**“Civil Sabbath” American Sentinel 3, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Christian Statesman* has sent us a circular giving reasons why that paper is to be commended. One of these reasons is:- {AMS September 1888, p. 66.1}

“Because it advocates a civil as well as a church Sabbath.” {AMS September 1888, p. 66.2}

But there is no such thing as a civil Sabbath. The original, supreme, and only Sabbath law-the fourth commandment-says explicitly of the Sabbath, that it is “the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” It is not the Sabbath of any civil government, it is the Sabbath of the Lord. He calls it, “My holy day.’ Christ has commanded us to render to God that which is God’s, while we render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar’s. The Sabbath being the Lord’s day, it is to be rendered to him and not to Cæsar. Civil government can never of right have anything to do with directing the observance of the Sabbath. Whenever it undertakes to do so, it puts itself in the place of God, and usurps the authority of God, both in such legislation, and by invading the sacred precincts of the conscience. The Lord alone “is the Author and Lord of conscience, and no power on earth has a right to stand between God and the conscience. A violation of this divine law written in the heart is an assault upon the majesty of God and the image of God in man.” {AMS September 1888, p. 66.3}

**“Bad Institutions and Good Men” American Sentinel 3, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

The American Sentinel has often called attention to the rapid spread of National Reform ideas, while the great majority of those who love real liberty seem to be asleep. The National Reform Association itself is a comparatively insignificant affair, and if the issue depended on its efforts alone, there would not be much to fear. Its organs, the *Christian Statesman* and the *Christian Nation*, have long ago ceased to publish distinctively National Reform articles, and seem to exist chiefly in order that the association’s “secretaries,” who sacrifice themselves in the cause of reform for one hundred dollars a month and expenses, may have a place in which to tell of their exploits. But the success of that which is misnamed National Reform does not depend on their efforts. There is just one thing that this so-called National Reform really stands for, and that is the passage and enforcement of strict Sunday laws, and for this many are working who are not known as National Reformers. {AMS September 1888, p. 68.1}

As an example of how the great object of the National Reform Association is gaining ground, take the Blair Sunday Bill. By request of certain influential persons in the church, Senator Blair introduced the bill, and it passed its second reading in the Senate almost before it had been heard of by anybody outside of the “ring” which had started it. Then the Rev. Dr. Crafts devoted his whole attention to it, and has already succeeded in working up large petitions in favor of it. He has got the churches, the Sunday-school Associations, and many trades-unions and Knights of Labor clubs to take hold of the matter, so that when the bill comes to its final passage, the legislators will be confronted with documents setting forth that the people of the country are almost unanimous in desiring the measure. {AMS September 1888, p. 68.2}

But besides all this, there is the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, which is now married, as the *Statesman* claims, to the National Reform Association. A more correct statement would be that the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union has adopted the National Reform Association, and is nursing its principles into stalwart proportions. Whichever way it is put, however, the fact remains that the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, with its vast influence, is wholly committed to the principles of the National Reform Association, and 1892 is set as the date for its triumph. Judging from the vast host of names of men and women both dead and alive that are arrayed in favor of the movement, we cannot see much presumption in the claim that it will succeed in four years. Think of it, you who have recently celebrated another anniversary of our country’s independence, and are swelling with pride at the thought that this is the freest country on earth-only four years to elapse before liberty in this country will be dead! only four years until laws shall be passed which will inaugurate a system of espionage upon those who think differently from the majority, and who have the courage of their convictions, which will be worse than any that ever existed in Russia! Is it a pleasant prospect? If not, what are you going to do about it? Do you say that if it is going to come it will come, and that you will not let it swerve you from the right when it does come? That will not do; for if through your indifference any who might have been warned of the danger, and put on their guard, are taken unawares and overcome by the speciousness or the force of the oppressor, their blood will be upon your head. It is time for somebody to be awake, for there is just before us a struggle between right and wrong such as the world has never yet seen. It will be a struggle between error intrenched in law, and having the cloak of righteousness, and truth under ban of law, and covered with reproach and stigmatized as blasphemy. He who stands firm for truth at that time will need much of the grace of God. There will yet be greater need for the martyr spirit than ever before in the history of the world. {AMS September 1888, p. 68.3}

