**“Opposed to the Gospel” American Sentinel 8, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

When there is legislation in regard to matters of religion, there must of necessity be the use of force, for a law without a penalty is no law at all. Now, legislation upon matters of religion is sinful, not only because force is utterly foreign to the spirit of the Gospel, but because it tends directly to lower the standard of religion. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.1}

Thus: When men are brought to think that the State has a right to legislate upon matters of religion, to enforce its observance, and to punish for acts of disobedience, then religion is brought down to a merely human level. The State then teaches that there is nothing more to religion than it can enforce. But it cannot read a man’s heart, and therefore the idea is spread that religion consists merely in a outward forms. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23. Now there is no power either on earth or in heaven that can compel a man to believe. Faith works by love; but that which is of force is not of love; therefore that which is not of love is sin. And therefore that service which is forced is sin. So then, when Government enacts and enforces laws pertaining to matters of religion it is simply using its power to compel people to sin. Religious legislation is therefore directly opposed to the gospel. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.2}

The Apostle Paul writes of those in the last days who have “a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:5. The gospel is the power of God. But when professed Christians appeal to the Government to enforce certain things that are wholly religious; when ministers plead for Sunday laws, so that they can have “fair play one day in the week,” they thereby admit that the Gospel which they preach has not the power of God. The form is there, but by their appeal to human power they deny the power of God; for no one who is conscious of the power of God to back his message, and who knows in his own person what that power is, would insult God by asking for human power to supplement the power of God. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.3}

Again: we have read that there is one lawgiver and one judge, namely, God, and that whosoever judges another is really sitting in judgment on the law, and judging the law. But religious legislation calls for human judgment upon law of God. For men to incorporate the laws of God in the human codes, is to usurp the place of God as lawgiver, and therefore His place as judge. But this is the characteristic of “the man of sin.” It is the acme of apostasy, for the apostle said that the apostasy that was working in his day would culminate in the man of sin, “the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4, 5. This man of sin is the same as the “little horn” of the fourth beast of Daniel’s prophecy, which is thus described: “And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Daniel 7:25. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.4}

The Roman Catholic Church is the result of the attempt to build up Christianity by means of the State. Religious legislation asked for and received by the church, made the Papacy. Therefore whenever any man, professed Protestants though they be, ask for legislation in behalf of religion, no matter to what degree, they are simply following the steps of the Papacy. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.5}

Nay, they are doing more than simply following in the steps of the Papacy; they are joining it, and becoming a part of it; because religious legislation is the very essence of the Papacy. And this is still further emphasized by the fact that it was legislation upon the Sunday that made the Roman Catholic Church. It is that which is the Catholic Church’s boast, and showing its power. In “Plain Talk about the Protestantism of To-day,” from the French of Mgr. Segur, we find the following:— {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.6}

“It is worth its while to remember that this observance of the *Sabbath,*—in which, after all, the only Protestant *worship* consists—not only has no foundation in the Bible, but it is in flagrant contradiction with its letter, which commands rest on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to the Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants, is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves to the authority of the church.” {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.7}

Any amount of history might be quoted, if we had space, to show that the adoption of Sunday instead of the seventh day, as the Sabbath is the distinguishing mark of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore when professed Protestants not only follow the practice personally, but fall into line and enforce its observance by law, they are identifying themselves with the Papacy. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.8}

And now read the warning against doing such a thing, and against in any way recognizing such laws when they are made. He who will read the whole of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation will see that it deals with the time reaching down to the coming of the Lord. It presents the last proclamation of the Gospel, in these words:— {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.9}

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” Revelation 14:6-12. {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.10}

This warning against the worship of the beast, or of his image, which is the union of any professed Protestants with the civil power, is the proclamation of the gospel, because as we have shown, religious legislation is the deadly enemy of the gospel. It is the denial of Christ as the power of God. It is the denial of God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and as the Creator, by that same power, of men in Christ to do His will. Therefore wherever there is any movement towards getting the State to help the church along in its work, the voices of all who would have the gospel of Christ preserved in its purity must be raised in protest and warning. This is the message for these days. It is to present Christ as the power of God, and the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ as the only righteousness which will cover men from the wrath of God. Who will heed it, and say, “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” {AMS April 13, 1893, p. 117.11}

E. J. WAGGONER.