**“Front Page” American Sentinel 3, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

“And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.” {AMS April 1888, p. 25.1}

The New York *Independent* notes and comments as follows:- {AMS April 1888, p. 25.2}

“‘The present worthless school system,’ is what the *Freeman’s Journal* calls our scheme of public education. If the Roman Catholics insist on destroying this system, they will have to destroy the Nation to succeed.” {AMS April 1888, p. 25.3}

Oh, no, they will not! All they will have to do to succeed is to wait a little while till the National Reform Association shall have gained the sup-port and the influence of a few more Protestant leaders, and then to accept the persistently proffered alliance of the Association, and the work will be done; the system will then soon and easily be destroyed. But then, having succeeded, the Nation will soon be destroyed. The Independent is right as to results; it had only misplaced the items. They will not have to destroy the Nation to succeed in destroying our public-school system. But having succeeded in destroying our public-school system, the destruction of the Nation will soon follow. {AMS April 1888, p. 25.4}

Mr. “Sam” Small has acquired a national reputation, and a very extensive influence, as a religious worker. Against this in itself, or in its legitimate exercise, we have not a word to say. But when he essays to use his influence in the line of things set forth in the following proposition, then we most decidedly object. Says Mr. Small:- {AMS April 1888, p. 25.5}

“I want to see the day come when the church shall be the arbiter of all legislation, State, national, and municipal; when the great churches of the country can come together harmoniously and issue their edict, and the legislative powers will respect it and enact it into laws.” {AMS April 1888, p. 25.6}

And that will be but the Papacy over again. From the way things are now going we have no doubt that Mr. Small as well as the rest of us will see that day come. And when it does come it will be the most woeful day the Nation will have ever seen; and the utter ruin of the whole national fabric will then be but a question of a little while. {AMS April 1888, p. 25.7}

**“National Reform Ideas of Right” American Sentinel 3, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following extract is National Reform doctrine in its purest form, from the pen of one of its best representatives:- {AMS April 1888, p. 28.1}

“A Christian people, adopting and ad-ministering a government that we would call Christian, might legislate about religion as well as about morals or education or temperance. To do so would not unite Church with State. Illustrations will be in place here. A Christian people might enact that any man who would blaspheme or curse God should be punished. If all the people of the United States were Christians, and they should be, they would do right in passing a law, Congressional or State or municipal, that no one, even a foreigner, pagan, or otherwise, should be permitted to erect a pagan temple and set up and worship idols therein. This would be a lawful, civil act, and would not unite Church and State.” {AMS April 1888, p. 28.2}

This is a fair specimen of National Reform logic. Let us analyze it. “If all the people of the United States were Christians,” they would have a right to pass a law prohibiting the erection of pagan temples, and the worshiping of idols. Upon this we would note the following three points: {AMS April 1888, p. 28.3}

1. If all the people of the United States were Christians, such a law would not be necessary, for Christians do not erect heathen temples, nor do they worship idols. If they were all Christians, we cannot see why any such laws could be called for, unless the Christians were of the class who believe that they ought to do a certain thing, but haven’t enough conscience in the matter to do it without being compelled. We have heard people say, “I believe Sunday ought to be kept, and if there was a law compelling everybody to keep it, I would keep it.” Such ones are on a par with those who want a law forbidding Sunday railroad travel, so that they will not be tempted to patronize the railroads on Sunday, or to get up Sunday excursions to camp-meetings. {AMS April 1888, p. 28.4}

2. But we will not find very much fault with our friend’s statement. Although it would seem like a bit of foolishness for a lot of people who are already Christians to get together and pass a law forbidding any one of them to erect a heathen temple, we would have no objection to their amusing themselves in that way if they wanted to. And right here we will say that if the National Reformers will wait until the people of the United States are all Christians, not in name simply, but in fact, before they press their measures, we will join with them. But even in that case we would not admit that they would have any right to say what should be done by those who might not be Christians, or, to prohibit anybody from giving up his Christianity, and adopting any other form of worship. In the case supposed, the people of the country would form one large church, and might, just as any church now may, pass laws regulating their conduct as church-members; and whenever anyone did not wish to abide by those laws, he would simply lose his church member-ship, but not his citizenship. Anything intended to affect those not Christians, and not church-members, would be religious legislation, and would unite Church and State. The facts, in short, are these: Any organization has a right to make laws regulating the actions of members of that society, so long as they remain members, and no longer. The Odd Fellows have rules for their order, which must be observed by everyone who wishes to retain his membership in that order. But if the State should pass a law requiring every citizen to observe those rules, then we would say that Odd Fellowship and State were united. So also with the church. {AMS April 1888, p. 28.5}