Right here, however, we are met with the charge of inconsistency. “How can it be possible,” it is asked, “that such evils should result from a movement that is in the hands of so many good people.” Our friends of the opposition tell us that the very arguments which we bring forward to show the strength of the National Reform movement, are strong arguments to show its righteousness. Indeed, it often puzzles many people who are really opposed to the principles of the association, to know how any harm can come from anything which is introduced by the good folks of the churches and the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. We will explain by a brief reference to the history of the past. And we will quote, first, as a text, a passage from the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, of May, 1844, written by Rev. Ralph Emerson, D.D., at that time Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Andover Theological Seminary. It is this:— {AMS September 1888, p. 68.4}

“Few things can be so pernicious to the church as a general belief that no very bad measure was ever introduced by good men or with a great and good purpose. Then will they look at the character of the men, and at the object proposed, instead of scrutinizing the means by which it is to be effected; and the work is done before its character is suspected. Nearly all the bad institutions in the church-Jesuitism among the rest-have been by apparently good men, and for a professedly good purpose.” {AMS September 1888, p. 68.5}

This is a point that is given too little attention. When we portray the essential wickedness of the National Reform movement, we do not impugn the character nor the motives of its abettors. We are convinced that many of them are conscientious men; but we never yet saw a good man who could not make a mistake, nor one whose advocacy of a bad institution could make that institution good. {AMS September 1888, p. 68.6}

We will take, for example, the system of slavery as it existed years ago in this country. That it was a wicked institution few will now have the hardihood to deny. Even the people where it flourished, and who reaped all the benefit that was to be reaped from it, are glad that it is abolished. And yet thousands of good men upheld the institution, and held slaves. It cannot be denied that there were people who held slaves, who were personally as upright, and as conscientious Christians, as any who opposed the institution. It is no doubt true that very many slaves were actually in better circumstances than many colored people are now in a state of freedom. But these are not the things by which we judge slavery. Even if the vast majority of slave-holders had been humane men, that would not have made the system right. The fact is that under that system which was upheld by so many good men, a bad man could expend upon his slaves all the hellish brutality of his nature, and the law would uphold him in it. The principle of the system was, in the first place, opposed to the golden rule, and all the good men in the world could not, by their advocacy of it, make it right. The system must be judged by the injustice which it allowed men to do. {AMS September 1888, p. 68.7}

So must we judge of the National Reform system. When a universal rigid Sunday law is once passed, all the good intentions of the men who are working to secure it, and the humane feelings of the good women of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, cannot prevent the law from being used as an instrument of cruelty upon persons who conscientiously differ with the majority. {AMS September 1888, p. 69.1}

The methods which are used to advance the movement should convince anybody that there is something essentially wrong about it. We have already spoken of the great lists of names which Rev. Mr. Crafts is securing to petitions in favor of the Blair Sunday Bill. But it would take too long, and would involve too much labor, to circulate these petitions throughout all the country, for individual signatures. So a scheme has been devised by which a great deal more influence can be secured for it, with much less trouble. The matter is to be presented, not to individuals, but to churches, and a vote taken on it. If the vote is favorable, as it will usually be, then the entire membership of the church will be counted as favorable. Let us illustrate. Here is a church of five hundred members. At one of its meetings, when there is an average attendance of perhaps three hundred members, a vote is taken on the Sunday bill, and no one votes against it. Then by the vote of less than three hundred people, the influence of five hundred is secured in favor of the bill, although many of the five hundred may be opposed to the bill. Even though a few of the three hundred present vote against the bill, their votes are not counted out, and so opposition is by this legerdemain turned into advocacy. Anything which uses such methods must be inherently wrong. {AMS September 1888, p. 69.2}

