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THE BLAIR EDUCATIONAL AMENDMENT.

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PUBLISHED BY THE

Pacific Press Publishing Co.,

12th and Castro Sts.,
OAKLAND, CAL.
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The Proposed Amendment to the Constitution.

ON the 25th of May, 1888, Senator H. W. Blair, of New Hampshire, introduced into the Senate the following "joint resolution," which was read twice and ordered to lie on the table:—

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States be, and hereby is, proposed to the States, to become valid when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the States, as provided in the Constitution:—

ARTICLE —.

"SECTION 1. No State shall ever make or maintain any law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

"SEC. 2. Each State in this Union shall establish and maintain a system of free public schools, adequate for the education of all the children living therein, between the ages of six and sixteen years inclusive, in the common branches of knowledge, and in virtue, morality, and the principles of the Christian religion. But no money raised by taxation imposed by law, or any money or other property or credit belonging to any municipal organization, or to any State, or to the United States, shall ever be appropriated, applied, or given to the use or purpose of any school, institution, cor-

poration, or person, whereby instruction or training shall be given in the doctrines, tenets, belief, ceremonials, or observances peculiar to any sect, denomination, organization, or society, being, or claiming to be, religious in its character, or such peculiar doctrines, tenets, belief, ceremonials, or observances be taught or inculcated in the free public schools.

“SEC. 3. To the end that each State, the United States, and all the people thereof, may have and preserve Governments republican in form, and in substance, the United States shall guarantee to every State, and to the people of every State, and of the United States, the support and maintenance of such a system of free public schools as is herein provided.

“SEC. 4. That Congress shall enforce this article by legislation when necessary.”

Before offering any comment on this, it may be well to note the opinion of two or three men who have made the United States Constitution a special study, as to the desirability of any change whatever in that document. In the New York *Independent* of January 10, 1889, the Hon. George Bancroft, the historian, wrote thus:—

“I have your letter asking what changes had better be made in the Constitution. I know of none; if any change is needed, it is in ourselves, that we may more and more respect that body of primal law.”

In the same paper Mr. Justice Blatchford, of the United States Supreme Court, wrote as follows:—

“I am satisfied with the Constitution as it is. It cannot be bettered. Constitution tinkers are in a poor business. If there are ills, it is better to bear them than fly to others that we know not of.”

And Justice Gray, of the United States Supreme Court, also said:—

“I am so old-fashioned as to think that the Constitution,

administered according to its letter and spirit, is well enough as it is. And I am of the opinion of the late Governor Andrew, that it is not desirable to Mexicanize our Government by proposing Constitutional Amendments as often as there is supposed to be a disturbance in its practical working."

These learned gentlemen are not alone in thinking that the Constitution is good enough as it is. Indeed, it ought not to require a great amount of legal knowledge to enable anyone to conclude that there cannot be any very serious defect in a Constitution under which this nation has grown to such magnitude, and has acquired such influence among the nations. The founders of this Government took special care to keep out of the Constitution any statement that would tend to legislate any form of religion. This they did by stipulating in the Constitution that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." And then, to make assurance doubly sure, almost immediately after the adoption of the Constitution they added the first amendment, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It is not our purpose here to discuss the evils of religious legislation in general, but only briefly to show that Senator Blair's proposed amendment is in direct conflict both with the sixth article of the Constitution and the first amendment; and also to note the necessary result of its adoption.

It will be in order first to call attention to that which gives the proposed amendment all its point. It is this: "Each State in this Union shall establish and

maintain a system of free public schools, adequate for the instruction of all the children living therein, . . . in virtue, knowledge, and the principles of the Christian religion." With this clause omitted, there would be no reason for the amendment; for the free public-school system for the instruction of children in the common branches of knowledge is already as much a part of our Government as it could possibly be by a constitutional amendment.

It needs no argument to show that this proposed amendment is in direct conflict with the Constitution as it now is, and that therefore before it could be of any effect the sixth article and the first amendment would have to be repealed. The Constitution declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," while this amendment calls for the establishment of the principles of the Christian religion. It says that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States," while the proposed amendment would require a belief in the principles of the Christian religion, as a necessary qualification of a teacher. Not only does it require a belief in the principles of the Christian religion, but it requires that each applicant for the position of teacher should stand an examination in those principles. Thus the proposed constitutional amendment is itself unconstitutional.

