**“Disestablishment vs. Religious Liberty” The Signs of the Times, 17, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

The sentiments uttered by the speakers at a recent annual meeting of the English “Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control” are very suggestive as showing that it is not necessary to have what is technically known as an “established church” in order to have all the pernicious effects of religious legislation. They demonstrate, also, the fact that very many who seem to be zealous workers for religious liberty, do not have any just conception of what religious liberty really is. The meeting in question was presided over by Sir George O. Trevelyan, M.P., who, in his opening speech, which was the principal one of the evening, spoke as follows:— {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.37}

“Addressing himself to those who held aloof from the work of the society because from a religious movement it had not become a political one, he said that the very words of the charge answered themselves. It did not require that a man should be a very deep Greek scholar in order to know that the meaning of the word ‘political’ was ‘that which concerns the State.’ Their object was to separate the Church from the State, and if that was not a political movement, he did not know what was, and he should specially like to put the question to those who appeared to think that religious equality was to come down like manna from heaven, and that it was not now as ever to be won by human effort, human courage, and human self-sacrifice. [Cheers.] Now, as ever, the motive power of their cause was religious, but their weapons were human, and as long as those weapons were honorably, safely, and valiantly used, they were not ashamed to look in the face anyone who told them that they ought not to bring their cause into the arena of politics. In a free country no cause was ever successful until it became political. [Cheers.] {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.38}

“But it was not only a question of taking the aggressive in politics; it was likewise a plain question of self-defense. There were in that hall, he supposed, a good many ministers of religion, and tomorrow certain newspapers would taunt them with being partisans and politicians, and yet those very newspapers would tell them that if they only maintained the church in Wales for another generation they would kill out dissent in the Principality. [Laughter.] The Nonconformist ministers of religion were warriors, and why should they not be when they were fighting for the life of churches whose life was as dear to them as their own? All the religious endowments of the country, all the prestige of State connection, not in Wales only, was conferred on one religious body in order that it should be able to extinguish all the others; and as long as that was the case, then, not in Wales only, but elsewhere, political action on the part of churches that were threatened became not only a necessity and an obligation, but absolutely a religious duty. [Cheers.]” {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.39}

The above is taken from the report in the London *Daily News*, and, while not *verbatim*, is a correct summary of a portion of the honorable gentleman’s speech. Before making any comments, it may be well to have before us a statement made at the same meeting by Sir Wilfrid Lawson: “It is said that ministers of religion should not be political, but it might just as well be said that politicians should not be religious. For his part he regarded a man who had no politics as a human cabbage or an idiotic oyster.” {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.40}

In all this we see a failure to distinguish between things that differ.While as long as society exists there must be force for its legislation, and consequently must be politics (in the best sense of the word), it does not follow that politics and religion must have any connection. Politics concerns the entire body of citizens, as a body, while religion is solely a matter between an individual and God. But when men fail to distinguish between things that differ, it soon results in there being no difference between those things; and so the result of such movements as the one under consideration is to make religion and politics identical. Thus the separation of Church and State, when gained, will be a separation only in name. {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.41}

One of the most celebrated of England’s poets wrote:— {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.42}

*“How small of all that human hearts endure.  
That part which laws of kings can cause or cure.” {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.43}*

But men, and women too, nowadays seem to think that legal enactment is a panacea for all the ills that human flesh and human souls are heir to. If they could but come to know practically the religion of Jesus Christ, they would know that true and perfect freedom is obtained in it alone, and that the freedom which it bestows may be enjoyed in the most autocratic government as well as in the freest democracy. The apostle Paul rejoiced in true religious freedom while he was held a prisoner in chains by the despotic Nero. On the other hand, the “Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control” will, if successful, make religious liberty in England a much rarer thing than it now is. {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.44}

One not acquainted with the situation would naturally think that the disestablishment of the Church in England would be a long step in the direction of religious liberty; but from the extracts quoted above it can readily be seen that the society which is working for the establishment in England is almost identical with what is known as the National Reform Association in America. The Society in England is dissatisfied because one church has the monopoly of State emoluments; its members are not opposed to church members and ministers engaging in politics in behalf of (a form of) religion, but they want that all the churches should have an equal chance. Likewise, the National Reform Association is opposed to the idea of one church or sect being singled out as the recipient of special favors by the government, but is most heartily in accord with religious legislation in favor of all religious bodies as a confederated whole. {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.45}

