**“A ‘Virtual Theocracy’ Promised” American Sentinel 2, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

It has been the aim of the SENTINEL, not only to set forth the principles that underlie the National Reform movement, and the loss of freedom that would follow its success, but also to arouse the people of this country to a sense of the fact that that movement has already acquired alarmingly large proportions. To this end we have repeatedly stated that the movement is by no means confined to the body of men called the National Reform Association. The Prohibition party and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union are fully committed to the movement, and these are endeavoring, with good prospects of success, to beguile the Knights of Labor into the movement. It is through the combined action of these various societies, as societies, and of the Protestant and Catholic Churches, as representing the Christianity of *America* (not of *Christ*, be it understood), that National Reform ideas will be made realities in this country. That National Reform ideas will prevail when these classes unite their forces, is too evident to call for proof. {AMS September 1887, p. 66.1}

The Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the National Reform Association have been wedded, so that the aims of one party may be said to be the aims of the other. What the ultimate aim of both is, is incidentally revealed in the following, which is part of the last paragraph of an article by Miss Willard, in the *Chicago Advance* of June 30:- {AMS September 1887, p. 66.2}

“We of this matchless epoch are preparing material for future orators, who, as they descant upon ‘the wonder that shall be,’ will point to these days of the saloon, the prize-fight, the trampled Sabbath, the grinding monopoly, the disfranchised womanhood, as a period of semi-barbarism from which they thank God for deliverance into the New Republic with its virtual theocracy and universal brotherhood in Christ.” {AMS September 1887, p. 66.3}

Miss Willard is *the* spokesman of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, so that the above may safely be taken as setting forth the aim of that association. Her statement is identical with that of the National Reformers themselves, who talk of the republic with Christ as its king. She confidently expects “a virtual theocracy” when these various “reform” associations and parties become consolidated, which she predicts will be in ‘92 or ‘96. Now “a virtual theocracy” is nothing more nor less than a union of Church and State, with some other name, and with the church element the controlling power in the union. National Reform evasions cannot conceal this. {AMS September 1887, p. 66.4}

Such a state of things cannot fail to be followed by disastrous consequences. We care not by whom it is brought about, the result will be the same. We are not impugning the motives of the gifted ladies who compose the working force of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, nor would we be understood as being one whit behind anybody in our admiration of their efforts in behalf of true temperance. What we deprecate is the fact that they have thought to enlarge their sphere of usefulness to the extent of bringing about the millennium by National Reform methods. We have no notion of detailing in this place the evils that must result from any union of Church and State; what we want to emphasize is the fact that those evils will be none the less because the proposed union will in large measure be the work of so good people as the ladies of the W. C. T. U. If a child in its innocent play draws the live coals from the grate and scatters them upon the carpet, the effect will be just the same as though the coals were scattered by a malicious incendiary. So these good people may think that “a virtual theocracy” will be the best thing for this country, but that will not lessen the evil. We cherish the hope that some of them, at least, may see whither they are drifting, and may recover themselves. But, in view of the position of the leader of the powerful organization known as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, will anyone who knows the evils of Church and State union, dare say that we are sounding an unnecessary alarm? {AMS September 1887, p. 67.1}

E. J. W.

**“Church and State” American Sentinel 2, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

EDITORS SENTINEL: In your last number I saw an article headed “Church and State,” copied from the San Francisco *Chronicle*. I thought it erroneous as well as incorrect in its statements, and therefore wrote a short article to the Chronicle in reply. It was thrown into Mr. DeYoung’s waste-basket. I am thankful to be assured by you that a brief and similar writing will not share the same fate by the editors of the SENTINEL. My statements must be brief, so I hope they will be accurate. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.1}

1. I have been familiar with the National Reform movement from its first inception, and I think its object is not the union of Church and State either in form or in fact. No member of the association says it is; not one man in the association desires it; and the movement has no tendency towards it. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.2}

2. If the movement and the National Reform Association are approved and indorsed by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union as well as by leading ministers of most of “the evangelical denominations,” as the “prominent clergyman,” the informant of the *Chronicle* reporter, says, the movement is not presumably very dangerous. Miss Willard is not a very dangerous woman except in the estimation of the saloonists and such like. Neither she nor the ministers of the evangelical de-nominations desire a union of Church and State; and if the movement tends to it, surely they have sense enough to see it. The presumption, therefore, is that the SENTINEL’S fears are groundless. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.3}