The adoption of the amendment would be nothing more or less than a union of Church and State. Thus: The "principles of the Christian religion" are the foundation of the Christian church. The teaching of those principles is that for which the Christian church

exists. Therefore to establish those principles, and to make them a part of the machinery of the Government, would be simply to establish the principles of the professed Christian church, and to make the State the partner and active agent of the church.

Some apologists for the amendment have thought to evade this conclusion by saying that it does not require the States to maintain religion, but only to maintain schools adequate for the education of children in the principles of the Christian religion. This is the thinnest kind of an evasion; for what would be the sense of maintaining schools adequate for the education of children in the principles of the Christian religion, if those principles were not taught? What is meant by "schools adequate for the education" of children in the principles of the Christian religion? Evidently, schools equipped with suitable text-books, and provided with teachers competent to give instruction in those principles. That would involve quite a change from our present school system, for our schools are not now capable of imparting such instruction. Now it is the height of folly to say that the Government would be at the expense of providing extra text-books and teachers, so as to make the schools adequate for the education of children in the principles of religion, and yet not require any such instruction to be given. The very fact that the State is required to establish and maintain a system of schools adequate for the education of children "in the common branches of knowledge, and in virtue, morality, and the principles of the Christian religion," shows that they would be expected to teach those principles, just as much as the common branches of knowledge.

The San Francisco *Chronicle* of December 27, 1888, stated this matter in very good style, as follows:—

“Where an article of the organic law provides that a certain thing shall be taught in the common schools of every State in the Union, is it not a mere evasion to say that it is not an establishment of that particular thing by authority of law?

“Suppose, for example, that the Constitution forbade the recognition by the State of the laws of mathematics. Would not an amendment which directed that the multiplication table be taught in every common school in the land, at the same time pledging the United States to the support and maintenance of such schools, be a repeal, or, at any rate, a palpable evasion of the prohibition against mathematics?

“Without seeking to enter upon any polemical discussion, it is beyond controversy that the ‘principles of the Christian religion’ must involve the divinity of Christ; for, so far as the purely ethical doctrines are concerned, they are common, to a greater or less degree, to all religions, and may, indeed, be found in certain philosophical systems which lay no claim to being considered religions at all. Senator Blair, then, would have every common school in the United States teach children, between the ages of six and sixteen, that Christ was divine. But if this be done, how can the conclusion be avoided that the United States has adopted a State religion? and what becomes of the rights of those of her citizens who believe otherwise?

“The question is a serious one, and it cannot be left for decision solely to those who already believe in the Christian religion. They have, under the law, every right to believe; but their neighbors, who may be fire-worshippers, or Mohammedans, or Agnostics, have, under the same law, an equal right to disbelieve; and the question is, whether it is consistent with the idea of a Government which has always disavowed any union between Church and State to insist that all the children of the nation shall be instructed in the principles of any religion, no matter what its intrinsic value or claims upon the world may be.”

We think that every unprejudiced, thoughtful reader will answer at once, that it is not consistent. This must be apparent, no matter what the merit of the proposed amendment may be. If it is good, and ought to be adopted, then the Constitution as it now is is wrong, and the sixth article and the first amendment ought to be repealed. If those sections are good, and embody correct principles, then the proposed amendment is bad, and ought to be rejected. Let the intelligent citizen judge between them.

The question now to be answered is, "Who shall decide upon the principles of the Christian religion which are to be taught if the amendment is adopted?" The Methodists would give one answer if it were left with them, the Baptists another, the Presbyterians another, and other denominations still another. All would differ, yet each would present something common to all. But the question is not to be left to any one denomination; for the latter part of the second section expressly stipulates that no public money shall ever be appropriated for the instruction of children in any of the tenets or doctrines peculiar to any sect. It is this part of the amendment, so wondrously worded, which catches the multitude, and blinds them to the principle of Church and State union, which is involved. They think it will be so fine a thing to settle it forever that no public money shall be appropriated for the purpose of sectarian teaching, that they lose sight of the real gist of the thing. Protestants think that it would forever shut Catholics off from any share in the school money, whereas it would give them practical control of the schools, as we shall show later on.