A religio-political movement may be intensely religious, but it can never be godly or Christlike. Sir George Trevelyan said that “their cause was religious, but their weapons were human.” But with human weapons only human results can be obtained; consequently the “religious liberty” resulting from the success of such a movement can be nothing else than liberty as regards a *human* religion. But a human religion is of no use whatever so far as salvation is concerned, and salvation is supposed to be the ultimate object of religion, although it is too often lost sight of. In contrast with the words of Mr. Trevelyan are the words of Paul.” “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [human], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.46}

The lesson that we commend to the thoughtful reader is to learn to distinguish between true and false movements in behalf of religious liberty. The term “religious liberty” is getting to be popular, and we need to be on our guard lest we be carried away with some movement having that as its watchword, while it is actually, though unconsciously, not only tending toward, but is really in itself, religious bondage. We must remember that true religion does not confine itself to church and society lines, but is an individual affair. Human nature averages the same in all parts of the world, and in all societies; in every established church there are many who are advocates and actual possessors of real religious liberty, while dissenting bodies, as bodies, are very far from being acquainted with the real meaning of the term. {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.47}

From the prophecies we are sure that religious despotism and religious persecution will prevail in all the world before the end comes; but that can only be when a vast majority of the people assent to such a condition; and that majority will be made up from all classes and all denominations. Majorities, as well as minorities, are always composed to individuals, and they take the color of the sentiments of the individuals composing them; therefore religious despotism can be prevalent only when the majority of people are ignorant of true religious freedom, and have a religious despotism in their own hearts. As in days past, relentless and bloody persecution was carried on in the name of Christianity, so in the tine to come, religious liberty-which is but another name for pure Christianity-will be the rallying cry of the men who will enact and enforce the most intolerant laws. {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.48}

Let us remember that the only religious liberty is “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” and that this is obtained, not by human weapons, but by the weapons which the Holy Spirit furnishes, and which it alone can wield. It is not the possession of any society of men, as a society, whether that society be religious or political, or not, neither is wholly an affair of the individual heart, and can be properly advocated only by those whom the Son has made free. It can no more be gained by political action than can love be gained by personal violence. All such action is death to that which it vainly thinks to gain. Jerusalem which is above is alone free, and the kingdom of which it is the capital is not of this world; hence, its children cannot fight with human weapons of any sort. May the readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES be so thoroughly acquainted with Christ and the freedom which he alone can give, that they will not be deceived by vain movements for religious liberty. E. J. W. {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.49}

*Hamburg, Germany, June 2, 1891.* {SITI July 6, 1891, p. 171.50}

**“What the Gospel Teaches” The Signs of the Times, 17, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

“And he said unto him, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:15, 16. These words were plainly spoken by our Saviour, after his resurrection, and shortly before his ascension. They are perfectly in harmony with his words recorded in Matthew 24:14, that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” There is no mistaking the extent of territory in which the gospel must be preached-nothing less than the whole world. And how long must it be preached? Read the whole of Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Then the gospel is to be preached until the end. The end here referred to is the same that is mentioned in verse 3, “The end of the world.” That this “end of the world” is in connection with the coming of the Lord is shown by the words of the disciples in the verse last mentioned, and by the words of Christ in Matthew 13:40-43; 24:30, 31. {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.51}

The fact that, by divine command, the gospel is to be preached in all the world until the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, proves conclusively that until the Lord comes, a necessity for its being preached will exist in all the world. This needs no further argument, for it is nowhere disputed. We will, therefore, turn our attention to a consideration of what the gospel is, and what creates the necessity for its being so long and so extensively preached. {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.52}

The word “gospel” means, literally, “a good message;” Webster’s first definition is “glad tidings.” According to its derivation, it might be applied to any good news; but in the Bible it is used with exclusive reference to one thing; what that thing is we may easily learn from the Bible itself. {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.53}

