in practice, if a courteous explanation of our position linked up with the Christadelphian position on military and police service and voting, be sent to the authorities they will excuse attendance. We should be wise to state our position as soon as we are informed of our eligibility for jury service, or better still, seek to have our names removed from the voter's list, thereby making our non-citizenship of Britain clear.

Let us faithfully uphold our citizenship of Zion, praying that it may soon be made absolute. The waiting will then be over, and.

then, in the grace of God and Christ, will be the time to administer justice and execute judgment. Then with infallible justice, will Christ and the saints proclaim the guilt of the world, and render it due recompense. May the day soon dawn and find us watching.

Extract from Bro. J. Thomas on

“THE GENTILE HEAVENLIES”

There are heavenlies beyond the pale of the Christ-body. These are Supernal States in which Paul locates principalities, powers, world-rulers of the darkness of the times of the Gentiles, which he styles “this aeon”. and the spirituals of wickedness enthroned throughout the earth. These heavenlies are constituted providentially or instrumentally by human authority and power after “the course of this world”, and are the tabernacle of “the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2 : 2). This Prince power and Spirit of the air is Sin's Flesh; whose spirit pervades all sublunary human constitutions styled “thrones, dominions, principalities and powers”, which Paul specifies as “things in the heaven” or “the Air” (Col. 1 : 16). In such an unclean heaven as this are found the ten horned and two horned Beasts, the Name of Blasphemy, the Lion-mouth, the Image of the Beat or False Prophet, the god of the Earth—all things of power, in short. emanating from falsehood and superstition. The dwellers in this Air or Heaven. are not the saints the dwellers in this Aerial are the civil and ecclesiastical orders of society; such as emperors, kings, diplomatists, nobles, spiritual and laical, *legislators, magistrates*, priests clergymen parsons, and all of that class styled by the Apostle “spirituals of the wickedness” which reigns in “the Court of the Gentiles without the temple”. Between this heaven and “the Heavenlies in Christ” there is implacable and uncompromising hostility. No peace can be perma-

nently established in the earth till one or other of these heavens be suppressed or subjugated: and who can doubt which of these heavens shall be shaken, be rolled up like a scroll and be made to pass away with the great tumult of war.

[Eureka (brown) vol. 4: page 320. (section 20. The Name and Tabernacle of the Deity, and those who Dwell in the Heaven)].

Do we believe that this statement by Bro. Thomas is scriptural and true, or just a rather exaggerated piece of rhetoric? Surely there can be no doubt as to what answer every enlightened brother will give.

Then, what place has any brother of Christ in these heavenlies of the Gentiles? If we co-operate with “*legislators and magistrates*” in the administration of the law of their unclean heavenlies, what becomes of our separation and the “implacable and uncompromising hostility” which should characterise our witness against them ?

Originators unknown

In the Daily Telegraph Tuesday 28th June 1994 the following headline appeared :-

Jury has the last laugh against the wrath of Wraith

In the account the following statements were made:-

‘But the jury ruled for Mrs Wraith on two other counts. They found that she had not slandered her former husband- - -The jury foreman awarded him £69 damages.’

The jury decides on the amount of the damages to be awarded in slander cases.

Bro Martin Pilbeam