**“What Think Ye of Christ?” American Sentinel 1, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

As we have read the arguments of the so-called National Reformers, in which they claim for Christ a political sovereignty, we have involuntarily asked the above question. We have wondered whether they really regarded Christ as the divine Son of God, or as a scheming politicians. Two quotations will suffice to show that our query is well grounded. In the *Christian Statesman* of April 22, in reply to the statement that “The apostles and primitive Christians never tried to get an amendment inserted in the statutes and laws of the Roman Empire,” M. A. Gault says:- {AMS June 1886, p. 42.1}

“Christ and his apostles did not work to amend the Roman laws and constitution, because it [Rome] was not a republic. Its power did not come to the people. Its laws were not a reflection of the sentiments of the people, and it could not be made a Christian nation in the sense in which ours can.” {AMS June 1886, p. 42.2}

That is as much as to say that if Christ had come in the days when Rome was a republic, he would have set about amending its laws. Instead of going about Judea and Galilee doing good, preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the broken-hearted, and those that were oppressed of the devil, he would have gone to Rome, got himself elected to the Senate, or as consul, and would at once have set about making Rome a Christian nation, by legal enactment! This is the way the “National Reformers” are doing, and they profess to be followers of Christ. The Lord, through the psalmist, said to the wicked, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself,” and that statement seems to be applicable in this case. Because they bring religion down to the level of party politics, they imagine that Christ would do the same. {AMS June 1886, p. 42.3}

Before commenting any further on the above, we will quote the illustration which a “National Reformer” gave to show what Christ did not accept the office of King when he was on earth. The illustration is quoted by Rev. Wm. Ballantine, in his reply to Dr. W. Wishart. Said the lecturer:- {AMS June 1886, p. 42.4}

“Had General Grant, after taking Richmond, been offered the office of township constable in any locality, he would have repelled the office with disdain. So Christ, being offered the small principality or kingdom of the Jews, refused acceptance; but if he had been offered the kingdoms of the whole world, as Grant the presidency of the United States, like him, Christ would have accepted.” {AMS June 1886, p. 43.1}

We cannot conceive how a man calling himself a Christian could use such blasphemous language, except on the ground that he was drunk with the idea of a union of Church and State. The question, “What think ye of Christ?” is indeed a pertinent one to put to the self-styled National Reformers. And the answer to the question, as drawn from their own statements, would be, “A selfish man of the world; a politician seeking the highest office.” In this we do not wish to be understood as implying that General Grant was such a man. There is no point of comparison between General Grant and Jesus Christ. General Grant was a man; Jesus Christ is the Son of God. General Grant, as a man, acted with manly dignity; but if Christ had done the same thing he would have been man and not God. The party of which the *Christian Statesman* is the organ, is wont to brand every one who opposes it as an atheist; but the above quotations show that the effect of inviting National Reform principles is to give one low views of Christ in his work. We never heard an infidel express sentiments more derogatory to the character of Christ. Being Christians ourselves and adoring Christ as the divine Mediator between God and man, we oppose the work of the National Reform Party because it is unchristian in its tendency. {AMS June 1886, p. 43.2}

To go back to Mr. Gault’s assumption that Christ would have attempted to amend the laws of Rome if it had been a republic. Says he, “Its laws were not a reflection of the sentiments of the people; and it could not be made a Christian nation in the sense in which ours can.” No, of course not; there would have been just the difference between an empire and a republic. The laws of Rome reflected the sentiments of the emperor, and the people acquiesced in them just the same as the people in a republic do in laws made by their representatives. The emperor was to them a divine being, an object of adoration, and therefore his laws did reflect the sentiments of the people. Therefore if Christ had been such a one as he is described by the Religious Amendmentists, he would have gone to Rome and converted the emperor. The emperor, being converted, would at once have placed “all Christian usages, institutions, and laws” on an undeniable legal basis, and, *presto*, Rome would have been a “Christian nation.” And since “the empire of Rome filled the world,” by that act the whole world would have been “Christianized.” {AMS June 1886, p. 43.3}

But, hold; that very thing was done. Not by Christ, however, but a little less than three hundred years after he declared, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Constantine the Great is generally known as “the first Christian emperor.” He made laws in favor of Christians, and although he was not baptized till near his death, he fully identified himself with the professed Christian party. In his day the whole Roman Empire became “Christianized.” At that time there existed just the state of things which the Religious Amendment Party is now striving to bring about. As an evidence of this, and to show how thoroughly “National Reform” principles were carried out the church historian, Socrates, tells us that no one was allowed to possess any Arian document, under pain of being burned at the stake, together with the prescribed document. And so strictly was this edict of that “Christian” emperor carried out, that not a line of the writings of Arius is in existence. {AMS June 1886, p. 43.4}

Like causes produce like effects. As the result of the “Christianization” of the State by legal enactments in Constantine’s time, bishoprics were bought and sold just the same as secular offices were then and are now. The richest and most influential men secured the office of bishop, and used that office to increase their wealth and influence. Since religion was regulated by the civil law, the emperor was the natural head of the church; and since He also was the dispenser of patronage, men professed Christianity in order to secure office. The emperor continued to be head of the church until he transferred that dignity to the powerful bishop of Rome, whose assistance he needed in civil matters. Religion was then a matter of policy. And that is just what would happen in this country if religion were upheld by legal enactment. We care not how pure the motives of some of the advocates of the Religious Amendment may be; when the proposed Amendment is adopted, the results briefly indicated above will follow just as surely as the night follows the day. And that is the state of things which these men in their blindness imagine that Christ would sanction! {AMS June 1886, p. 43.5}