In Luke 2:10 we find these words, addressed by the angel of the Lord to the shepherds in the field: “Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings [a gospel] of great joy, which shall be to all people.” The next verse tells what this gospel is: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Then the gospel which is to be preached to all people is the announcement of a Saviour. It is from this that Webster derives his specific definition of the gospel as, “especially, the good news concerning Christ and his salvation.” {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.54}

But the simple heralding of Christ, without stating the nature and object of his work, would not be the preaching of the gospel. The “good news” consists in the fact that Christ the Lord is a *Saviour*. That Christ comes as a Saviour necessarily implies that there are people to be saved. Turning to Matthew 1:21, we read the angel’s declaration before the birth of Christ, “And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.” Paul says (1 Timothy 1:15), “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” So it is manifest that the preaching of the gospel consists in the announcement that Christ will save people from sin. {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.55}

But while the gospel is the good news that Christ brings salvation from sin, it is evident that that simple announcement would not suffice to produce the desired results, viz., that men should believe and be baptized. For there are millions of people who virtually say that they are “rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” not knowing that they are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” No matter how destitute a man may be, it would be of no use to offer him money if he were ignorant of his necessities, and perfectly satisfied with his condition. So no man can feel any interest in the gospel as a means of salvation from sin, unless he (1) knows what sin is, and (2) is convinced that he is a sinner, and (3) understands the nature and results of sin so as to realize that it is something to be shunned. Therefore the gospel, with its announcement of salvation from sin, must also make known what sin is. This it does, as we shall see. {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.56}

John the evangelist, so called because it is he who more than anyone else dwells on the love of God and Christ in the salvation of man, defines sin. He says, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for *sin is the transgression of the law*.” 1 John 3:4. In harmony with this, Paul says that “where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15. And “sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Romans 5:13. Volumes could not define sin more clearly than do these three texts. We have found out, then, (1) that “gospel” means good news; (2) that the gospel of the Bible is the good news of a Saviour-Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10, 11); (3) that Jesus saves from sin (Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15); and (4) that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.57}

So that, in short, the gospel announces the way by which man may be saved from the transgression of the law, and from the consequences of such transgression. Sin is the disease; the gospel is the remedy. And since the gospel is to be preached in all the world, until the coming of the Lord, it follows that “all the world,” yea, “every creature,” has sinned. This we read in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.58}

It must also be true that sin will be in the world till the Lord comes. And this we verify by a comparison of Genesis 6:5 and 13:13 with Luke 17:26-30. But since sin is the transgression of the law, it also necessarily follows that “the law” will be in full force in all the world until the coming of the Lord. In other words, Sin is the disease, and it cannot exist where there is no law. Romans 4:15. The disease, sin, does exist in “every creature” in “all the world;” for the remedy, the gospel, is to be thus extensively made known, and the Great Physician would not send the remedy where it is not needed. “They that be whole need not a physician; but they that are sick” (Matthew 9:12); and therefore the law, by which alone “is the knowledge of sin”—the disease—is binding upon “every creature” “in all the world.” Now since “the wages of sin”—the transgression of the law—“is death” (Romans 6:23), it is important that all men know just what that law is the transgression of which brings death, and just what its nature and requirements. These points will, therefore, next claim our attention. E. J. W. {SITI July 20, 1891, p. 171.59}

**“The Law and the Gospel Co-extensive” The Signs of the Times, 17, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

In Nehemiah 9:13 we find the following words in the Levites’ confession to God: “Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai; and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments.” Here we have reference made to true laws and good statutes. A good and true law would in every case condemn sin; therefore the law here referred to is of the same character as that which, being transgressed, makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached. This law was given upon Mount Sinai; so we examine the law there given to see if it meets the requirements. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.60}

In the nineteenth chapter of Exodus we have a description of the preparation of the people to hear the law from Sinai. We read:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.61}

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.” Exodus 19:10, 11. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.62}

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” Exodus 19:16-18. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.63}

This was the condition of Mount Sinai when from it God spoke “true laws, good statutes and commandments.” Chapter 20, verses 3 to 17, contains the words which God spoke at that time. We quote them in full:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.64}