Before we close we must refer to a little circumstance that happened years ago, for the express benefit of those who think that no harm can come from a movement that is in the hands of such good women as the leaders of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. Some men named Paul and Barnabas were preaching the doctrines of a sect that was everywhere spoken against. They were doing this, notwithstanding the fact that their preaching had been condemned by the established church, and was utterly out of harmony with the belief of the majority of church members. At Antioch, in Pisidia, they had been so active that “the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region,” much to the disgust of the general public. So the record says:- {AMS September 1888, p. 69.3}

“But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.” Acts 13:50. {AMS September 1888, p. 69.4}

Here is something for our friends to consider. If it had not been for the influence of the “devout and honorable women,” Paul and Barnabas might have continued preaching in Antioch. The heathen did not persecute them, but on the contrary rejoiced to hear the word; it was the good people of the church, “the chief men of the city,” and the “devout and honorable women,”-the eminently respectable and moral people,-that persecuted Paul and Barnabas, and drove them from the country. And who shall say that a similar thing may not happen again? We bring no charges against the worthy women of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. We are willing to grant that they are all “devout and honorable,” but we remember that just such women once persecuted the preachers of the gospel, and were no less “devout and honorable” when they got through than when they begun. When error is upheld by law, then the law-abiding people must prosecute those who stand for truth and against error; and in such a case prosecution becomes persecution. {AMS September 1888, p. 69.5}

E.J.W.

**“Back Page” American Sentinel 3, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

Doctor Crafts reports that between three and four million names have already been secured to the petitions in behalf of the National Sunday law. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.1}

The names of seventeen hundred new sub-scribers have been added to the Sentinel list within the last thirty days. The reason of existence of the Sentinel is becoming every day more and more a living issue, and we are glad to know that the Sentinel grows in favor with the people accordingly. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.2}

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the Prohibition party have become so entirely National Reform organizations that the regular National Reform organizers have ceased to organize local National Reform clubs as such, but work through these to spread the National Reform ideas. So says District Secretary M.A. Gault in the American, June 27, 1888. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.3}

Thousands of people are signing petitions for the National Sunday law, without a thought of harm to themselves or anybody else. Yet only harm to thousands of people can ever come from the enactment of such a law. Many of those who are signing the petitions would not do so if they knew the danger that there is in the enactment of the law. The Sentinel clearly points out the danger. Therefore the Sentinel should be placed in the hands of every person in the land. Are you doing your part to see that this shall be done {AMS September 1888, p. 72.4}

The *Christian at Work* says:- {AMS September 1888, p. 72.5}

“The Spanish Constitution guarantees equal religious liberty to all. But that did not prevent two Protestant citizens of Madrid from being arrested, tried, and condemned, the other day, to six months’ imprisonment for refusing to kneel before the Viaticum. We do not know if the offenders were Englishmen or Americans, or of what nationality-perhaps they were Spaniards. But some action should be taken that will secure to Protestants in Spain their just constitutional rights. They must spell liberty in a queer way in the Andalusian country.” {AMS September 1888, p. 72.6}

Oh, no, they don’t! They spell it just as it is spelled in New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, and just as they are fast learning to spell it all over this country. Spain has a national religion; it is Catholicism; and refusing to kneel before the Viaticum “disturbs” the devotees of the national religion. Such “disturbance” must not be allowed, hence these prosecutions; precisely as the New York law punishes those who “disturb” the Sunday worshipers by working on Sunday, and as Senator Blair’s proposed Sunday law will punish men all over the country. The American method of spelling liberty has descended almost to a level with the Andalusian. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.7}

Communications have been addressed to the Sentinel asking its influence in favor of a certain party or candidate. We have but one reply that we can make to all communications of this kind, viz.: The Sentinel cannot lend its influence to any party or candidate as such. The Sentinel is not in politics in that sense. It is not partisan in any sense. The Sentinel is devoted to the defense of the National Constitution as it is, so far as religion is concerned; and in this is devoted to the defense of the civil and religious rights and liberties of every person in the nation, regardless of party or creed. And now that the National Constitution is attacked at this very point, and by a United States Senator at that, this question ought to take precedence of every other in National affairs. With the Sentinel this question does take precedence of everything else, therefore the Sentinel cannot be partisan in any sense. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.8}