3. “If all the people of the United States were Christians, ...they would do right in passing a law, ... that no one...should be permitted to erect a pagan temple, and set up and worship idols therein.” This statement is a virtual ad-mission that they would not do right in passing such a law, if all were not Christians. And that is exactly the case. Nobody has a right to say what, or how, or when, anybody else shall worship. To say that if all the people of the United States were Christians, they would do right in passing a law that not even a pagan should erect a heathen temple, is simply nonsense; for if there were a single pagan here the people would not all be Christians. But we affirm that if all the people of the United States were Christians, with only one exception, they would not have the slightest right to say what that one should or should not worship. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.1}

Here, as before, we wish to emphasize the fact that if all were Christians, they would have a right to pass laws against idolatry, which should affect themselves as Christians, and none others. But they would have no right to say that nobody should come to this country, unless he believed just as they did. Here again is shown the inconsistency of National Reformers. They raise a great hue and cry against the injustice of limiting Chinese immigration, yet they hold to views that would not only exclude the greater portion of foreign immigration, but would expatriate many who are loyal citizens. This is bigotry of the worse kind. It virtually says, “Every thing that we do is right, no matter how wrong it may be in others.” We affirm the absolute right of every man to live wherever he pleases on this earth, and to believe what he pleases. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.2}

But many who would assent to this, might hesitate to say that the Government has no right to prohibit blasphemy. The third commandment is the touch-stone. If civil governments have a right to enforce the moral law, then they must prohibit blasphemy; if they have the right and power to prohibit blasphemy, then they have the right and the power to legislate on any other matters of morality and religion. In short, the whole matter of the right of the State to legislate on matters of religion, must stand or fall with the right to legislate against blasphemy. We think the following propositions will demonstrate that the State has no right to inflict any penalty, for violation of the third commandment. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.3}

If a man has a right, so far as men and human governments are concerned, to worship God according to the dictates of his own con-science, he has an equal right not to worship him at all. That religion is to be a matter of free choice with every individual, is evident from the gospel call, “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” If whosoever will, may come, then whosoever will not, may stay away. Man’s free agency is everywhere recognized in the Bible. To be sure, certain penalties are announced as sure to be visited upon those who do not accept the gospel; but these penalties are visited, not for refusal to accept the gospel, but for the sins which they have committed, from which they would have been freed by accepting the gospel, but which, since they do not come to Christ, remain upon them. The truth is, that every man is just as free to reject the gospel as he is to accept it. So far as men are concerned, he has as much right to believe nothing as he has to believe in God and the Bible. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.4}

2. If no man has a right to compel another to worship God, then men have no right to compel such an one to show reverence for God; for reverence is worship. The man who reverences God, worships him; and the man who does not reverence and worship God, violates the third commandment, even though he does not openly blaspheme. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.5}

1. If it be claimed that refraining from taking God’s name in vain is not an act of worship, and does not indicate reverence for him, then the same thing must be true with reference to heathen gods. And then if the heathen were in a majority in this country, or if we were in a heathen country, they would have a right to compel us to refrain from speaking against their gods. For, {AMS April 1888, p. 29.6}

2. Blasphemy is not simply the use of profane oaths, but speaking against God. Last year a man was convicted of blasphemy, in New Jersey, yet there was no evidence that he had sworn. The only thing for which he was convicted, was for speaking most disrespectfully of God; the Bible, and religion. When our missionaries go to foreign lands, they blaspheme the gods of the heathen. Paul was at Ephesus, he declared that “they be no gods which are made with hands.” Now if the National Reform idea that the majority ought to rule in matters of religion, be true, then Paul ought not to have said anything against those heathen gods. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.7}

1. The ten commandments comprise the sum of all morality. The perfect keeping of them is perfect religion. To conscientiously and truly refrain from taking God’s name in vain; that is, to reverence the name of God, is an act of religion. Therefore, if obedience to the third commandment may be enforced by the State, then the State may enforce religion upon all. The germ of all religious legislation lies in the enactment of laws against blasphemy. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.8}