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.65}

2. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.66}

3. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.67}

4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.68}

5. “Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.69}

6. “Thou shalt not kill. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.70}

7. “Thou shalt not commit adultery. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.71}

8. “Thou shalt not steal. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.72}

9. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.73}

10. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbors.” {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.74}

These are the words which the Lord spoke in the hearing of all the people, from the midst of the fire and smoke upon Mount Sinai. Soon afterward he spoke to Moses, as follows:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.75}

“Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” Exodus 24:12. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.76}

Accordingly, we find by reading the remaining verses of the chapter, that Moses went up into the mount, and remained there with God forty days and forty nights. While he was there, the Lord gave him minute directions concerning the building of the sanctuary. Then we read:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.77}

“And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” Exodus 31:18. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.78}

“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand; the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” Exodus 32:15, 16. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.79}

Then we are told how Moses, as he drew near the camp, saw the golden calf, and the people dancing around it, “and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath [at the foot of] the mount.” But this was not the end of the matter; for very soon we read thus:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.80}

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.” Exodus 34:1. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 171.81}

We will now read the words of Moses, as he rehearses the whole matter to the Israelites, just before his death. We begin with the point last quoted:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.1}

“At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly: and the Lord gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.” Deuteronomy 10:1-5. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.2}

One more quotation on this point. In the course of Moses’ final address to the people, in which he rehearsed all their history in the wilderness, he repeated the substance of the ten commandments, and at the close he said:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.3}

“These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.” Deuteronomy 5:22. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.4}

The gist of these texts of Scripture may be expressed as follows: The good and true laws which were spoken upon Sinai (Nehemiah 9:13) were the ten commandments, found in Exodus 20:3-17; these ten commandments were written by God himself on two tables of stone; and there was nothing spoken to the people by the Lord, except that which was placed upon the tables of stone (Deuteronomy 5:22). Therefore the words found in Exodus 20:3-17, and no others, form the ten commandments, the perfect law of God. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.5}

But what has this to do with the gospel? Just this: We found that the gospel is the remedy for sin, which is the transgression of the law; and that the law must be in force as long and as extensively as the gospel is preached. We were concerned to know what law it is the transgression of which makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached, and we have now found it. One more step completes the identification. It is this:— {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.6}

Paul says (Romans 7:7): “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not know sin, but by the law; for I had not know lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” The law here referred to must be the same law that is referred to in John 3:4, because it is one that points out sin; it does this because it is “holy, and just, and good.” Therefore it is the law to which the gospel relates. And what law is it?—It is the law which condemns unlawful desire by saying, “Thou shalt not covet.” But this is the last one of the ten commandments. Therefore we have proved to a demonstration that the ten commandments of Exodus 20:3-17,—those commandments which were spoken by Jehovah, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the smoke, and of the thick darkness, and which were written on two tables of stone and deposited in the ark,—form the law which points out sin. They are the law which has been universally trodden underfoot, making it necessary that the gospel should be preached in all the world, to every creature; and, therefore, it is as plain as the Scripture can make it, that they are still binding upon every creature in every part of the world. If it were otherwise, there would be no sin, and, consequently, no need of the gospel. Whoever, therefore, says that he is not under the jurisdiction of those ten commandments, virtually says that he has no sin; and whoever says that he has no sin, places himself outside of the gospel plan; for “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and no others. His salvation has reference only to those who have transgressed the law of God, the ten commandments. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.7}

The above argument is, we think, so conclusive as to make it almost unnecessary to notice the assumption that the gospel of Christ is that which points out sin. If this were true, we should have Christ introducing the gospel into the world in order to save men from the rejection of it! That is, the remedy for the disease creates the disease, the remedy being introduced to cure that which without it would never have existed! Such an absurdity is too puerile to be entertained for a moment. The gospel must relate to something outside of and prior to itself. Since the gospel saves from sin, it is evident that sin existed before the gospel, and that it continues to exist so long as the gospel exists; and since sin is the transgression of the law, it is just as evident that the law existed before there was sin, and, consequently, before there was any gospel, or any need of it, and that it exists as long, at least, as the gospel exists. E. J. W. {SITI July 27, 1891, p. 235.8}