3. It is true that the National Reformers are opposed to the secular theory of Government, but it is not true that their avowed intention is to afford a basis of organic law “for the general enforcement of Sunday observance.” The Reformers do not differ from the great mass of Protestant Christians all the world over. They all hold that in Christian lands the civil law should protect the people in their right to rest on the Christian Sabbath and to worship God without molestation by others. Neither National Reformers nor others dream of compelling men to observe the Sabbath religiously. They all believe, however, that the State should be the conservator of morals; and they assume that the law of the fourth commandment is a moral law. And who that believes in Christianity at all does not know that if the Christian Sabbath should be abolished there would soon be neither religion nor Christian morality. Moral anarchy and chaos would result. The friends of the Sabbath, therefore, are the best friends of the nation and of the people. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.4}

4. The “prominent clergyman” who answered the *Chronicle* reporter’s question, “Which one of the religious denominations takes the lead in this movement” shows that he knows little about it. He should post himself before he presumes to post others through the secular press. Rev. Dr. Gibson of San Francisco, is not to be one of the vice-presidents. I presume he never was at a National Reform meeting, and never spoke in public or preached in favor of it. He does not even take the *Christian Statesman,* the organ of the association. And the statement that it is Dr. Gibson’s “intention, on his return from Europe, to organize a state branch in California,” etc., will, no doubt, be news to himself. Indeed, I do not know that there is a minister in San Francisco, and almost none in Oakland, who has ever written or spoken a word in favor of the special object of the National Reform Association. So that manifestly the *Chronicle’s* “prominent clergyman” is an alarmist who himself needs to be instructed. And I am sorry that the SENTINEL borrows trouble from the *Chronicle*. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.5}

5. That a wine and liquor paper, such as the San Francisco *Chronicle*, should like to make capital against the Prohibition party by arraying them with the National Reform movement, might be expected. But that the SENTINEL should endorse the *Chronicle* in such an effort seems strange to one who knows that the editors of the SENTINEL are the fast friends of temperance, and presumably of prohibition also. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.6}

6. General Grant never opposed National Reform nor the Amendment advocated. In his Des Moines speech he spoke what may have displeased Roman Catholics, who influence in the State he feared; but it is unfair to array him and Sumner and Andrews as opposed to the Reform so feared by the SENTINEL. On the contrary, Senator Charles Sumner, in the early years of the movement gave public testimony in favor of it. That they all opposed a union of Church and State is presumed, but it does not follow that they opposed National Reform. So far as they knew the value of Christianity, so far they knew that “righteousness exalts a nation.” {AMS September 1887, p. 68.7}

A REFORMER.

The above communication is from one for whom we entertain sincere respect, and for this reason, as well as because the SENTINEL can afford to be more than fair, we give it a place in our columns. We have no desire except for truth; and if anything that anyone could write would overthrow any of the positions which the SENTINEL has taken, we would publish it as willingly as we did those positions. But although we have unbounded confidence in our correspondent’s honesty, we think he is not so well informed on the question of National Reform as we are, and we shall therefore review his statements *seriatim*. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.8}

1. Positive argument would be much more conclusive than our friend’s modest disclaimer. He thinks that the object of National Reform is not the union of Church and State; we *know* that its object is the union of Church and State, to the fullest extent that such a union ever existed. We say we know this, and so we do, if we may believe the statements of those who seem to be at the head of the movement. It is true that no member of the association says that a union of Church and State is the object of the movement; on the contrary, they emphatically declare that it is not; but at the same time they most urgently demand a condition of things which would be nothing else. It is possible that they do not know what would constitute a union of Church and State, and imagine that if they give some other name to that which they are working for, no evil results will follow. But we care not for names; the mere name of Church and State union can do no harm, but the thing itself can, by whatever name it is called. {AMS September 1887, p. 68.9}

To show that we have reason for saying that we *know* that the National Reform movement does design a practical union of Church and State, we re-quote the following specimen statements made by prominent National Reformers, and published in the official organs of that association:- {AMS September 1887, p. 69.1}

In the *Christian Statesman*, in March, 1884, Rev. J. W. Foster said, among other things:- {AMS September 1887, p. 69.2}

“According to the Scriptures, the State and its sphere exist for and to serve the purpose of the church;” and again he affirms that in the ideal National Reform State, “The expenses of the church in carrying on her public, aggressive work, it meets in whole or in part out of the public treasury.” This means the taxation of the people to support the church as a branch of the government. How a more complete union of Church and State could be made, we cannot imagine. And right in harmony with Mr. Foster’s statements, but far more explicit, is the following from the *Christian Nation*, July 14, 1886:- {AMS September 1887, p. 69.3}