And this naturally brings us to another thought that was suggested by the second quotation, which says that if Jesus had been offered the kingdoms of the whole world he would have accepted. We call to mind the fact, recorded in two of the Gospels, that Jesus *was* once offered “all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” Did he accept? Not even in thought. Why not? Because the condition was that he should fall down and worship Satan. That same offer is still held out to the church. Many are becoming dazzled by the sight, and many, led by a selfish zeal which they suppose is zeal for Christ, are eager to accept. But the conditions have never changed, and if at any time before the nations are given to Christ to be dashed in pieces, his professed followers accept; professedly in his name, and for him, the sovereignty of any or all of the kingdoms of this world, it may be set down as a fact that it is because they have accepted the conditions which Christ rejected with holy scorn. {AMS June 1886, p. 43.6}

If those who are so loudly clamoring for Christ to be recognized as the head of this Government, would study his life and get proper ideas of his exalted character and of the nature of his kingdom, they might truly honor him. As it is, their work tends only to degrade Christianity into dishonor Christ. Christ not only did not seek; but he resolutely shunned political alliance, and “he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even has he walked.” E. J. W. {AMS June 1886, p. 43.7}

**“Religion and the Church” American Sentinel 1, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

When so much is said *pro* and *con* about a union of Church and State, it is fitting that we know exactly what is meant by “the church.” Many people erroneously suppose that the term refers to some particular denomination, as the Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterian. But this is not the case. To use the term in that sense would be manifestly unfair. If in speaking of “the church” we should refer to some special denomination, we would thereby imply that no other denomination could be part of “the church.” With the exception of the Catholic, nobody uses the term “the church” with reference to any particular sect. {AMS June 1886, p. 45.1}

In the Bible “the church” is declared to be the body of Christ. In one place Paul says of Christ that “he is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18); and again he says that God “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.” Ephesians 1:22, 23. Baptism is universally recognized as the entrance to the church, as Paul says, “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,” and that this body is Christ is shown by the words, “As many of you as had been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” {AMS June 1886, p. 45.2}

“The church,” then, in the strict sense of the word, is comprised of those who are “in Christ,” who have been converted, “born again,” and are consequently “new creatures.” From this it is very evident that, strictly speaking, no one religious sect, nor all of them all together, can be called “the church.” Everybody is willing to admit that in every denomination there are those who are really members of “the church,” because they are united to Christ; but nobody will claim that all of any denomination are truly Christian. {AMS June 1886, p. 45.3}

Since we cannot always distinguish the true professor from the false one, it is evident that the extent of the church is known only to Him who can read the heart; but it is not convenient always to make this fine distinction in our conversation, neither, is it possible; and therefore we speak of all who profess the religion of Jesus as members of this church. Thus we *assume*, since we cannot *decide*, that each individual’s profession is an honest one. {AMS June 1886, p. 45.4}

Now mark this fact: the religion of Jesus, or the profession of that religion, is the distinguishing characteristic of the church. It is that which makes the church, and without that there is no church. {AMS June 1886, p. 45.5}

With this matter clearly in mind, we are prepared to decide for ourselves whether or not the Religious Amendment Party is in favor of a union of Church and State. And this decision shall be made from the published statements of that party. In the National Convention held in New York in 1873, Dr. Jonathan Edwards, of Peoria, Ill., said:- {AMS June 1886, p. 45.6}

“It is just possible that the outcry against Church and State may spring rather from hatred to revealed religion than from an intelligent patriotism. But where is the sign, the omen of such Church and State mischief coming upon us? Who will begin and who will finish this union of Church and State? If you think the Roman Catholic can do it in spite of the watchfulness of the Protestant, or that one Protestant sect can do it amid the jealousy of all the other sects; or that all these sects would combine to affect a joint union with the State, you have a notion of human nature and of church nature different from what I have. Church and State in union, then, are forever impossible here, and, were it never so easy, we all repudiate it on principle. There are enduring and ever valid reasons against it. But religion and State is another thing. That is possible. This is a good thing-and that is what we aim to make a feature in our institutions.” {AMS June 1886, p. 45.7}

{AMS June 1886, p. 46.1}

“But,” says one, “do you not teach that a man should carry his religion into his business? Why then should you object to religion in the State?” We do believe that if a man *has* religion he should manifest it in his business transactions as well as in church; but if he has it not, we would not have him simulate it. So likewise we believe in religion among individuals everywhere, for only individuals can be religious. No man can be religious for another, neither can one man or any number of men make any man religious. And therefore we are not in favor of upholding religion by the laws of the State. {AMS June 1886, p. 46.2}

Perhaps it may be made a little plainer that religion in the State is Church and State united. We say that the possession of true religion marks one as a real Christian-a member of the church of Christ. The association together of a body of people professing religion constitutes, outwardly at least, a branch of the church of Christ. And so likewise the profession of religion by the State, constitutes a State church. It is all the union of Church and State that has ever existed. And when such a union shall have been affected, what will be the result? Just this: Religion and patriotism will be identical. No matter how pure some of the principles upheld by the laws may be, they can have no vitalizing, spiritual effect on the hearts of the people, because they will stand on the same level as the law defining who are eligible to office, and regulating the length of the presidential term. In short, the incorporation of religion into the laws of the State, marks the decline of religion in the hearts of the people. And this is what the Religious Amendment Party is pledged to bring about. {AMS June 1886, p. 46.3}

Ought not all lovers of pure Christianity to enter a hearty and continued protest against such a proceeding? E. J. W. {AMS June 1886, p. 46.4}