We will now consider the amendment adopted, and Congress ready to enforce it by proper legislation. It finds a score of denominations, each strenuous to have its own peculiar views taught in the public schools, if any are to be taught. But this will not do; only those can be taught which are common to all—upon which all can agree. It is manifest, therefore, that the churches themselves are the only ones who could determine this. They only can tell the principles upon which they can all agree. Congress cannot decide this point, nor would the churches allow it to if it could, for they have already expressed themselves on the matter. In the *Christian Statesman* of February 21, 1884, Rev. J. C. K. Milligan said in regard to theological questions :—

“The churches must settle these questions among themselves, and with each other, and at least we will not allow the civil government to decide between them, and to ordain church doctrines, ordinances, and laws.”

Further on in the same article he said :—

“The churches and the pulpit 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 churches and the pulpits] the chief discussions and the final decisions of most points will be developed there.”

In short, before Congress could enforce the new article, it would be obliged to call a council of the churches. Representatives of all the churches would convene and decide what they could all agree upon, and would then inform the Government just what it should enforce. This would be an exact parallel to the

Council of Nice, A. D. 325, which Constantine convened in order that the bishops might settle upon some common principles which could be enforced by imperial authority. Now as that action is universally recognized as the celebration of the union of Church and State, this would necessarily be the same. The churches in America would, by the adoption of the Blair Amendment, which they desire, be forced to follow in the steps of the bishops of the church in the fourth century. The State would then be simply the agent to execute ecclesiastical decrees.

Remember that in such a council all professed Christian churches would have to be represented. That would include the Catholic Church, for it is reckoned as a branch of the Christian Church. But from many States the Catholics, according to a fair representation, would have a very large majority of the delegates; and their delegates in the council would nearly equal those of all the Protestant churches. So the Catholic Church would be able to dictate terms to the council. For of course a vote would have to be taken to decide upon the principles of the Christian religion, and the Catholics could carry more of their points than the Protestants could. Thus the Catholic Church would secure the practical control of the public schools. The Protestants might not like this very well, but having committed themselves to the theory of religious teaching by the State, they would have to abide by the decision of the majority.

Let no one think that the great objection to such an amendment as is proposed, is that it would put the public schools of the country largely in the hands of

the Roman Catholics, so that their religion would be taught. That might be left out of the question altogether, and the objection would be just as great. When the State goes into the business of teaching religion, evil must result, no matter who it employs to do the teaching. The objection is not to the principles of the Christian religion, but to the conferring on certain parties the authority to define what those principles are, and to compel all to accept them, whether willing or not.

The Catholic Church is not dangerous because its doctrines are corrupt, but because its fundamental principle is that the State should support the church. It was this that corrupted the doctrines of the primitive church, and made it Catholic. The same result will always follow the same cause. If there were not a Roman Catholic in the United States, the adoption and practical application of the Blair Amendment would form an established church so like the Papacy that it would differ only in being American instead of Roman.

As stated before, the State would be simply the agent of the church, to carry into execution its decrees. And this would be exactly in accordance with the ideas of the Papacy, as set forth by an eminent and highly educated Catholic. Speaking of natural and revealed law, Dr. Brownson says of the church:—

“She is, under God, *the supreme judge of both laws*, which are for her but one law; and hence she takes cognizance, *in her tribunals*, of the breaches of the natural law as well as of the revealed, and has the right to take cognizance *by nations* as well as of its breaches *by individuals*, by the prince as well as by the subject, for *it is the supreme law for both*. The *State is*, therefore, only *an inferior court, bound to receive*

the law from the Supreme Court, and liable to have its decrees reversed on appeal."—*Brownson's Essays, p. 284, quoted in The Papacy and the Civil Power, p. 32.*

Let the Blair Amendment be adopted, and we should have a very pretty likeness of the Papacy,—an American Papacy. There might not be any one man acknowledged as Pope, but that would make no difference. There was not in Constantine's time. It took time to grow to that.

