

# “Proposed Union of Church and State” American Sentinel 1,

## 1.

E. J. Waggoner

Notwithstanding the fact that the so-called a National Reform Association repeatedly disclaims any desire to bring about a union of Church and State, and is profoundly opposed to such a thing, it is not very difficult to show that, although its supporters reject the *name*, the thing itself is that for which there most earnestly striving. This is shown plainly enough by that article of their constitution, which states that the object is to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as shall place all Christian institutions and usages on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land. Men do not seriously work for the enactment of laws which they have no intention of enforcing; therefore we may be sure that when they shall have accomplished their purpose, “Christian institutions and usages” will be enforced by law. Now when we consider that the term “the church” refers not to any single denomination, but to all professed believers in the Christian religion, it is plain that the carrying out of the design of the National Reform Party, will be nothing less than a union of Church and State. {AMS January 1886, p. 4.1}

But we are not now obliged to draw conclusions as to the intent of this Association. The *Christian Statesman* is the organ of that Association, and it one of the issues of March, 1884, Rev. J. W. Foster expressed its design in so clear a manner as to leave no room for doubt. The first proposition was that, “according to the Scriptures, Church and State are mutually separate and independent divine institutions.” This proposition, which may mean anything or nothing, was doubtless intended to prepare the mind for the strong statements of follow, just as the infamous Jefferies used to raise the hopes of his victims of the highest pitch before he pronounced upon them an outrageous and cruel sentence. The second proposition is explicit and enough to satisfy the dullest mind, it is this:- {AMS January 1886, p. 4.2}

“According to the Scriptures, *the State and its sphere exist for the sake of and to serve the interests of the church.*” But the learned it writer and the ingenuous party for which he speaks, would not have anyone imagines that this means a union of Church and State. Oh, no! Both are “mutually independent;” Nevertheless the church is to be master, and the State to exist simply “to the interests of the church.” The lion and the lamb are “mutually independent and separate” animals; there can be no equal union between them; but they may lie down together, the lamb taking its position inside the land, the better to serve his lordship’s interest. {AMS January 1886, p. 4.3}

This was just the condition of things during the Middle Ages, when the pope had gained supreme control of affairs. There was no more union of Church and State then than there would be now if the *Statesman’s* ideas were carried out. Then the state was allowed to exist solely for the purpose of serving the interests of the church, and when any secular ruler, as in the case of Henry IV, presumed to act in a way to serve the interests of the Government, he was deposed and excommunicated, and all his dominion was placed under interdict, until he submitted. Human nature has not changed a particle since the eleventh century. Let the body of professed Christians once become thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that the State exist solely to serve the interests of the church, and, with the power in their hands, the horrors of the Inquisition will be revived, unless all shall allow the claim. {AMS January 1886, p. 4.4}

Again Mr. Foster says: “The true State will have a wise reference to the churches interests, in all her legislative, executive, and judicial proceedings. Public vice and crime, in morality and licentiousness, the wild boar from the forest, at that devours the garden of the Lord, it destroys; and morality, virtue, and good order, the handmaids to

religion, it promotes and encourages." Every Government tends to promote morality; virtue, and good order; it is for this purpose that Government exist, and unless this is done there is no Government, for government means restraint, and Governments exist for the sole purpose of affording equal rights to all, by restraining the outward manifestation of those passions which would endanger human rights. But this promotion of good order is solely for the sake of good order, and not for the sake of religion. The State promotes virtue and good order, not because they are handmaids of religion, but because without them there will be anarchy and no government. It cannot make men moral, because morality has to do with the heart, and not simply with outward acts, of which alone the State can take cognizance. A man may be vicious at heart, and yet did nothing of which the State can take notice; nay, even his most intimate friends may be ignorant of his in moral tendencies. Religion alone can change a man's heart and make him truly virtuous; and this it can do with the individual, even if there be no State. {AMS January 1886, p. 4.5}

But Mr. Foster goes further. He says of the true State; "*The expenses of the church in carrying on her public aggressive work, it meets in whole or in passed out of the public treasury.*" It is but just to the *Statesman* to say that it enters a gentle protest to the statement, saying that the National Reform Association "does not hold that the state should contribute *directly* to the financial support of the church." It does, however, indorse the statement that "the church will recognize the good officers of the Christian State; and the true State will formally acknowledged its obligation to serve the church;" and here is an approval of the claim that it is "the duty of the State, as *such*, to enter into alliance with the church of Christ, and to profess, adhere to, *defend*, and *maintain* the true religion." {AMS January 1886, p. 4.6}

Is not this a union of Church and state? If it is not, then such a thing is impossible. Equality is not necessary to a union. An alliance may be formed between superior and inferior as well as between equals. And this is the alliance proposed, and alliances between mistress and servant, in which the church is to act as mistress, and the state as a dutiful and obedient servant. If it is *not* a union of Church and State, it is at any rate a thing most earnestly to be shunned. {AMS January 1886, p. 5.1}

It may be wondered why we, as Christians, should object to such a union. We object to it simply because we're Christians. We know that such a union is not in accordance with the spirit of Christianity. The life and practice of our Lord was an example for all Christians. He did not ask the rulers to support him; on the contrary he recognize the right of earthly governors to exact support from him and his followers. He did not desire forced service; he asks not now for anything but willing obedience. He taught his followers that in this world they were to expect tribulation as pilgrims and sojourners, and not that they should exact obedience as kings in their own land; that their time for reigning would come when he himself should come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. [Matthew 23:31-34](#). Therefore when the church proposes, not simply to unite with the state, but to be served by the State, it is departing from the precepts of the Master, and is becoming unchristian. It is for this reason that we oppose such a step. For ourselves, we have no desire to depart from any true Christian institutions and usages; we acknowledge the divine law that enforces them, and hence have no need that they should be enforced by the law of the land; and we deem it neither just nor wise to force those who do not believe in them to conform to them. The injustice must be apparent to all, and to still say that it is a wise policy to force men to act the hypocrite? {AMS January 1886, p. 5.2}

The *Statesman* indignantly repels any accusation that its proposed amendment would infringe upon the rights of any one, much lest take them away. From its own standpoint it would not interfere with the rights of any; because when that amendment should be carried, it would at once appear that all of its composers were possessed of no rights,-a distinction without a enough difference to satisfy the minority. A movement

whose obvious result would be to deprive even a single individual of his inalienable rights of the life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness, should be vigorously opposed by all two men, and most of all by Christians. E. J. W. {AMS January 1886, p. 5.3}

**“True Christianity” American Sentinel 1, 1.**

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If the struggle be between Christianity and infidelity, we take the side of Christianity. If between a Christian and an infidel, we stop and inquire into the cause. If the Christian is endeavoring to deprive the infidel of his rights, we will ignore his profession and defend the infidel. *True* Christianity robs no one of his rights, but its followers do to others as they would that others should do to them. W. {AMS January 1886, p. 6.1}