“It is the duty of civil rulers, in subordination to Christ, to recognize the church, its ordinances, and its laws. It is not merely that the existence of such an organization is owned and tolerated, but a statutory arrangement, confessing the divine origin of the church, and the divine obligation resting on the nation to accept its doctrine and order, and engaging to regulate their administration in conformity with its constitution and object.” {AMS September 1887, p. 69.4}

In the same article we read:- {AMS September 1887, p. 69.5}

“Civil rulers owe it to their supreme Lord and to society to encourage and to stimulate the church in its work of faith and labor of love, and, when it may be necessary, to give pecuniary aid to its ministers, that the gospel may be preached in every part of their dominions, and to all classes without respect of persons.” {AMS September 1887, p. 69.6}

And then the writer proceeds to say that there would be no injustice, but that it would be perfectly right, “to take public money to teach principles, enforce laws, and introduce customs to which many members of the community are conscientiously opposed.” That is, it is right according to the National Reform idea of right, which idea seems to be that everything that the majority may do is right, if the majority chance to be National Reformers, and that the minority have no rights of any kind. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.7}

These statements were not made in the heat of debate, but are part of a sermon written by Wm. Sommerville, of Nova Scotia, and after his death edited from the original manuscript by Rev. R. M. Sommerville, of New York, and then published in one of the organs of the National Reform Association. So we must take them as the sentiments of that association. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.8}

We might multiply quotations to the same effect, from leading National Reformers, but it is not necessary in this connection. If National Reformers do not believe in nor desire a union of Church and State, and if they wish to set themselves right in this matter, they may publish in the columns of the SENTINEL a repudiation of these and other quotations which we have made from their leading men. So long as such sentiments are expressed, however, it is useless for them to say that they do not want a union of Church and State. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.9}

2. It does not necessarily follow that because there are good and able men in the National Reform Association, and because the movement is indorsed by the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, it cannot be dangerous. Our correspondent would evidently have us believe that a good or an honest man, or even a wise man, cannot be mistaken or blinded by feeling or prejudice. We are perfectly willing to admit that very many (we cannot include all) National Reformers are sincere in their motives, and desire only good for the people of this country; but that by no means proves that they have chosen the true way to accomplish the good that they desire. Whether or not Miss Willard is a dangerous woman, depends upon how she uses her vast influence. If she uses it to help the majority to put a yoke upon the consciences of the minority, then she is dangerous, no matter how upright her intentions may be. A little child is not a very dangerous creature, nevertheless a match which it may ignite in its innocent play, may cause as great a conflagration as a match in the hands of a hardened incendiary. Honesty of purpose may secure to a person immunity from punishment for an imprudent act, but it cannot ward off the evil consequences of such an act. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.10}

3. When our friend says, “It is true that the National Reformers are opposed to the secular theory of government,” he virtually admits that they do desire a union of Church and State. The opposite of the secular theory of government is the ecclesiastical theory, which National Reformers favor. So then his disclaimer amounts to this: National Reformers do not desire a union of Church and State; they simply want an ecclesiastical government. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.11}

It is mere nonsense to say or to imply that what the National Reformers want is that “the civil law should protect the people in their right to rest on the ‘Christian Sabbath,’ and to worship God without molestation of others,” for the civil law does that already. There is no law in the United States that would compel a man to work on Sunday, or that would for a moment uphold any man or any set of men in attempting to force anyone to do so. More than this, the laws do protect all religious bodies in their right to worship God without molestation by others. If any religious congregation in any city in the United States should be molested in their worship, whether on Sunday or any other day of the week, the intruder would be landed in jail as soon as a policeman could be summoned, and he would be very fortunate if he did not receive the severest penalty. Our laws do at the present time protect *all* people in their worship; but they do not compel those who have no religious convictions to conform to the practice of those who do, and they will not do so until National Reform principles shall prevail. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.12}

Again our friend says: “They all believe that the State should be the conservator of morals.” “They” may believe it, but we do not. The person who thinks that the State can act as the conservator of morals has either a supremely exalted idea of the power of the State, or an extremely low standard of morality, or else he has not really given the subject any careful thought. It will not be questioned but that the ten commandments contain the sum of all moral duties. Then if the State is the conservator of morals, it must see that every one of the ten commandments is obeyed by its citizens. As a matter of fact, however, the State can do nothing of the kind, no matter how virtuous its law-makers are, nor how just its judges. Let us consider an instance or two. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.13}

The tenth commandment says, “Thou shalt not covet.” Will any National Reformer claim that it is the duty of the State to keep a man from being covetous? or that it is within the province of the State to punish a man for covetousness? The thing is an impossibility. The State has no power, in the first place, even to determine whether or not a man is covetous. But covetousness is immoral; therefore in this respect the State cannot be a conservator of morals. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.14}