But it may be said that our God is the true God, and that the Christian religion is the true religion, and that therefore people ought to worship our God, and adhere to our religion; that the gods of the heathen are no gods at all, and that we alone have a right to enforce laws concerning religion. Then we set ourselves up as the only ones who have the right of choice in matters of religion. And then the question might well be asked by the heathen, Who gave you a right to choose your religion and ours too? Have we not equal rights with you? {AMS April 1888, p. 29.9}

Let our National Reform friends turn their whole attention to making men Christians, in accordance with gospel methods. When they have done that, so that this is in fact a Christian Nation, and all the people without exception, are Christians, and of one mind, then it will be time enough to talk about making laws prescribing the forms of religion. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.10}

E.J.W.

**“Mr. Gault Speaks” American Sentinel 3, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the Sentinel of December, 1887, in answer to the Christian Statesman’s inquiry, we wrote this- {AMS April 1888, p. 29.11}

“The Sentinel espouses the Christian theory of government; the theory enunciated by Christ, that men shall render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things which are God’s; the theory that so far as man or civil government is concerned, the heathen, or the infidel, or the atheist, has just as much right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as the Christian has.” {AMS April 1888, p. 29.12}

With this Mr. I.A. Gault makes his voice to clash after this sort:- {AMS April 1888, p. 29.13}

“There are two difficulties about the Sentinel’s theory of government, one is its readers don’t understand it, and the other is it don’t understand itself. If it would only reason a moment it might discover that in our Government Cæsar represents the people, and among the things we must render to Cæsar is one day’s rest in seven, and the security of the family relation, the security of life, liberty and property.” {AMS April 1888, p. 29.14}

The great trouble with Mr. Gault is that he measures other people’s understanding by his own; and because he doesn’t understand a thing, he at once decides that nobody else does. The gentleman greatly mistakes; the readers of the Sentinel do understand it, and the Sentinel thoroughly understands itself. As for Mr. Gault the Sentinel can only repeat to him the answer that Dr. Johnson once gave to one who said that he “didn’t understand:” “I give you reasons, sir; I cannot give you an understanding, sir.” {AMS April 1888, p. 29.15}

Then he informs us that if we should reason a moment we might discover that “among the things we must render to Cæsar is one day’s rest in seven.” Well, let us reason a moment. Christ commanded: “Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” Now how did Cæsar ever come into possession of one day’s rest in seven? The truth is he never came into possession of such a thing at all. The word of God says, “The seventh day is the Sabbath [rest] of the Lord thy God.” The Sabbath is God’s. He called it “My holy day” It is “the Lord’s day.” And the Lord has never resigned to Cæsar the possession of this day. Now as we are to render to Cæsar only that which is Cæsar’s, and as the Sabbath is wholly the Lord’s, therefore there never can be any obligation upon any soul to render to Cæsar any such thing as the Sabbath or one day’s rest in seven. Cæsar has no proprietorship whatever in the Sabbath, and he has no right to any. And whenever he attempts to assert any such thing, he obtrudes himself upon the rights and prerogatives of God; puts himself in the place of God; and demands the obedience which is due to God alone. And that is the principle of all Sabbath laws, and of Sunday laws, enforced by the civil power. And the Sentinel is going to tell the people so. {AMS April 1888, p. 30.1}

**“Back Page” American Sentinel 3, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

In his revival services in Kansas City, last January, “Sam” Jones said one day:- {AMS April 1888, p. 29.1}

“One reason why I favor woman suffrage is because we would have more Christian voters if the women were allowed to vote.” {AMS April 1888, p. 29.2}

True enough, but would we not have more un-Christian voters too? If not, why not? Not all of the women in the United States are Christians, by any means. The truth is, that there are a great many more women in the United States who are not Christians, than there are who are Christians. And although it is true that to give women the ballot, will give more Christian voters, it is equally true that there will be more un-Christian voters also, and in the end the matter would not be helped at all. History does not present women-politicians in any better light then it does men-politicians. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.3}

In a sermon at Kansas City, January 22, “Sam” Small, in speaking of our country said:- {AMS April 1888, p. 29.4}