Anybody can see that while for carrying into effect the proposed amendment there would necessarily be a nominal union of all the churches, there would be no real union. All would be satisfied with the enunciation of those teachings which were really common to all, while everybody, except those belonging to the sect having the strongest representation in the council, and having the greatest number of their tenets adopted and taught, would be dissatisfied. It was just so in the fourth century. Neander says:—

"In fact, however, the manner in which the controversies had been decided by the Council of Nice, could only contain the seeds for new disputes; for there was here no cordial union springing freely, by a natural course of development, out of inward conviction; but a forced and artificial union of men, still widely separated by their different modes of thinking, on a creed which had been imposed on them, and which was differently expounded according to the different doctrinal interests of the several parties."

And just so it would be in this case. Their union would be no real union, but only a confederacy.

But Senator Blair would contend that nothing of this kind could take place, because he does not intend to have anything but the empty shell of religion taught.

Following are the remarks which bear directly upon this question of religion in schools, in the Senator's speech in the Senate, December 21, 1888, made on the occasion of his calling the bill from the table to have it referred to the Committee on Education and Labor:—

“Of course the clause to require instruction to be given to those between the ages of six and sixteen years, inclusive, in the common branches of knowledge only, and in virtue, morality, and the principles of the Christian religion, brings up a question much discussed, and upon which the public mind is not settled. . . .

“It is said that this sort of instruction should be turned over to the clergy, to the churches, to other influences, to the family especially; but we all know, not perhaps mathematically, for we cannot settle it exactly, that there are not far from one-third of the children of this country who never see the inside of a church, and who, in their family relations, are so unfortunate as to have little, if any, training in the ordinary principles of virtue and morality. If it is indispensable that they have training in these ideas, that these ideas be implanted in the young mind with a view to a safe and proper citizenship in the future, the instruction must be given by the public schools dependent upon the power of the State. The preservation of the State demands it, and self-preservation is the first law of nature to the State as of individuals.

“In regard to the general principles of the Christian religion, no one but a bigot would think of having introduced into the public schools instruction in favor of any form of sectarianism; but a knowledge of the Christian religion, even if there be no enforcement of those truths upon the conviction and belief of the child, instruction in those principles, a statement or explanation of what they are, exactly as instruction is given in the principles of arithmetic and geography, and any of the common branches of science, is exceedingly desirable and important for every citizen of this country to possess, whether he applies the principle in his personal conduct or not, because

they are the warp and woof, the very fabric, of society, of the surroundings in which he lives, the basis of our customs and laws, and of the conduct of life. These general principles are exceedingly essential and important not only to apply in personal conduct, but a knowledge of them should be possessed by anyone who is to enter successfully into the ordinary competitions and relations of life. There never was a great nation yet which was without an affirmative religious belief and practice—a religion which was the source and inspiration of perhaps the noblest deeds of the people.”

The Senator well says that this is a question upon which “the public mind is not settled.” May it be long before it becomes settled upon the side which he advocates. As to his argument, we wish to say:—

1. Virtually admitting that the churches are the bodies to teach the principles of the Christian religion, which is true, since they are organized for that purpose and for no other, he would give that work to schools supported by the State. Thus he would have the schools do the work of the churches. He would have the State support the work of the church, only that work would be done in the school-houses instead of in the church buildings. But it makes no difference where the work is done, whether in the churches, the school-houses, or in the woods; when the State carries on the work of the church, you have simply a State church. That is all there is of it. The State, under the working of the Blair amendment, would be a grand church school.

2. This proposed amendment, according to Senator Blair’s explanation—and he ought to know, for he made it—puts the State not only in the place of the parent, but above the parent. Take his argument

that the State must educate the children in religion, because so many of them never go to church. Now suppose the case of an infidel, or a man who strongly dissents from the decree of the council. He refuses to send his children to a school where they will be taught what he believes to be error. And then the State must necessarily, in the discharge of its duty as laid down by Mr. Blair, take that child away from its parents, and place it where it can be educated in the religion of the State. Protestants have been justly indignant where such things have been done in countries where Catholicism was the religion of the State. Read the account given by Dowling ("History of Romanism," pp. 794-800) of the abduction of the boy Edgar Mortara, whose parents, being Jews, naturally wanted to educate him in their own religion, but who was abducted, and brought up as a Catholic. That very thing might, and almost undoubtedly would be, repeated in this country if the proposed amendment were adopted. This again marks it as a measure that would make this country a likeness of Papal governments.

