

# **NATIONAL REFORM IS CHURCH AND STATE**

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by A.T. Jones

From a somewhat long and careful study we are fully persuaded that the National Reform movement bears in itself the "promise and potency" of a union of Church and State. And we are fully convinced that if that movement shall succeed there will be seen in the United States a veritable union of Church and State, with the train of evils that inevitably follows such an illicit connection.

It is true that in their conventions the National Reformers have by resolution affirmed and "re-affirmed" that in the Religious Amendment to the National Constitution, which they propose, there is no tendency to a union of Church and State. For instance, in the Cleveland National Convention the following resolution was adopted:--

"Resolved, That we re-affirm that this Religious Amendment, instead of infringing on any individual's right of conscience, or tending in the least degree to a union of Church and State, will afford the fullest security against a corrupting church establishment, and form the strongest safeguard of both the civil and religious liberties of all citizens."

This, however, has no weight against the fact that there is in it a tendency to a union of Church and State, because their actions, their

speeches, and their writings, all contradict the resolution, and betray the very tendency which the resolution denies. That such is the case, and that the direct tendency of the National Reform movement is to unite Church and State in the United States, we propose to prove.

Mr. W. J. Coleman, a "district secretary" and one of the chief speakers of the National Reform Convention, in explaining to "Truth Seeker" the change that will have to be made in the existing Constitution when the proposed Amendment shall have been adopted, says:--

"The first sentence of Article I of Amendments reads, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' This would be made consistent with the proposed Amendment by substituting the words 'a church' for 'religion,' making it read, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of a church.' This is what the Reform Association believes should be the rule in a rightly constituted State. There should be religion but no church."--Christian Statesman, November 1, 1886.

"There should be religion but no church." What religion should there be? The Christian religion, to be sure. No idea of any other is for a moment entertained by the National Reform party. But the Christian religion is embodied in the Christian church. Apart from the Christian church there is no Christian religion in this world. Christ did not say, On this rock will I build my religion; but he did say, "On this rock will I build my church," and in that church is his

religion. The church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18); the members of the church are members of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15); members of his body--the church (Ephesians 5:29, 30). Out of Christ no man can live a Christianly religious life; for he himself said, "Without me ye can do nothing." But to be in Christ is to be in his church, for we have proved that the church is his body in this world. We repeat, therefore, that apart from the Christian church there is no Christian religion. This is exactly what the National Reform party believes; and it is the Christian religion as embodied in what they call the Christian church which that party wants this Government to make the fundamental law of the nation. And that will be Church and State. For the nation to unite with the Christian religion as embodied in the Christian church is to form a union with the Christian church, and is, therefore, a union of Church and State.

If they deny our deduction from their proposition as quoted, and insist that they mean literally that there can be "religion [the Christian religion], but no church," then it follows that they mean that the religion of Christ can be separated from the church of Christ. Then there follows upon this the absurd conclusion that there can be--a church of Christ with no religion, and a religion with no representatives! But if the religion of Christ have no representatives in the world, then there is no religion of Christ in the world. If it be claimed that this is so as far as our nation is at present concerned; and that now our nation must adopt this religion, and by constitutional Amendment embody in the nation's fundamental law the doctrine of God and of Christ, and enforce its observance, that will be simply for the State to create for itself the Christian religion,

and so will be nothing else but a union of Church and State. It is plain, therefore, that by their own proposition, whatever they may claim under it, there is literally no escape from a union of Church and State.

District Secretary M. A. Gault says:--

"Sinners on earth cannot be truly religious without being joined to the church, but nations ought not to be joined to the church, and yet they can and must be religious."--Statesman, January 7, 1886.

Suppose then that every sinner in the nation--that is, every person in the nation, for all are sinners--should purpose to be "truly religious." To be so, everyone must be "joined to the church," then the whole nation would be joined to the church. Suppose then that the nation should make that religion national, would not that then be a national church? The same would be true in the case of a majority of the nation. But a national church is a State church, and a State church exists only by a union of Church and State. Therefore, as this is the doctrine of National Reform, it is proved that the National Reform movement does contemplate nothing short of a union of Church and State.

If this reasoning is by the National Reform party considered unsound, if the deduction which we make from their premises is not logical, then we verily wish that that party would show us where the line shall be drawn between the Christian religion and the Christian church. Will they show us where the line shall be drawn which will

shut the Christian religion in the State, and shut the Christian church out? They will never show it. They know just as well as we do, and we just as well as they, that practically they can never make any such distinction. Therefore the success of their movement would be a union of Church and State.

