**“Both Sides” American Sentinel 2, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

From the Rev. Robert White, of Steubenville, Ohio, we have the following communications under the heading, “Hear the Other Side,” which in harmony with his request we gladly give place in the SENTINEL:- {AMS January 1887, p. 3.1}

“Through your kindness I have received the AMERICAN SENTINEL for January, February, March, October, and November, 1886. I have given them careful perusal, and have also noted some things to which, with your permission, I would like to reply in your columns. {AMS January 1887, p. 3.2}

“As your aim and mine is only to know and to do what is right, and as it is not victory for its own sake, but for truth’s sake that we are (or ought to be) striving for, I feel sure you will cheerfully accord me the privilege of correcting what I regard as misstatements made (no doubt honestly) by you of the sentiments, purposes, and position of the National Reform Association. This, and not the ‘Religious Amendment party,’ or the ‘God-in-the-Constitution’ party, is our correct designation. These and all similar titles we disown and disclaim. Whatever may be the design of those who employ them, they convey a wrong, because a one-sided and imperfect, notion of the object of the National Reform Association. {AMS January 1887, p. 3.3}

“Before however, proceeding to the correction of what I consider misinterpretations and misapprehensions of the declarations and views of the advocates of National Reform, I desire to enter my protest against the very serious charges you lay at their door. Although you pay a not undeserved tribute to the respectability, learning, piety, and patriot-ism of its published list of officers, over and over again you affirm that our professed object is one thing while our real object is another and a totally different thing (p. 76). You assert that we are laboring to subvert the Constitution of our country (p. 78), and to overthrow all that was done by the Revolutionary fathers (p. 81); that we propose to put in practice persecution for conscience’ sake (pp. 78, 84); that we are seeking our own aggrandizement (p. 86); that we are actuated by ambition (p. 76); and that our repeated re-affirmations or denials that we do not contemplate in any sense a union of Church and State is a mere blind (p. 19), a display of effrontery (p. 81), an exhibition of duplicity (p. 74), and a piece of Jesuitical casuistry to hide our real intention (p. 19). You also say that ‘we do not see how we can expect anything else of that party. Its cause is worthy only of Jesuitism and the Inquisition, and can only be justified by such casuistry as a Jesuit might envy’ (p. 20). {AMS January 1887, p. 3.4}

“Do you really think, Messrs. Editors, that this is an honorable mode of warfare? Is it necessary to the success of your cause? If it is, then verily it must be a bad one. When such questionable measures have to be employed to defend it, it is ‘condemned already.’ If you think the advocates of National Reform are mistaken or misguided, have a zeal that is not according to knowledge, and do not perceive the natural and necessary consequences of their movement, you have an undaunted right to say so, and also to try to prove what you say. But to hold them up to public reprobation as deliberate and intentional deceivers is, to say the least, very unfair Insinuation, defamation, and aspersion of motives are not arguments. Let us reason together, but because we differ, let us not descend to vituperation. {AMS January 1887, p. 3.5}

“A great deal of what you have written against the National Reform Association arises from a misreading (how to account for it I do not know) of the constitution of the Association. In almost every paper you sent mp (and I suppose the same is true of those I have not received), you say that the object of the National Reform, Association, in the Amendment to our National Constitution they wish incorporated in that instrument, is ‘to legalize the laws and institutions of Christianity, or of that which they may claim is Christianity;’ or ‘to place the laws, usages, and institutions of the Christian religion on an undeniable legal basis’ (pp. 1, 3, 4). How foreign this is to our purpose will be seen almost at a glance by comparing your way of putting it with the language of the constitution of the National Reform Association. As many of your readers may never have seen it, and as it is of itself a sufficient reply to much that has appeared in the SENTINEL, I ask as a matter of justice, and that your readers may have an opportunity of judging for themselves, that you publish it in full. The readers of the SENTINEL will do themselves a favor by referring to it as often as may be necessary. {AMS January 1887, p. 3.6}

**CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL REFORM ASSOCIATION**

“‘Believing that Almighty God is the source of all power and authority in civil government, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Ruler of nations, and that the revealed Will of Cod is of Supreme authority in civil affairs; {AMS January 1887, p. 3.7}

“‘Remembering that this country was settled by Christian men, with Christian ends in view, and that they gave a distinctly Christian character to the institutions which they established; {AMS January 1887, p. 3.8}

“‘Perceiving the subtle and persevering attempts which are made to prohibit the reading of the Bible in our Public Schools, to overthrow our Sabbath Laws, to corrupt the Family, to abolish the Oath, Prayer in our National and State Legislatures, pays of Fasting and Thanksgiving and other Christian features of our institutions, and so to divorce the American Government from all connection with the Christian religion; {AMS January 1887, p. 3.9}