3. It is utterly useless to talk about teaching the principles of the Christian religion as one would teach the principles of arithmetic and geography. Such a thing cannot be. Those sciences are fixed. There is no chance for a difference of opinion in regard to them. They are the same in every nation and among all classes of religionists and men of no religion at all. An infidel could not possibly teach any different principles of arithmetic than a Christian would. But it is not so with religion. Even though it had

been decided by vote of a council what the principles of the Christian religion are, that, as already shown, would not change anybody's mind, and every teacher of the Bible would give his teaching the bias of his own conception of truth. It could not be otherwise.

4. To obviate this it is evident that, the principles of the Christian religion having been settled by the council of the churches, the State would have to embody them in a text-book, which all would be required to use. Mr. Blair has already seen the necessity for this, and has planned for it, as appears from the following extract from a letter which he wrote to the secretary of the National Reform Association:—

“I believe that a text-book of instruction in the principles of virtue, morality, and of the Christian religion, can be prepared for use in the public schools by the joint effort of those who represent every branch of the Christian church, both Protestant and Catholic.”

But what would this result in? Just this: First, in giving the Catholic Church the controlling voice in determining what religious instruction should be given in the public schools, so that very many, if not the majority, of the public schools would virtually be only Roman Catholic schools. Second, it would necessarily result in withholding the Bible from the people. For even though the principles laid down in the text-books or catechisms were in harmony with the Bible, it would not do to let the teachers have free access to the Bible, or else they would be imbibing doctrines that would be heretical, according to the religion of the State, and would be teaching them to the children. Within four hundred years men have been burned at the stake for doing just such things as that, and pun-

ishment of some kind would certainly follow in this country.

It is evident, also, that the only way that uniformity could be secured would be by forbidding the reading of the Bible in private, or even the possession of it. Children who were allowed access to the Bible would get hold of some of these things that are not common to all branches of the church, and would be setting up their opinions against that of their teachers. No, not against the opinion of their teachers, for they would not be allowed to have any, but against the opinions of the text-book. It needs but a moment's thought to enable one to see that all the benefits of the proposed amendment would be lost if the people were allowed to read the Bible for themselves. When the State undertakes to define and teach the principles of the Christian religion, it must do the work thoroughly, and must not suffer its authority to be questioned. The Bible therefore will have to be proscribed.

So we see that from whatever side we approach this amendment, it provides only for a union of Church and State, and that union on the Catholic model. Heresy will be rebellion against the State, and any thought of the Bible, different from the standard text-book, will be heresy. We have not indulged in any fanciful speculation. History repeats itself, because human nature is ever the same. The causes which led to the prohibiting of the Bible in the Middle Ages, will do the same thing now. As then, so now, the State church will be the censor of men's conscientious convictions, and the liberty of a man to think for himself will be taken away.

One other point in Senator Blair's remarks should

be noticed. That is, that it is of the greatest importance that a child should possess a knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion, even if he does not apply those principles in his personal conduct. We most heartily dissent. We don't believe that the knowledge which Judas had of the principles of the Christian religion, and he must have had an intimate knowledge of them, made his traitorous act one whit better. The principles of the Christian religion are of no account whatever unless they are applied to the personal conduct. Indeed, they are worse than useless if not applied to the personal conduct, since they make the individual satisfied with a mere form of religion. And so again we charge this amendment with providing for a State religion which will be utterly destitute of the power of vital godliness, and of planning the education of children in this form, so that they will become conceited formalists, sunk in carnal security.

If anybody says that there is no danger that the amendment will ever be adopted, we warn him against indulging in any such delusion. The National Reform Association is to a man in favor of it. The *Christian Statesman* of July 19, 1888, said:—

“Senator Blair's proposed amendment furnishes an admirable opportunity for making the ideas of the National Reform Association familiar to the minds of the people.”

