**“An Examination of Principles. (Concluded.)” American Sentinel 3, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

3. With the statement that “the revealed will of God is of supreme authority in civil affairs,” we also take direct issue. That the union of Church and State is a pernicious thing, is so generally conceded that National Reformers themselves are careful always to deny that their movement tends toward any such result; nevertheless the statement which we have just quoted contains the whole substance of Church and State union. For the Bible, not a part, simply, but the whole, is the revealed will of God, and is the whole of the revealed will of God; and it must be admitted that the Bible is a religious book. It was given to men for the sole purpose of teaching them the true religion. But religion and the true church are inseparable. There may be a church and not religion, but there cannot be religion and not the church. In a word, the revealed will of God is the true religion, and is the standard of the true church. Therefore, if that will should be recognized as of supreme authority in civil government, that government would be an ecclesiastical government; in other words, it would be a union of Church and State. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.1}

Men may assume to take the revealed will of God as of supreme authority in civil affairs, and to oblige all men to conform to it, but in reality such a thing is impossible. For to make all men conform to the will of God would be nothing less than to make them all perfect, not only in outward actions, but in thought. The will of God, which is the law of God, requires that men shall not be angry, that they shall not indulge in the least degree of hatred or envy, that they shall not be covetous; and it declares that the harboring of such evil thoughts is just the same as the commission of outbreaking sin. Now when it is stated that any document is of authority in civil affairs, it is implied that the power to enforce the provisions of that document, and to punish those who violate it, rests with the men at the head of civil affairs. But there is no man, or set of men, who has the power to determine whether or not a man is covetous, or whether he is cherishing hatred or other evil in his heart; therefore we say that it is utterly impossible that the revealed will of God should be the authority in civil affairs. Civil government is for the purpose of keeping men civil, and not of making them moral. When it attempts to interfere in the matter of morals, it assumes prerogatives that belong to God alone. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.2}

We might cite another instance which shows that to take the revealed will of God as the supreme authority in civil affairs, would be to unite Church and State. The Bible, which teaches the revealed will of God, says that it is the duty of men to believe on Christ and to be baptized. Now if National Reform ideas should be adopted, the Government would not only have the right, but it would be under obligation, to require every citizen and everyone who desired to be a citizen, to be baptized. In other words, baptism would be the evidence of naturalization, just as it is the evidence of church membership, and so the Church and the State would be identical. But it needs no argument to show that such a state of affairs would simply make hypocrites of more than ninety-nine-one-hundredths of the people. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.3}

Again, the apostle Paul says: “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18. It is manifestly the duty, as it is declared to be the will, of God, for everybody to give thanks for the blessings which they daily receive. Now if the revealed will of God is to be of supreme authority in civil affairs, then civil rulers must enforce that will, and compel every man in the nation to give thanks. Of course they could not compel people to give thanks privately, and that shows the folly of their claim, but they could force them to church to offer thanks nominally, or by proxy, just as people now celebrate Thanksgiving day. But such enforced thanksgiving would be mockery, and it is not the will of God that people should thank him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.4}

4. The second paragraph of the preamble contains a bit of sophistry and an assumption which is entirely at variance with the golden rule. It assumes that because the people who came over in the *Mayflower*, for the National Reformers do not go back of that date, were professed Christians, and because the founders of the early colonies made church membership a test of citizenship, and subjected those who differed with them in belief to the same persecutions to which they had been subjected as dissenters from the ecclesiastical organization of the Old World, therefore this Government ought to be professedly a Christian Government. But when they make this argument, which is a standard plea with them, we ask them, Who was here first? Long before the arrival of the *Mayflower*, or the voyage of Columbus, this country was inhabited by powerful tribes of Indians, all of whom were pagans. Therefore if the National Reform argument were good for anything it would prove that the religion of this country should be paganism. But the argument does not amount to anything. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.5}

Notice further that the assumption is that the people who first settle a country, or who are in the majority in any country, have the right to determine what religion shall be tolerated. The National Reform constitution assumes that Governments must recognize some religion, and that such State religion must of course be the religion of the majority, and that no other religion can be tolerated. According to their claim for this country, the established religion of China or India ought to be Buddhism, and that of Turkey ought to be Mohammedanism; and the rulers of those countries ought to say to the missionaries who go there from England and America: “If you do not like our institutions, and cannot conform to them, you can return to your own land; you must not think to bring your foreign customs here.” If this were done, what a howl of indignation would be raised, and the National Reformers would be the very first ones to raise the cry of “persecution.” We agree that it would be persecution, and unjust persecution, too; but, if the National Reform theory of majority rule be true, it is just what ought to be done. If such a course would be wrong in Turkey, how can it be right in the United States? To state the question differently, does an act which is wicked and unjust when done by a Mohammedan, become virtuous and just when done by a professed Christian? {AMS January 1888, p. 3.6}