Again, the Bible tells us that “covetousness is idolatry.” Now while the State has the power, although not the right, to restrain men from falling down before images, it cannot prevent their being at heart the grossest kind of idolaters. And who shall say that in the eyes of the only Judge of morals, the ignorant image worshiper is more immoral than the scheming, covetous Pharisee? {AMS September 1887, p. 69.15}

Take for instance those commandments in regard to which the State has a certain duty. The sixth commandment says, “Thou shalt not kill.” It is the duty of the State to prevent murder as far as possible, by executing severe penalties upon those who take human life. But we are told in the Scriptures that he who gives way to unreasoning anger, or who secretly cherishes hatred and envy in his heart, is a murderer. With this, the State can do nothing. Is the man who takes the life of’ another in the heat of passion, and possibly after great provocation, any more immoral than the one who for days and perhaps years cherishes murder in his heart, perhaps longing for a chance to commit it, and only deterred by lack of opportunity? Everybody will answer in the negative. Yet the State executes the first and pays no attention to the second. Why? Because the first has interfered with the rights of society, while the second, although probably more depraved, has injured no one but himself The first has committed an uncivil act, which is also immoral, and comes in collision with the civil law, which punishes him, not for his immoral, and comes in collision with the civil law, which punishes him, not for his immorality, but for his uncivility; while the second, although basely immoral, and violated no civil law, and is therefore not answerable to the State. {AMS September 1887, p. 69.16}

The seventh commandment says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” It is within the province of the State to punish the man who openly commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife; yet that man may not be half so corrupt as another one whose every thought is impure, and whose soul is rotten with meditated vice which he has not the power or the courage to openly practice, yet upon whom the State can lay no hand, because he has invaded no household. Then let no one say that the State is or ever can be the conservator of morals. All it can do, and all it is appointed to do, is to punish those whose unrestrained vices interfere with the rights of society. {AMS September 1887, p. 70.1}

The very expressions “civil laws” and “civil government” define the extent of the State’s jurisdiction. As to the morals of the people, it is impossible for it to take cognizance of them, even if the right to do so were given it. The State may overstep her prerogatives, and enforce the customs and ceremonies of religion, but in so doing it will be making hypocrites, and will seriously interfere with the work of the gospel, by making men believe themselves to be moral, and in no need of conversion, although they may be, in reality, as corrupt as the inhabitants of Sodom. {AMS September 1887, p. 70.2}

4. As to Dr. Gibson, it is a matter of very small moment whether he is personally connected with the National Reform Association or not. If the *Chronicle* reporter was misinformed, that ends that matter, but does not affect the main question in the least. {AMS September 1887, p. 70.3}

5. The SENTINEL has never sought to make capital against the W. C. T. U. or the Prohibition party by arraying them with the National Reform movement, although we are sure, as our correspondent tacitly admits, that it is to their discredit that they are so arrayed. It should be understood that the SENTINEL deals first, last, and all the time with the National Reform Association, and has no crusade to make against any other association. As a matter of fact, the SENTINEL is heartily in favor of the W. C. T. U. as far as it adheres to its legitimate temperance work, and we have mentioned that organization only to show how rapidly the current is setting toward National Reform principles. We regard it as a great calamity that an organization with such power for good as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union should lend itself, however innocently, to the furtherance of National Reform designs. When the W. C. T. U. does this, then to that extent it necessarily brings itself into the same condemnation as the National Reform Association. {AMS September 1887, p. 70.4}

6. We have not the data at hand to verify or disprove the statement made concerning the attitude of Grant, Sumner, and Andrews toward National Reform, and it is of little consequence anyway. It matters not how certain men, no matter how great, have regarded this question. We are discussing the case on its own merits, and if the National Reform movement is intrinsically wrong, as we believe it is, it cannot be bettered by the adherence of any number of eminent men. We do not borrow trouble from the Chronicle nor from any other source. There will be no necessity for any lover of justice to borrow trouble so long as the National Reform Association exists. We speak the things which we know, and do not take our information at second hand. We consider it our duty, however, to let our readers know how other journals regard the movement which the SENTINEL is combating; but in giving their opinions we do not necessarily become responsible for all their statements. That the SENTINEL’S charges against the movement are incontrovertible is evidenced, we think, to some extent by the fact that not a single National Reformer has ever attempted to demonstrate the fallacy of one of them. E. J. W. {AMS September 1887, p. 70.5}