In the *Christian Statesman* of September 6, 1888, Mr. John Alexander, the father and first president of the National Reform Association, congratulated the association on the introduction of the Blair amendment, and said: “The National Reform Association ought

to spare no pains and omit no effort which may promise to secure its adoption." And in the issue of December 27, 1888, the same paper spoke most enthusiastically of the Sunday-Rest bill and the joint resolution proposing a Constitutional Amendment, and said: "Both of these measures involve the principle of National Christianity," thus showing that we are not taking a partisan view when we say that its adoption will make the union of Church and State.

As further showing that the proposed amendment is all that the National Reformers desire, we quote the words of Rev. J. C. K. Milligan, a leading member of the National Reform Association, in a communication to the *Christian Statesman* of July 26, 1888:—

"Your editorial of July 12, on a Christian constitutional amendment pending in the Senate, is most gratifying news to every Christian patriot. It seems too good to be true. It is too good to prevail without a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether on the part of its friends; but it is so good that it surely will have many friends who will put forth the necessary efforts. True, the pending amendment has its chief value in one phrase, 'the Christian religion;' but if it shall pass into our fundamental law, that one phrase will have all the potency of Almighty God, of Christ the Lord, of the Holy Bible, and of all the Christian world, with it. By letters to senators and representatives in Congress, by petitions numerously signed and forwarded to them, by local, State, and national conventions held, and public meetings in every school district, such an influence can quickly be brought to bear as will compel our legislators to adopt the measure, and enforce it by the needed legislation. The Christian pulpits, if they would, could secure its adoption before the dog-days end. The National Reform Association, the *Christian Statesman*, and the secretaries in the field, are charged with this work, and will not be wanting as leaders in the cause."

The danger to be apprehended from the proposed amendment, and the results that would necessarily follow its adoption, were eloquently and forcibly set forth by the Rev. H. E. Sawyer, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado, in a sermon preached in his church on Sunday, January 13, 1889, and reported in the *Rocky Mountain News* of January 15. He said:—

“I challenge the churchman and the statesman to beware of the danger to which he exposes the institutions bequeathed us by our fathers. I exhort you, my people, ‘Take heed that no man deceive you!’ To provide liberally and intelligently for the education and culture of our children is the constitutional prerogative and duty of our Government, but to ‘educate our children in the principles of the Christian religion,’ is the right and duty reserved by the divine Lawgiver, and assigned solely to the church of Jesus Christ.

“It was while pursuing the great object of his ambition through the dark and bloody paths of war and policy, that Constantine is said to have beheld the sign of a cross in the heavens—inscribed, ‘By this conquer’—and henceforth he assumed the relation of terrestrial father to Christianity, that ‘daughter of the skies.’ Having acquired political dominion over the States of Europe, he conceived the idea of forming an alliance between the civil and the religious organizations in the empire. From this unholy alliance, consummated in the fourth century, has issued a progeny of evil which during many centuries have afflicted both Church and State.

“A National religion often becomes to the State, in times of special awakening, burdensome and even revolutionary; be the zeal of a religionist the ambition of a Becket, a Hildebrand, or a Wolsey, or be it the flaming love for souls that burned in a Whitefield, a Wesley, or a Bunyan, or be it the heroic attachment for truth which actuated a Wycliffe, a Luther, or a Calvin. A fervid state of the church causes

more or less uneasiness to the worldly ruler who must deal with it. To the church, on the other hand, such alliances become an influence to secularize, to pervert, and to cripple, while nominally subsiding, assuming, and patronizing her. Persecution becomes almost an inevitable sequent.

“State-craft and priestcraft, each evil when alone, become more vicious by their mutual aid and emulation, and plague together the country which in common they drain of its resources, and in common they circumscribe and fetter in its development. Revenue and rank and wealth tempt evil men into high places of the church. Simon Maguses are more easily fostered than Simon Peters, and when, if ever, God withdraws his hand of restraint, the national church sees rising within her normal bounds, men like Dunstan and Wolsey and Richelieu and Mazarin and Dubois, trampling on truth and right, and aiming at power won by the worst means and used for the basest purposes. Our own favored land has for many years enjoyed the distinction and blessedness of seeing the Christian churches left alike unendowed and unfettered by the State, and yet largely influential, widely enterprising, and greatly prospered.