“From Maine and Massachusetts, to Georgia, all along the coast, the characters of the settlements gave it as one of their objects to glorify God, and forward his kingdom... Then the heresy of hell took hold of a handful of people, and they made a Constitution, and left God entirely out of it.” {AMS April 1888, p. 29.5}

We had thought to make some comments on this, but to brand as “the heresy of hell,” the action of George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and the other noble makers of the United States Constitution, is sufficient of itself to render infamous the whole complaint which the speaker makes against the Constitution. Mr. Small is an evangelist and a great revivalist; now here is a conundrum: If the religion which he inculcates is compatible with such defamation as the above, then how much better off would this Nation be, if such religion should become National? We give it up. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.6}

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Marion County, Missouri, in convention assembled at Palmyra, in that State, “resolved” that,- {AMS April 1888, p. 29.7}

“We believe the very same condemnation and punishment should be visited upon man as upon woman for violation of the moral law.” {AMS April 1888, p. 29.8}

So do we, and more than that, we know that it will be, for the Author of the moral law has said that “there is no respect of persons with God.” What could have led these excellent Christian women to think that the same condemnation and punishment might *not* be visited upon man as upon woman for violation of the moral law, when the word of God is so plain on the subject? {AMS April 1888, p. 29.9}

Do they suppose the Lord is going to prove recreant, and that it is therefore necessary for them to remind him of his duty? We suspect, however, that they have fallen into the dangerous error of believing that it is within the province of civil government to punish violation of the moral law, and they are contemplating the taking of God’s work into their own hands {AMS April 1888, p. 29.10}

In the February Sentinel, it will be remembered that we asked Mr. W.T. McConnell “to show any commandment of God for keeping Sunday.” We do not intend for a moment to convey the idea that we would not be opposed to civil laws enforcing its observance, even though it were commanded by the law of God. This was simply an *argumentum ad hominem*. We would be just as much opposed to civil laws enforcing the observance of Sunday, or any other day, even though it were commanded by the law of God, as we are as it is. Our opposition to Sunday laws is from principle and not from partisanship. The principle is that the civil power has no right to enforce the observance of any religious institution, of any kind whatever; nor to enforce any duty as a commandment of God. Yet, as against this principle, the Sunday institution is doubly weak: First it is wholly an ecclesiastical institution, and secondly, there is no commandment of God for it. And as the National Reformers propose to enforce the keeping of Sunday as a commandment of God, of course it is perfectly in order for us to call for the commandment, while at the same time we would oppose civil laws enforcing it, even though there were a commandment of God for it. {AMS April 1888, p. 29.11}

**“Not a Christian Nation” American Sentinel 3, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

It would be difficult to use language in a looser way than by calling this “a Christian Nation.” In all the Nation there is not a single town, nor a village even, in which the people are all Christians. A single family in which all are Christians is seldom found; and individual Christians are not abundant, We do not say these things to find fault; we are simply stating the facts in the case, as every person knows who looks at things as they are. Let any person anywhere in the land honestly ask himself the question, and honestly answer it, How many of my immediate neighbors and acquaintances actually show in the works of a godly life that they are real, consistent Christians? In the face of facts as they are, the answer only can be, Very few. How many are really separate from the world, and conformed to the will of Christ? {AMS April 1888, p. 32.1}

Take even the churches themselves, and everybody knows, and the churches themselves confess, that many of their members will not bear the test of the precepts of Christ. Many, of them love the opera or the circus more than they love the prayer-meetings; and the excursion more than the services of the church; and the newspaper more than the sermon; and pleasure more than God; and the world more than Christ. Then, while it is thus with the church, where is the sense of calling the Nation, Christian? and while the church is so nearly half full of worldlings, what is the use of talking about this being a Christian Nation? The trouble is that they put upon the term “Christian” a construction so loose that there is scarcely any discernible distinction between many of those who bear it and those who don’t, and then spread the term over the whole mass, and thus they have a “Christian” Nation. But so long as the term “Christian” means what the word of God means-so long as it means strict conformity to the precepts of Christ-just so long it will be that this is not, and cannot be, a Christian Nation, except by each individual’s becoming a Christian by an abiding, working faith in Christ. {AMS April 1888, p. 32.2}