The latter part of July, “Sam” Jones, the great revivalist, preached in Windsor, Canada, to an audience composed mostly of Americans, who went over there to hear him. One of his devout, elegantly refined, and intensely instructive passages was this:- {AMS September 1888, p. 72.9}

“Now I’ll tell you, I think we are running the last political combat on the lines we have been running them on. It is between the Republicans And Democrats, this contest, and it is the last the Republicans will make in America. The Democrats are going in overwhelmingly. Four years from now the Prohibition element will break the solid South. The issue then will be God or no God, drunkenness or sobriety, Sabbath or no Sabbath, Heaven or hell. That will be the issue. Then we will wipe up the ground with the Democratic party, and let God rule America from that time on.” {AMS September 1888, p. 72.10}

And this the Christian Statesman inserts under the heading, “The National Reform Movement!” It is very appropriately placed. It is a worthy addition to the literature of the National Reform movement. But what consummate mountebanks many of those popular “revivalists” do make of themselves! {AMS September 1888, p. 72.11}

In the *Christian Statesman* of August 9, Rev. R. C. Wylie praises Senator Blair’s proposed constitutional amendment, because it would, if adopted, give the National Reformers many ad-vantages which they have not now. He says:- {AMS September 1888, p. 72.12}

“We would then have a vantage-ground we have not now. The leading objection that has been urged against us will have lost its power. That objection, which has such a tender regard for the infidel conscience, will have spent its force against this amendment, and will be no more fit for use against us.” {AMS September 1888, p. 72.13}

That is to say: The charge of invading the rights of conscience has, so far, lain against the National Reformers; but now, if this amendment is carried, this charge will lie against the amendment, and will spend itself there, while the National Reformers escape. This charge is justly made against the National Reformers; for they distinctly affirm that the civil power has the right to compel the consciences of men. And the admission that if the amendment were adopted the charge would then lie against that, is a confession that the proposed amendment, if adopted, will invade the rights of conscience. And that is the truth. It will surely do so. If it would not, it would not be so heartily indorsed by the National Reformers. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.14}

Rev. R. C. Wylie says the National Reformers should advocate Senator Blair’s religious amendment to the Constitution,- {AMS September 1888, p. 72.15}

“Because of the aid it will give us in discussing National Reform principles. Some of these are clearly embodied in the amendment. Senator Blair’s amendment marks an epoch in our history... The pulpit and the platform should herald the truths it teaches, from ocean to ocean.” {AMS September 1888, p. 72.16}

Yes, the amendment will not only aid in discussing National Reform principles, it will also, if adopted, most materially aid the National Reformers in carrying those principles into practice by the civil power, and in satisfying their in-tense longing to tolerate dissenters as lunatics and conspirators are tolerated. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.17}

As was to be expected, the National Reformers are delighted with Senator Blair’s religious amendment to the Constitution. It is in substance just what they have been working for all these years. The *Christian Statesman* of July 12 says the amendment “should receive the strenuous support of all American Christians.” In its issue of July 19 the *Statesman* says:- {AMS September 1888, p. 72.18}

“Senator Blair’s proposed constitutional amendment furnishes an admirable opportunity for making the ideas of the National Reform Association familiar to the mind of the people.” {AMS September 1888, p. 72.19}

Then, after mentioning “Christianity, the religion of the Nation,” and “The Bible, the textbook of our common Christianity, in all the schools,” it says:- {AMS September 1888, p. 72.20}

“These have been our watch-words in the discussions of a quarter of a century. And now these ideas are actually pending before the Senate of the United States in the form of a joint resolution proposing their adoption as a part of the Constitution of the United States. Here is a great opportunity. Shall we boldly and wisely improve it?” {AMS September 1888, p. 72.21}

We are afraid that the iniquitous scheme will actually carry. {AMS September 1888, p. 72.22}