Further, it is a fact that what used to be the Presbyterian Church is now only the Presbyterian branch of the Christian church. That which once was the Methodist or Baptist Church is now merely the Methodist or the Baptist branch of the church of Christ, or the one true church. And it is a subject of constant rejoicing to them that all the differences that once made them antagonists, are being accommodated, and that the one grand object of the "unity of the church" and its work is about to be realized. And even the Catholic Church is not excluded, but is recognized by some of the leading religious papers of our land as a part of the true church, and is recognized by the Reform Association itself, as an efficient helper. That this is the position of the National Reform party the following is proof:--

"But these divisions are a fact, and they have been overruled so that they are not inconsistent with the unity of the church. All upon whom the name of Christ is named have their calling. The Methodists have their vocation to arouse Christian life; the Presbyterians their vocation to conserve Calvinistic principles; and the Reformed Presbyterians their vocation to keep unfurled the blue banner 'for Christ's crown and covenant.' We are different divisions of Immanuel's army. The Methodists are the charging cavalry, the

Presbyterians the fighting, infantry, the Covenanters the batteries upon the heights. We have one Commander-in-chief, and under him we go forward, one united phalanx against the common enemy. And when the victory is gained, the army will be one, as the Leader is one."--Christian Statesman, February 7, 1881, page 6.

If, then, as they claim, all these are but branches of the one church, it necessarily requires all of them to make up the church. And if it requires all of them to make up the Christian church and the representatives of Christianity in the earth, when they all unite, as they are doing, and all work to the one point of securing this Religious Amendment to the Constitution, and under it enforcing their united views, what is that but Church and State?

But as they insist that their movement does not tend "in the least degree to a union of Church and State," it may be well to lay before our readers the National Reform idea of what is a union of Church and State. In the Pittsburg convention, in 1874, Professor Blanchard gave their definition of a union of Church and State. It is as follows:--

"But union of Church and State is the selection by the nation of one church, the endowment of such a church, the appointment of its officers, and oversight of its doctrines. For such a union none of us plead. To such a union we are all of us opposed."

Let us accept this definition, and see what it proves. Here it is plainly declared that "the selection by the nation of one church" as

the recipient of its favor is the union of Church and State. In the quotation that precedes this it is just as plainly declared that the different denominations are one church. Therefore, according to their own words, when this nation selects this one church, and by constitutional amendment espouses her to itself as the especial object of its favor, that will be the union of Church and State.

But let us examine the point which is doubtless intended in this last quotation, and see whether they fare any better. In the phrase, "the selection by the nation of one church," the meaning is, no doubt, that the selection by the nation, for instance, of the Methodist, or the Baptist, or the Reformed Presbyterian Church as the object of its favor, would be the union of Church and State. But if this would be the union of Church and State, how is it that the other would not be? If the selection by the nation of one church is union of Church and State, we should like to know how the difficulty is in the least relieved by the selection of a dozen or fifty as one. Will some one of the National Reform advocates point out the distinction and draw the line of demarkation?

Once more: In one of the foregoing quotations from the Statesman, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Reformed Presbyterians are said to be but "different divisions of Immanuel's army,"--the Methodists, the cavalry; the Presbyterians, the infantry; and the Reformed Presbyterians, the artillery, in "one united phalanx" in the one army. Now in the Declaration of Independence our fathers charged that the king of Great Britain had affected to "render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil



power." What a great pity it is that George III. did not have for his advisers some of these National Reform statesmen (?) ! If he only could have had these, he could have shown to a "candid world" that this charge of his American colonies was altogether false, and foreign to the subject of their grievances. With the reasoning of the National Reformers he could have projected into the controversy this magnificent and most conclusive disclaimer:--

"We re-affirm" that the establishment of our military forces in America, instead of tending in the least degree toward making the military superior to the civil power, will afford the fullest security against such a corrupting establishment, and form the strongest safeguard of the liberties of all citizens. But what we mean by making the military superior to the civil power is the selection by the king of one division of the army, the artillery, for instance, and making that the depository and the expositor of the king's will. For such a superiority no one pleads. To such a superiority all of us are opposed. For the king thus to select and favor one division of the army would indeed be to make the military superior to the civil power; but for him to so select the whole army together, cavalry, infantry, and artillery,--would not tend "in the least degree" to make the military superior to the civil power.

Now these National Reform advocates, as well as all others, know perfectly that for the king of Great Britain to have offered to the American colonies such an excuse as that for his military occupancy here, would have been only to make himself supremely ridiculous in the eyes of all civilized people. Yet when we charge, as

we distinctly do, that the National Reform party aims directly at the union of Church and State, and effects to make the ecclesiastical superior to the civil power in the Government of the United States, that party, apparently in all soberness, offers just such an absurdly ridiculous plea in justification of its course.