“The ‘danger clause’ in the proposed amendment to our National Constitution would require for its appropriate execution the assembling by executive authority of a council similar to the Council at Nice, ordered by Constantine, of the most learned and distinguished divines and statesmen, to frame a creed embracing ‘the principles of the Christian religion,’ contemplated in the bill. The diversity of belief, hitherto allowed and fostered by our free Constitution, would necessarily require the adoption of the vaguest and laxest type of Christian doctrine, and the loosest and most secular type of Christian practice consistent with the retention of the Christian name. Thus would we repeat the folly and crime of the Old World. In the name of religion, and appealing to the Bible for support, we would confiscate Christ’s own golden crown of godhead, to beat it into the thin and flexible gold-leaf bands of perilous and unwarranted brotherhood. The pulpit in a national church would reflect

the will of the cabinet, and be the mouthpiece of the court. Such has been the experience in Europe. In the wars of the league in France it trumpeted sedition and revolt; in the days of the Stuarts of England it sought to graft passive obedience in the interests of despotism on the gospel of Paul and of Paul's master.

"If this scheme were practicable we should admire their wisdom; if it were possible we should applaud their zeal; if it were patriotic we should emulate their devotion; if it were Biblical we should memorialize their achievement. But, alas! they would have the State by a strange impartiality widen its establishment, varying its motley creeds and rituals to suit its complex subjects. By what talisman would the statesman select and establish the true religion for us? Great Britain, confessedly one of the most enlightened and religious Governments of earth, has subsidized Episcopacy in England, Presbyterianism in Scotland, and threatened by more than one of her statesmen to add to the staff of her ecclesiastical pensioners by endowing Romanism in Ireland. By some of her Indian placemen she has contributed to the festivals of Juggernaut, foul and bloody as they are.

"France pays salaries to the Romish priest, the Protestant pastor, and the Jewish rabbi. Now a faith thus elastic, indiscriminate, and all-devouring, cannot honor God or rightly develop conscience. Parity of reasoning would require the State to extend salaries and subsidies to the impurities and defilements of Mohammedanism and Mormonism, should votaries of either delusion in sufficient number colonize our soil. The God of the Bible would be compelled to share his throne with mammon, and the system sweeping on into the dim and misty realms of pantheism would ultimate in the prince of this world branding all truth as lies, and approving all lies as truth."

The counts, then, in the indictment against the proposed constitutional amendment, or any similar one, are these:—

1. It is unconstitutional.

2. Its adoption would necessitate the repeal of those principles of our National Constitution, which have made this country the glory of all lands, the home of the oppressed, where every man is free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

3. Its adoption would unite Church and State, making the State simply the agent of the church. This is virtually admitted by National Reformers themselves.

4. It would make the Christianity of the country a mere form, without any power, by instructing the intellect without appealing to the heart.

5. Instead of encouraging the study of the Bible, it would eventually result in shutting the Bible away from the people.

6. It would make the dissenter from the religion established by the State, a heretic and a rebel, and would result in the worst kind of persecution against those who dared hold and teach an opinion of their own.

In view of these things, we believe that all lovers of true liberty and of pure Christianity will endorse the injunction of General Grant, in his speech at Des Moines, Iowa:—

“Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private school supported entirely by private contribution. Keep the Church and State forever separate.”

And this can be done only by repressing all attempts to amend the Constitution in any such way as that proposed by Senator Blair, and by refusing to legislate in favor of any ecclesiastical institution or rite.

E. J. WAGGONER.

• ♦ T H E ♦ •

AMERICAN SENTINEL,

AN EIGHT-PAGE WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

The Defense of American Institutions, the Preservation of the United States Constitution as it is, so far as Regards Religion or Religious Tests, and the Maintenance of Human Rights, Civil and Religious.

It will Ever be Uncompromisingly Opposed to Anything tending toward a UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE, Either in Name or in Fact.

IT is well known that there is a large and influential association in the United States bearing the name of the "National Reform Association," which is endeavoring to secure such a

Religious Amendment to the Constitution

Of the United States as will "place all Christian laws, institutions, and usages, on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land."

While there are many persons in this country who are opposed to, or look with suspicion upon, this movement, there are few, outside of the party, who realize what the influence of this amendment would be. The object of the AMERICAN SENTINEL will be to

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