**“Religious Coercion is Antichristian” American Sentinel 12, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

**“Present Truth.” (London, Eng.)**

Why is it that those who have passed under the name of Christian, and whom the world at large accounts as representative of Christianity, have, so universally, sought temporal power? {AMS March 4, 1897, p. 139.1}

He who is really Christian follows in the footsteps of Christ, does he not? But Christ avoided even the slightest assumption of temporal authority. He even refuse to be an arbitrator in a simple dispute as to the division of property, saying to the one who sought his intervention, “Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?” {AMS March 4, 1897, p. 139.2}

The persistent and fatal error with which so many of His personal followers were possessed was that He was about to set up an earthly kingdom. But Christ combated this error continually, taking every occasion of reproving them for their worldly ambitions, and of setting before them the contrast between the futility of all earthly things and the eternal stability of the mansions of that kingdom eternal in the heavens, which He went to prepare. {AMS March 4, 1897, p. 139.3}

The follower of Christ must follow Him in truth, or else he is not a disciple and a follower, but a pretender and a traitor. Christ sought no temporal authority over men. He strenuously referred even the smallest opportunity for the exercise of such power. Is it then consistent with the life and example of the Master, for those who claim to be His disciples, to seek to dominate over their fellow-men? {AMS March 4, 1897, p. 139.4}

If the example of Christ is followed, those who carry His Gospel will use no authority in religious things, other than the persuasion of the Word. Christ judges no man. He Himself said so. He permits all men to judge themselves, to choose that which they will, whether it be life or death. This being so, it is impossible for men who claim to speak for Christ, and exercise authority from Him, to coerce men into accepting and receiving eternal life. Spiritual coercion is futile. It even goes beyond futility, it defeats itself, and becomes an active agent in the opposite direction to that in which it purports to work. {AMS March 4, 1897, p. 139.5}

The fact that this is so marks the origin of this great deception, and its masterly development to the present hour, as coming from the arch-enemy of God and mankind. When the teachings of the Word of God, and the example of Christ, are so plain, and the evidences of the destructive working of Satan’s deceptions so evidently seen, it is indeed a “mystery of iniquity” that man should choose the antichristian way and call it Christian. {AMS March 4, 1897, p. 139.6}

**“Politics and Religion” American Sentinel 12, 11.**

E. J. Waggoner

**“Present Truth.” (London, England.)**

Why is it that this society which considers itself cultivated two tabooed subjects are “religion” and “politics?” No doubt because so many people, who are admitted even to the best society, are unable to control their tempers, or speak with calmness and moderation respecting subjects in which their personal interests are involved, or concerning which their personal prejudices are crossed. In discussing politics it certainly is quite natural that there should be heat and rancour. Here individual prejudices are likely to hold sway and to govern more or less the language and demeanour of those who indulge in political conversation. But in the realm of true religion, the religion of Jesus Christ, prejudice has no place. {AMS March 18, 1897, p. 172.1}

There must be, it is true, assured and fixed conviction. But that is quite a different thing from prejudice. Conviction is indeed the natural foe and conqueror of prejudice. Two persons whose hearts are filled with the conviction of the eternal truths of true religion pure and undefiled, may talk together of the hope that is in them with joy and delight. Nothing in word, or act, or look, would pass between them which could mar the amenities of any social gathering. In their hearts prejudices do not exist,-they have been driven out by the conviction and acceptance of religious truth. {AMS March 18, 1897, p. 172.2}

Politics cannot exist without prejudice. Indeed it is nothing else than the personal and individual interests, desires, and feelings, of different men and bodies of men, countries and sections of countries, brought into activity and antagonism. It is unavoidable that the partisanship here should be intense. But in the realm of true religion there is no room for partisanship, there can be no selfish interests or desires. Politics, it is evident, cannot be otherwise than disturbing in its tendency, it is inevitable from its very nature. But the very contrary is the fact in the case of true religion from *its* very nature. {AMS March 18, 1897, p. 172.3}

What then is the trouble? Why should these two things, direct opposites-the one which makes the most for war, and the one which makes the most for peace-be classed together as the two greatest elements of disturbance, and equally denied admittance to the drawing room? The one, it is true, contains every uncomfortable and disagreeable possibility, but the other contains none. The reason of this strange and ill-assorted companionship in exile is that true religion is utterly misapprehended. That which is thought to be religion, and discussed as religion, is not the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but the visionary politics of an unknown future. {AMS March 18, 1897, p. 173.1}