In this connection we might say, in the words of another: "We are reminded of the turn taken by the Spiritualists when they deny that they are opposed to marriage; they explain by defining marriage to be a union of two persons not to be regulated nor guarded by civil law, and which exists only as long as the parties are agreed thereto, requiring no law to effect a divorce! To such the most lawless libertine would not object. We are sorry that the respectable advocates of the Amendment take a position so nearly parallel to the above-cited position of Spiritualists. They give a definition of union of Church and State such as no one expects nor fears; such, in fact, as is not possible in the existing state of the churches--and then loudly proclaim that they are opposed to a union of Church and State!" The illustration is very apt.

Again, "District Secretary" Rev. J. M. Foster, in defining the duties of nations according to National Reform principles, says:--

"The duties which the reigning Mediator requires of nations," are: "1. A constitutional recognition of himself as King of nations... 2. A constitutional recognition of their duty as the divinely appointed keeper of the moral law.... 3. A constitutional provision of moral and religious qualifications for their officers.... 4. An

acknowledgment and exemplification of the duty of national covenanting with him.... 5. An acknowledgment and performance of the nation's duty to guard and protect the church--by suppressing all public violation of the moral law; by maintaining a system of public schools, indoctrinating their youth in morality and virtue; by exempting church property from taxation;" and "by providing her funds out of the public treasury for carrying on her aggressive work at home and in the foreign field."--Christian Statesman, February 21, 1884.

Now take even the phenomenal definition given by the National Reform party itself, as to what constitutes a union of Church and State, i. e., "the selection of one church, the endowment of such a church, the appointment of its officers, and the oversight of its doctrines," and if this National Reform scheme does not sufficiently meet the definition, then nothing can; and if such would not be a union of Church and State, then there has never been any such union in this world.

In the Cincinnati National Reform Convention, January 31 and February 1, 1872, Mr. Francis E. Abbott presented a remonstrance against the object of the convention. Rev. A.D. Mayo, D.D., of Cincinnati, replied to it. In his remarks he said:--

"One would think the gentleman had come all the way from Toledo to Cincinnati to utter a prophet's warning against some future danger threatened by us. Why, he is now living as a citizen of Ohio, under a constitution that substantially includes every idea we

propose to place in the national charter. The constitution of Ohio begins with a confession of dependence on Almighty God as the Author of the liberties it is made to preserve. It declares that 'religion is essential to good government.' And by 'religion' it means just what this proposed Amendment means,--that in order that a State shall endure, its citizens should be religious men; should live according to the highest idea of morality, which, in this State, is the moral system of Jesus Christ; and that the State itself should conform to that idea of morality in its legislation and character, as it hopes for life. That's all there is in this thing."

Dr. Mayo also cited the new constitution of Missouri, formed after the war had closed, as another example, and said:--

"Just what the people of the State of Missouri did, will the people of the United States finally do. They will plant in their great charter of liberties an acknowledgment of the nation's dependence on Almighty God, and its duty to conform to the laws of religious or Christian morality."

Here is a plain argument that the constitutions of Ohio and Missouri contain and mean all that the religiously amended Constitution of the United States will mean; that the constitution of Ohio "substantially includes every idea" that the National Reform Association proposes to place in "the national charter;" that the constitution of Ohio embraces "all there is in this [National Reform] thing." Very well, be it so. From this it follows that in the State of Ohio, under that constitution, there should be found a condition of

government and society such as is expected to be formed in the whole nation by the Religious Amendment to the National Constitution. That is the theory; how stands the fact?

The constitution of Ohio declares that "religion is essential to good government," and that "means just what this proposed [National Reform] Amendment means." Now how much more religion, or how much better government, is there in Ohio than there is in any other State in the Union? How much purer is politics in Ohio than it is anywhere else? It is well known that "Ohio politics" has almost become a proverb, and that the phrase, "Ohio methods," is fast becoming a symbol of political corruption.

Dr. Mayo says that the constitution of Ohio means just what the Religious Amendment means; and under this proposed Amendment the National Reform party insists that our rulers must be "Christian men;" if not actually church members, they must be "men who believe in Christianity."--Christian Statesman, February 8, 1877. How does this work under the Ohio constitution? Why, in 1883 Hon. George Hoadly, an avowed infidel, was elected Governor. And under the title of "An Infidel Elected Governor," the edition of the Christian Statesman, November 1, 1883, said:--

"By a decision of the popular will, Mr. Hoadly, a pronounced unbeliever in the Christian religion, is governor-elect of the great State of Ohio. His record on this point is unmistakable, not merely in that he was counsel against the Bible in the schools, for a professed Christian like Stanley Matthews stood with him in that

effort, but in that he has been for years one of the vice-presidents of the Free Religious Association. He is well known also to favor the program of the Liberals as to the complete secularization of the State by the abolition of all vestiges of Christian usages from the administration of government. The Christian people of Ohio, therefore, believers in the supreme authority of the Christian religion, are to have for their chief magistrate a man who denies that the Christian religion is revealed from God, and who looks elsewhere for the ground of moral obligation."