National Reformers seem to be blind to the fact that if their scheme should prevail, and they should carry it out as they propose, making a profession of Christianity the basis of citizenship, and declaring indifference to Christ to be treason to the State, they would run directly counter to many things which they now profess to desire. For instance, they profess to be staunch friends to the native Indians, and to the Chinese who are here. They declaim loudly against the injustice that is done to both of these races, and yet if their ideas were carried out, both the Indians and the Chinese would be outlaws, and both would be subject to persecutions, by the side of which all that they have had to suffer would be considered pleasure. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.7}

5. Our Government has no Christian features. The Constitution of the United States expressly forbids any religious test of any kind being required as a qualification for office or citizenship. Thus the National Reform preamble is self-contradictory, in that it speaks of the Christian features of our institutions, and the Government’s connection with the Christian religion, while at the same time it admits the fact that the Constitution, which is the basis of the Government, is utterly silent concerning Christianity, or any other religion. {AMS January 1888, p. 3.8}

Yet it is said that the object of this National Reform movement is “to maintain existing Christian features in the American Government.” These Christian features are declared to be the reading of the Bible in our public schools, prayer in our National and State Legislatures, days of fasting and thanksgiving, etc. But the reading of the Bible in the public schools is not a feature of our Government, for there is no law requiring it; whenever it is done, it is a merely voluntary exercise. We will not here discuss the propriety of requiring the Bible to be read in the public schools, but simply call attention to the fact that it is not an existing feature of our Government, as the National Reformers claim. {AMS January 1888, p. 4.1}

The same may be said of prayer in our National and State Legislatures; there is nothing obligatory in the matter, and it is only a matter of form, as anyone can testify who has ever witnessed the opening of one of these assemblies. We believe in prayer; we believe that the divine injunction to “pray without ceasing” ought to be obeyed by all men, by members of Legislatures as well as ministers of the gospel; but we do not believe that anybody ought to be forced to pray, or to listen to prayers. And we can see no more reason for opening the State Legislatures with prayer than for merchants to open their stores with prayer. To be sure, it would be a very proper thing for the merchant to do; but he ought not to be forced to do it. But there is as yet no law requiring public prayer on any occasion, and so this is not an existing feature of our Government. {AMS January 1888, p. 4.2}

6. We affirm most positively that the object of the National Reform Association, as set forth in its constitution, is not merely erroneous, but is unchristian and directly opposed to the spirit of the gospel. Its object is to amend the Constitution of the United States so that it will declare the nation’s allegiance to Jesus Christ, and its acceptance of “the moral laws of the Christian religion,” whatever they may be. This means, in plain language, that the Constitution is to be so amended that the officers of this Government may compel everyone who desires to be a citizen to profess Christianity, and to disfranchise all others. If it does not mean this, it does not mean anything. We have the statement of National Reformers themselves that this is just what it does mean. But the Christian religion knows nothing of any such coercive measures as this. The gospel call is, “Whosoever will, let him come.” The implied permission is that whosoever will not come may stay away. The ministers of Christ are simply ambassadors whose duty it is to entreat people to become reconciled to God, but who have no authority to compel any. Therefore we say that the day that sees the consummation of the National Reform designs will mark the blotting out of Christianity in this country, except among the few who will dare to dissent from such an iniquitous form of government. That national Christianity, so-called, is the enthronement of antichrist, is proved by the Dark Ages, which followed immediately upon the professed conversion of Constantine, and the lifting of Christianity to the throne of the world. {AMS January 1888, p. 4.3}

We also view with grave apprehension the corruption of our politics, and the immorality not only of those who are exalted to high places in the nation, but of the nation itself; but we know that politics cannot be purified nor immorality checked by legal enactment. There is only one remedy for immorality and corruption, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. By this alone can men be saved either from the guilt of sin or the love of it. We do not say that the preaching of the gospel will purify politics by making politicians and all others moral men; for the Bible nowhere holds forth the hope that all men will ever repent, and it expressly declares that the righteous will ever be few in number as compared with the wicked, and that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.” See 2 Timothy 3:13, Matthew 7:13, 14; 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30, etc. But we do say that whatever of purification is ever accomplished must be solely by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. {AMS January 1888, p. 4.4}

Therefore we conclude, from the very constitution of the National Reform Association, that while a large majority of its advocates may honestly desire to see a reform brought about in this country, the means by which they propose to secure it are both impolite and unscriptural, and such as would soon rid the country of what little morality it now possesses. {AMS January 1888, p. 4.5}

E.J.W.