“‘Viewing with grave apprehension the corruption of our politics, the legal sanction of the Liquor Traffic, and the disregard of moral and religious character in those who are exalted to high places in the nation; {AMS January 1887, p. 3.10}

“‘Believing that a written Constitution ought to contain explicit evidence of the Christian character and purpose of the nation which frames it, and perceiving that the silence of the Constitution of the United States in this respect is used as an argument against all that is Christian in the usage and administration of our Government; {AMS January 1887, p. 3.11}

“‘We, citizens of the United States, do associate ourselves under the followings ARTICLES, and pledge ourselves to God, and to one another, to labor, through wise and lawful means, for the ends herein set forth:- {AMS January 1887, p. 3.12}

**ARTICLE I**

“‘This Society shall be called the “NATIONAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.” {AMS January 1887, p. 3.13}

**ARTICLE II**

“‘The object of this Society shall be to maintain existing Christian features in the American Government; to promote needed reforms in the action of the Government touching the Sabbath, the institution of the Family, the religious element in Education, the Oath, and Public Morality as affected by the Liquor Traffic and other kindred evils; and to secure such an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will declare the nation’s allegiance to Jesus Christ and its acceptance of the moral laws of the Christian religion, and so indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our Government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land.’ {AMS January 1887, p. 4.1}

“After reading this constitution law, can any one truthfully affirm that the aim of the National Reform Association is ‘to place the laws, usages, and institutions of the Christian religion on an undeniable legal basis’? It distinctly specifies ‘the Christian laws, usages, and institutions of our Government’-these and no more. Between the statement of the SENTINEL, ‘to place the laws, usages, and institutions of the Christian religion on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental laws of the land,’ and the one in the constitution of the National Reform Association, ‘to place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our Government’ on such a basis, there is a world-wide difference. The former embraces all the doctrines, roles, and principles of Christianity; the latter only such ‘moral laws of the Christian religion’ as are necessarily involved in the practical administration of our Government. The chief of these are mentioned in the constitution of the Association, and the undeniable fact ‘that the silence of the Constitution of the United States in this respect is used as an argument against all that is Christian in the usage and administration of our Government,’ is asserted. The SENTINEL’S version of our aims and purposes is as wide of the mark as it possibly can be. To any such scheme as that attributed by the editors of the AMERICAN SENTINEL to the friends of National Reform, the latter are as much opposed (and as honestly) as are or can be the former. The AMERICAN SENTINEL, therefore, is wasting its ammunition, firing at a specter of its own creating, fighting a ghost of its own imagining. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.2}

“As this communication is already perhaps too long, I reserve, with your permission, further criticisms to a future article. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.3}

“ROBERT WHITE.  
“*Steubenville, Ohio*.”

We have no desire to present a one-sided view, and shall always be glad to publish views of the other side when they are presented in as temperate and candid a manner as are the above. Indeed this has been our course from the first. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.4}

Mr. White refers to several expressions which he has found in different numbers of the SENTINEL, and asks if we “really think that this is an honorable mode of warfare?” We can answer that if the expressions had been used with no director dependent connection, if they had been printed as a series of expletives with no explanation, we should not consider such to be an honorable mode of warfare. But when in every instance the expressions are simply and only the logical deduction from the propositions of the National Reformers themselves, then we are prepared to say without hesitancy that such is an honorable mode of warfare. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.5}

It is an honorable mode of warfare to trace every proposition to its logical conclusion; and if sound logic demonstrates that while the professed object of National Reform is one thing, the real object is a totally different thing; if the logic of the thing shows that it is subversive of the constitution; if not only logical conclusions, but their own words, show that the practice of persecution for conscience will be the outcome of the success of National Reformers; if sound logic develops casuistry and even Jesuitical casuistry; then we say that in all this there is nothing but an honorable mode of warfare. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.6}

Mr. White speaks of our “insinuations,” etc. Now Webster’s Unabridged says that to insinuate is “to hint; to suggest by remote allusion.” So far as we know we have insinuated nothing. What we have had to say we have said openly and plainly. And if what we have said appears to him as “insinuations,” then we should be glad for him to tell us how we can speak plainly and directly. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.7}

We wish Mr. White had spent his time in showing that our reasoning is not logical, and that our expressions are not the plain statements of logical conclusions from the propositions of National Reformers, instead of complaining of the expressions themselves. If our reasoning is not sound, if our conclusions are not logical, it ought to be easy enough for the principals in the movement to show it. There are certainly enough professors, and Doctors of Divinity, and Doctors of Laws, pledged to National Reform, to furnish some one to point out wherein we have reasoned wrongly, or where we have missed the point in our arguments on the propositions of the National Reformers. Besides this, if in our arguments we have so constantly missed the point of National Reform, how does it happen that our efforts hurt the National Reformers so much? If they are not hit, how does it happen that they are hurt? And if the real point of National Reform is missed, how does it happen that the National Reformers are hit? {AMS January 1887, p. 4.8}