Dr. Mayo says that the constitutions of Ohio and Missouri mean, on this subject, just what the Religious Amendment means; and one of the chief avowed purposes of the Religious Amendment is to secure forever the reading of the Bible in the public schools of the nation. Now at the very time when Dr. Mayo uttered these words in Cincinnati, there was then pending in the courts of the State of Ohio this very question of the Bible in the schools. The case went to the Supreme Court of the State. And under that constitution, which they say means just what the proposed National Amendment means, the Supreme Court affirmed the legality of the Cincinnati School Board's prohibiting prayer and the reading of the Scriptures in the public schools. In St. Louis, also, under their model Missouri constitution, the Bible has been excluded from the schools. We might thus go through the whole list of subjects which they make prominent in their work; but these are enough to expose the sophistry of the National Reform advocates.

Therefore, if it be true that, on the subject of religion, the constitution of Ohio means just what the proposed Religious Amendment to the National Constitution means; if in that there is "all there is in this," then it is positively proved that when they shall have secured their Religious Amendment to the United States Constitution, "a pronounced unbeliever in the Christian religion," a man who is "well known to favor the abolition of all vestiges of Christian usages from the administration of government"--in short, a man who is opposed to every principle which they advocate--may be President of the great nation of the United States; and that under their religiously-amended Constitution, the Bible may be excluded from all the schools in the land. Then, too, politics may be just as corrupt everywhere as it is now in Ohio. Where, then, will there be any practical difference between the workings of government under the amended Constitution, and those workings under the Constitution as it now is? None at all.

If they mean what they said at Cincinnati, where lies the efficacy of their movement? Ah! there is the point; they do not mean what they said by Mr. Mayo, at Cincinnati. They know that the Ohio constitution does not substantially include every idea which they propose to place in the national charter.

They know that that is not "all there is in this thing." Says "Secretary" Coleman, in the Christian Statesman of November 1, 1883:--

"An acknowledgment of God does not of itself impose any restraint on the conscience, nor fix a single law requiring obedience. We have it in our State constitutions, and it has little or no force. It would be complimentary, but not itself binding.... But we do not stop here. This is simply the foundation for an imposing structure. These principles are only premises, the conclusion is yet to come, and it has this dangerous character of the syllogism, that the conclusion must come, and come with invincible power."

And what is the "conclusion"? This:--

"That such changes with respect to the oath of office, and all other matters, should be introduced into the body of the Constitution as may be necessary to give effect to these Amendments in the preamble."--Memorial to Congress, in 1864.

Exactly; and one of the very first "changes" that will have to be "introduced into the body of the Constitution" to give effect to the Christianized preamble, will be so to alter the First Amendment that Congress shall make laws establishing religion, and prohibiting the free exercise thereof; and the Sixth Article will have to be changed so that religious tests shall be required as qualifications for office. Then the power to lay restraint upon the conscience will be fully secured.

But in the almost endless discussion that will necessarily arise in regard to the changes with respect to the oath and all other matters, where shall the final decisions be made upon what changes



shall or shall not be made? By what shall these questions be tested? That is easily enough discovered; here is the wonderful touch-stone that is to detect all false legislation and prove the true.

"The churches and the pulpits have Much to do with shaping and forming opinions on all moral questions, and with interpretations of Scripture on moral and civil, as well as on theological and ecclesiastical, points; and it is probable that in the almost universal gathering of our citizens about these, the chief discussions and the final decisions of most points will be developed there. Many nations shall come, and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion.'"--Statesman, February 21, 1884.

Again:--

"We will not allow the civil government to decide between them [the churches] and to ordain church doctrines, ordinances, and laws."--Id.

To be sure, the united churches are "Zion;" "the law shall go forth of Zion;" "the final decisions will be developed there," and "WE will not allow the civil government" to do this or that. And when the churches, as one body, under the title of the National Reform Association, shall have reached that place where they can say in the plenitude of their power, "We will not allow the civil

government" to do so and so, there will be no single element lacking to the perfect union of Church and State.

However often they may declare by word that their movement does not contemplate such a union, all their affirmations and re-affirmations in denial cannot hide the evidence of their works, nor disprove the fact that the National Reform Association affects to render the ecclesiastical "independent of, and superior to, the civil power," in this Government; and its success will fully assure the union of Church and State, with all its attendant evils, in the United States.

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