**“Back Page” American Sentinel 3, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

There is no question that is growing faster in the United States to-day than is the Sunday question. It is coming nearer and nearer to the point where it will be an essential factor in the political field. And the Christian Nation announces the intention of it all, thus:- {AMS January 1888, p. 8.1}

“Let those who will remember the Sabbath to keep it holy from motives of love and obedience; the remnant must be made to do so through fear of law. We have no option.”-*Christian Nation, September 28, 1887*. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.2}

This is the National Reform version of the fourth commandment. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.3}

A good many people imagine that they love law and order, when they do not. It is a fact that many, indeed the great majority of men, are perfectly indifferent as to whether or not the laws are enforced, so long as they themselves do not suffer by their violation. Laws are enforced in this country principally from selfish motives, and not from a love of justice. There is not an abhorrence of evil because it is evil. Men will make an outcry against a crime which involves their interest, and will excuse the same if they are in no way concerned. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.4}

On Sunday, October 23, the corner-stone of a Catholic college was laid in Oakland. After the ceremony, Rev. Joseph Sasia, of the Jesuit college in San Francisco, delivered a sermon on education, in which, as a matter of course, he referred to the fact that Catholic schools and churches are taxed, and that the Government does not give Catholic schools a share of the public money, and then said: “We earnestly believe that, by the blessing of Providence, our grievances will be redressed, and our just claims shall justly prevail.” If the obsequiousness with which the Catholic Church is treated by the press, both political and religious, is any just indication, we may well believe that the priest will not have to wait long to see his desire fulfilled. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.5}

In this number of the Sentinel we have shown how the representative California preachers proposed to secure from the Legislature the passage of a “civil” Sunday law. We confess that it does not present them in a very enviable light, but we can’t help that, it is a simple statement of the facts in the case. Yet these men are no worse than the representative ministers in any other State in the Union. We have, for instance, the minutes of the Preachers’ Convention, held for the same purpose precisely, in Elgin, Ill., last November, and they reach their point in the same way. The thing is fast becoming universal, and the methods are all of a piece. The trouble is that in this they are all working for legislation upon a matter that is wholly religious, and which every argument that they make proves to be wholly religious, while they try to cover it all up with the word “civil;” but the covering is too narrow for them to wrap themselves in it. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.6}

The National Reformers indignantly deny the charge that they are laboring for a union of Church and State, but insist that what they want is a union of Religion and the State. The Rev. Josiah Strong, D.D., General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, and author of the well-known book, “Our Country,” has expressed himself to the same effect. He, with the National Reformers, wants not Church and State, but Religion and State. Says Dr. Strong, “I distinguish, as some apparently do not, between Church and Religion.” {AMS January 1888, p. 8.7}

Now we think we know enough about mathematics to work out so simple a problem as is here presented. The three terms are these, the State, the Church, and Religion. They say that they design to keep Church and State forever separate and distinct, but that Religion and State must be closely united. The result of our calculation is that if they succeed in their design they will necessarily have to divorce the Church and Religion. If this solution is not correct, we should be glad if someone would point out the defect in our calculation. We verily believe that when the National Reformers, and their many friends who do not go by that name, shall have accomplished their purpose, no one of acute perception will have any difficulty in distinguishing between Church and Religion. There may be a form of Religion but the power will have fled forever. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.8}

**“What Does it Mean?” American Sentinel 3, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

What means this almost universal uprising over the question of “How shall our American Christian civil Sunday sabbath be preserved?” Large Conventions of ecclesiastics are held solely to discuss this question. The W.C.T.U. works it up all over the United States. Prohibition Conventions put it in their platforms. The leading preachers and lecturers of the Nation discuss it from pulpit and platform. Legislatures, both State and National, from beginning to end of their sessions, are petitioned for the enactment of stringent laws in its behalf. The religious papers of the country lift up one united cry that it must and shall be preserved. Knights of Labor, and workingmen’s unions, and socialists, call loudly for laws enforcing its observance. Political Conventions are “worked” and Legislatures are “lobbied” in the interests of the Christian Sunday. Saloon-keepers enforce laws for its observance. Only a few years ago there was no sign of any such thing, and even those who now make the most of it, then insisted that it was one of the least of the questions that concerned religion. But now, instead of its being the least and most incidental of the questions of religion, it is by their own confession the greatest and most urgent of all. Now, instead of the question of how to reach the masses with the gospel being the greater, that question must take a back seat, while there comes to the front the universal demand for stringent Sunday laws strictly enforced, that by this means the masses may be reached. Now instead of the questions of infidelity and atheism taking the far greater precedence, it has come to this, that if you don’t favor Sunday laws you are an infidel, and if you oppose them you are an atheist. Now, instead of the questions of infidelity and atheism taking precedence, it has come to pass that the question of the Sunday sabbath is made the test of fidelity and theism. Yet in “demanding” laws to compel everybody to observe the day, and submit to the test, they will gravely argue that the movement is entirely civil, and that there is nothing religious about it. {AMS January 1888, p. 8.9}

What, then, does all this mean? It means that, through this question of compulsory Sunday observance, the civil power is to be subordinated to the ecclesiastical in these United States. We know that this statement will be pooh-poohed by many, and especially by those who are working for it, but in making the statement we but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. This is precisely the way in which the civil power was subordinated to the religious, in the fourth century, out of which came the tyranny of the Papacy; and both time and events will shortly demonstrate that we state the exact truth. Therefore, without hesitation, we lift up our voice against the whole scheme. To laugh at the fears of the Sentinel will not avert the evil. To despise its warnings is only to rivet your own chains. In perfect sincerity the American Sentinel adopts the memorable words, “I am in earnest-I will not equivocate-I will not excuse-I will not retreat a single inch-and *I will be heard*.” {AMS January 1888, p. 8.10}