If the reader will look over the numbers of the SENTINEL, he will find copious extracts from the writings of National Reformers. We have endeavored to represent them fairly, and in order to do this, have uniformly quoted their own language. If we have misconstrued the sentiments, the purpose, and the position of the National Reform Association, it can only have been because its advocates have not meant what they said. In noticing the strictures of Mr. White, we shall simply re-quote a few statements made by National Reformers. And here we would say that we have never yet used the expression “God-in-the-Constitution” party. We have referred to the National Reform Association as the “Religious Amendment party,” and we think justly, although they may disclaim that distinctive title. To show that this is so, we quote from a-speech made by Professor Blanchard in the National Reform, Convention held in Pittsburg in 1874. He said:- {AMS January 1887, p. 4.9}

“Constitutional laws punish for false money, weights, and measures, and, of course, Congress establishes a standard for money, weight, and measure. So Congress must establish a standard religion or admit anything called religion.” {AMS January 1887, p. 4.10}

In the same convention President Brunot said:- {AMS January 1887, p. 4.11}

“The American people must say that the Bible is the word of God, and that Christianity is the religion of this country.” {AMS January 1887, p. 4.12}

In March, 1884, Rev. J. M. Foster, writing in the *Christian Statesman*, concerning the model State, said:- {AMS January 1887, p. 4.13}

“According to the Scriptures, the State and its sphere existed for the sake and to serve the interests of the church.” And again “The expenses of the church in carrying on her aggressive work it meets in whole or in part out of the public treasury.” {AMS January 1887, p. 4.14}

Rev. R. M. Somerville, in the *Christian Nation* of July 14, 1886; declared that it is right to take public money to teach principles, enforce laws, and introduce customs to which many members of the community are conscientiously opposed. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.15}

The National Reform Association has for its avowed object the securing of such an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will indicate that this is a Christian Nation. And when that Amendment shall have been secured, Congress must, according to Professor Blanchard, establish a standard religion. If, then, the Amendment which they desire is not a Religious Amendment, language does not mean anything. Moreover, Christianity cannot be separated from religion, for it *is* religion. A Christian man is a religious man and a Christian nation must be a religious nation; therefore we say again, that is the Constitution is so amended that this Nation shall *seem* to be a Christian Nation, the Amendment which secures that object will be a Religious Amendment. Although National Reformers repudiate the title of “Religious Amendment party,” their own writers proclaim the fact that they do want a religious test for citizenship. We do not see, therefore, how the emphatic declarations, made again and again by National Reformers, that they do not want a *Religious* Amendment to the Constitution, nor anything like Church and State, can be considered as anything else than a “blind,” or a manifestation of Jesuitical casuistry. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.16}

In view of the above quotations, we think we are justified in calling the National Reformers the “Religious Amendment party.” In fact, we always wince whenever we write “National Reformers” and “National Reform Association,” for we cannot regard their movement as a reform in any particular. It is true that many advocates of this movement are highly respectable and learned and pious, and we cannot believe that they realize what will be the result of their proposed Amendment. But we cannot allow that they are patriots, even though they are honest in their purpose, for patriotism seeks only the welfare of the country, and the success of their movement would be the greatest calamity which this Nation ever suffered. We are obliged, however, to discredit the piety of many who stand high in the National Reform counsels, and the reason for this will shortly appear. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.17}

Now a few words concerning constitution of the National Reform According Association. According to that its idea is to place “all Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our Government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land.” If they purpose to follow the letter of their constitution, they might as well stop at once, for in our Government there are no Christian laws or institutions. “Christian laws” are precepts regulating the practice of the Christian religion. Christian institutions are those ordinances which Christ has placed in the church, as baptism and the Lord’s supper. To claim that it is desired to regulate marriage laws, judicial oaths, and the observance of the Sabbath, we submit that these are not Christian institutions. The moral law of ten commandments antedates Christianity and is obligatory on all mankind. For the observance or non-observance of its precepts, Jew and Gentile, Pagan and Christian, will alike have to give an account to God. That part of the law which relates especially to man’s duty to his fellows and tends to secure harmony and good order in society, human Governments are empowered to enforce, and that without regard to the form of religion that may be professed. The Czar of Russia, the Shah of Persia, the emperors of China and Japan, the queen of England, and the President of the United States are alike ministers of God to execute wrath upon those who trample upon the rights of their neighbors. And it is a fact that in many heathen countries the rights of citizens have been as well maintained as in some so-called Christian nations. It is also a fact that there is no such thing as Christianity in marriage. Marriage was instituted in Eden for the whole race, and the marriage of the Jew is just as sacred as that of the Protestant. The regulation of marriage is within the province of every nation, whether it is Christian or Pagan. {AMS January 1887, p. 4.18}

