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WHY POLITICAL DISSENT?
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It is right and proper that we should study such a subject as this so that every Covenanter and especially every young Covenanter should be able to give a reason for his attitude to politics. There are some who have been unfaithful to the Covenanting cause and who have argued that voting isn't a sin. There are others who are lukewarm and who prefer to keep an open mind on the matter. They think that the question of Political Dissent is of no fundamental importance as a Covenanting attitude. But those of us who abide by the true Covenanting position maintain an attitude of Political Dissent. *Why* is it that we must do so in order to be true to our principles ? How can we be citizens of a nation, receive its protection, reap the benefits of its laws and yet refuse to associate ourselves with her by voting for a candidate at a Parliamentary election ? There must be reasons when such a state of affairs exists. Why do I as a Covenanter refrain from voting at a Parliamentary election ?

1. The first and chief reason is : **IF I VOTE I AM DISLOYAL TO MY SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.** Every man who votes accepts the Constitution of his country and the British Constitution leaves Jesus out of account. He is not ranked as King and Lord over all. He is not exalted and given his rightful place in the nation. A nation is a moral being responsible to God and is placed in moral subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth. She is under obligation to acknowledge His authority as Mediator and to submit to His sceptre which is a sceptre of righteousness. She is to frame her laws and appoint her rulers with a single eye to the Saviour's glory. The British nation has not done so. It is true that there is much that is good and much to be commended in Britain's laws. There are many good Christian people in her Parliaments. On her shores the exile can have freedom and refuge. Liberty and justice are well established in our beloved land, while all around us there is evidence of Christian influence. We rejoice that this is so, but such things do not make a nation Christian. As a nation Britain has dishonoured Christ, ousted Him from His rightful place and trampled His Covenants in the dust. Can I be loyal to Christ and associate myself with politics by voting at Parliamentary elections ? Surely I must answer No. Again Britain dishonours Christ in that the Jew, the atheist, the drunkard can sit and frame her laws. Is this in line with the Covenants ? Can we who profess to be Covenanters agree to a Constitution which so far from laying down that our legislators must be just, ruling in the fear of God, does not even require them to believe in a God at all ? If I vote, therefore, I am not only sanctioning such a state of affairs ; I am actually supporting it.

Further, if I vote I am authorizing a candidate to take the oath of allegiance acknowledging the sovereign to be Head of the Church. By this acknowledgment Jesus Christ is dethroned from His office as the Church's only Head and an earthly ruler is enthroned in His place. As a Covenanter then I must not vote, for I must be loyal to Christ.

2. A second reason, subordinate to and connected with that already given is this ; **IF I VOTE I AM DISLOYAL TO MY CHURCH.** Perhaps you think this is not important but it is. On becoming a member of the Covenanting Church I have pledged myself to be loyal not only to my Saviour but also to my Church. It is a small Church, but an honourable one. Let us each one honourably uphold her testimony. If I vote I am a traitor to my church and there is nothing a true Britisher despises more than treachery.

3. A third reason to be noted is this : **IF I VOTE I AM DISLOYAL TO THE MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS** who have given their lives that I might enjoy civil and religious liberty. On joining the church I have accepted the terms of Communion. In acknowledging the 5th term I am pledged to associate myself with the earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses who suffered persecution and death on behalf of freedom. It is a joy to be in such a company. I am on their side if I refrain from voting, but if I vote I am breaking faith with those who died that they might hand on to me the torch of freedom.

4. A fourth and final reason why Political Dissent is that **SEPARATION is SCRIPTURAL.** There are those who taunt us by saying that it is cowardly, unreasonable and purposeless. In reply to such taunts we would say that we have Scriptural authority for separating ourselves from such things as are not honouring to Christ. " Wherefore come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." It has been argued that Covenanters ought to vote, that by returning God-fearing men to Parliament a good influence might be exerted. That has never been God's plan. " Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Those who dissent can exercise a better influence than those who unreservedly associate with ungodly and evil practices. Before Luther could reform the Church he had to separate himself from Rome. He could not do it from within. Separation or Political Dissent is not cowardly. It is Scriptural. For these reasons, I, as a Covenanter must not vote. I must be loyal to Christ, to my church, to the memory of the martyrs, and I am supported in my attitude by Scriptural teaching.