Mr. White uses the expression “moral laws of the Christian religion.” This is simply an absurdity. The Christian religion has no moral laws. The moral law is of primary and universal obligation. It covers every conceivable act or thought. If the moral law had never been broken there would be no necessity for the Christian religion, but since it has been violated, Christianity is the means devised to bring man back to obedience to it. We cannot refrain from saying, what we believe to be the truth, that if those who call themselves National Reformers had a just conception of the true object of the Christian religion, and of the Spirit which actuated its Founder, they would cease their efforts to tamper with the Constitution of the United States. Christ said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” and steadfastly resisted all human efforts to make him king. When two of his disciples wished to call down fire upon some who did not acknowledge his divinity, he rebuked them, saying, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” And when Peter drew his sword in defense of the Master, he was sternly rebuked. {AMS January 1887, p. 5.1}

Mr. White is grieved because the SENTINEL attributes to National Reformers the purpose to put in practice persecution for conscience’ sake. Let National Reformers answer for themselves on this point. Rev. Jonathan Edwards, one of the vice-presidents of the Association, says: “Tolerate atheism, sir? There is nothing out of hell that I would not tolerate as soon.” And the same man classes deists, Jews, Seventh-day Baptists, and, in fact, all who deny the claims of the National Reform Association, as atheists. And now remembering that opposition to the so-called National Reform movement is counted as infidelity and atheism, we quote the following from another vice-president, Rev. E. B. Graham. He says:- {AMS January 1887, p. 5.2}

“If the opponents of the Bible do not like our Government and its Christian features let them go to some wild, desolate land, and, in the name of the devil, and for the sake of the devil, subdue it and set up a Government of their own on infidel and atheistic ideas, and then if they can stand it, stay there till they die.” {AMS January 1887, p. 5.3}

This is the fate to which at least one National Reformer would consign, not only those who deny the existence of God, but also those who, believing in God and Christ and the Bible, are content to rely upon the aid of the Spirit of God alone in their efforts to spread the gospel, and who refuse to invoke civil aid in that work, or to yield their consciences to the will of any human power. Again we quote from the pen of Rev. M. A. Gault, one of the leading lights of the National Reform Association. He says:- {AMS January 1887, p. 5.4}

“Whether the Constitution will be set right on the question of the moral supremacy of God’s law in Government without a bloody revolution, will depend entirely on the strength and resistance of the forces of antichrist.” {AMS January 1887, p. 5.5}

That is to say that National Reformers are ready to shed blood if need be in order to enforce their ideas of Christian morality upon the people. If this does not mean persecution for conscience’ sake, then such a thing never existed. It may be that we have been mistaken in charging duplicity and Jesuitical casuistry upon National Reformers who claim that they desire no union of Church and State, and that the success of their movement cannot result in persecution; but if so, then we are forced the attribute to them a degree of ignorance which is inconceivable. {AMS January 1887, p. 5.6}

Once more: The *Christian Statesman* of December 11, 1884, stated its desire to join hands with Roman Catholics in carrying forward the work of National Reform. And in the *Statesman* of August 31, 1881, Rev. Sylvester F. Scovel, speaking of this desire to secure the co-operation of Roman Catholics, said:- {AMS January 1887, p. 5.7}

“We may be subjected to some rebuffs in our first proffers, and the time has not yet come when the Roman Church will consent to strike bands with other churches, as such; but the time has come to make repeated advances, and gladly to accept co-operation in any form in which they may be willing to exhibit it. It is one of the necessities of the situation.” {AMS January 1887, p. 5.8}

Now when we remember what the Catholic Church has been and has done in the past, and that it is the church’s boast that Rome never changes, and that in the encyclical letter published by Pope Leo XIII. only a little over a year ago, every act of every Pope was endorsed, certainly every one who is not willingly blind must see that when National Reformers co-operate with the Catholic Church on its own terms, and when by such co-operation they have secured the power which they desire, persecution will follow as a matter of course. The idea that in matters of religion the minority must submit to the majority is of long standing with Roman Catholics, and is openly avowed by National Reformers. But minorities do not always submit willingly, and if that idea is carried out, force must be used. {AMS January 1887, p. 5.9}

But space forbids our making further quotations. We submit to Mr. White that it is strictly an honorable mode of warfare to condemn an opponent out of his own mouth. We have made no statements concerning National Reformers which the facts will not warrant. While we cannot believe that all self-styled National Reformers are actuated by sincere motives, we do believe that many of them are honest at heart and desire only the truth, but are deceived as to the real object and the necessary result of the National Reform Association. In this latter class we gladly place our correspondent. And as our desire is to reclaim those who have fallen into error, as well as to bring the real truth before all, we hold our columns open to any one who is competent and authorized to speak for the National Reform Association, who shall wish to make a statement as to its nature and object. E. J. W. {AMS January 1887, p. 5.10}