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FOR UNION MEN

MR. BATTEN REPLIES.

Lincoln, Neb., March 17th.—To the Editor of The Wageworker: I have read with interest your open letter addressed to me as published in The Wageworker of March 14th. I note also your assurance that the columns of The Wageworker are open to me, subject of course to reasonable limitations of space. Permit me to say that I appreciate fully the candor and courtesy of your letter, and trust that what I say may illustrate the same equalities. Let me say too that I thank you for the kind tender of space in The Wageworker to discuss the question at issue. I shall endeavor to be as brief as possible.

There are two ways that I might take in the discussion of the question before us. I might take up your letter section by section and consider each sentence by itself. And I might give my attention to the fundamental principle that underlies the whole discussion and seek to make this plain. In view of the fact that the main difference between us, as I think will become evident, is a difference in our conception of Christianity and its relation to political action, it seems to me that the better course is to confine our attention to the primary question. If we can reach an agreement here we will not find ourselves far apart on the subsidiary questions. If we cannot agree in the primary issue, we shall not find ourselves in full accord on incidental matters.

What is the relation of Christianity to political matters? Can the one who believes in the power of the Gospel to win and save men seek the aid of law in promoting the moral life of men? Does the state fulfill a moral function, and can it do anything in behalf of the moral and religious progress of society? However these questions may be stated, these are the questions at issue.

For one thing, Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, and as such he inherited the hopes and ideals of his people. "Think not," he said, "that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17.) In his life and teaching he made it very plain that he regarded himself as the child of his race, and more than once he took occasion to show how the hopes and ideals of his people were fulfilled in himself. Now, in the Jewish system we find that the state, through its ruler and its law, is the representative of the invisible and heavenly King. Not only so, but the life of the

state is the civil realization of the divine and eternal order. This meaning lies upon the surface and cannot be mistaken. And once more in the Jewish system the state is a kind of providence, regarding the interests of all men and making provision for the welfare of each. In a word, in this system the state appears as the visible and social realization of the divine King and his beneficent will; it is the visible and social realization of the divine and eternal order; and it is the human and social providence acting for the divine providence in conserving the interests of all and in safeguarding the welfare of each.

In his teaching, it is true that Jesus says little directly about the state and its functions, but he says some things, and these are very significant. For one thing, he paid his taxes, as a good citizen, and he respected the powers that be. At one time in his life when enthusiasm ran high, and the people wanted to take him by force and make him a king, he stoutly refused. There are several reasons for this refusal, no doubt but it is certain that in his refusal there is recognition of the rightful claims of the existing authorities.

One day the Pharisees and the Herodians frame a cunning question and try to entrap him. The Pharisees, be it remembered, were the separatists of their day, the religious and goody-goody people whose hopes were in heaven and who would have nothing to do with politics. The Herodians, be it remembered, were the time-servers and politicians of their time, the "practical" men who cared nothing for dreams and visions. In his reply, Jesus says: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." That is, let each party fulfill the other half of its duty. That is, a man's duty to the state is as real as his duty to God, and the man who loves God must be a good citizen. Again, when on trial before Pilate, he is asked: "Whence art thou?" This is not the question at issue, and Jesus gives the Roman no answer. Then Pilate becomes angry and says: "Why do you not answer me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and I have power to crucify you?" To this Jesus replies: "Thou couldst have no power against me at all except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." What do the words mean? First, that Pilate was there in official position as the

representative of high heaven. Second, they imply that he was there to do justice and protect the weak and innocent. And third, they assert that the Jewish authorities, to whom the ruler was the representative of God and to whom law was sacred, were guilty of a black sin in using the civil ruler to further their evil designs. That is, Pilate was in office to represent in the civil order the righteousness of God, and he was expected to be the earthly representative of the divine providence.

It is not necessary to consider the teachings of the first interpreters of Jesus, the men who had lived with him or who were most familiar with his teaching. Thus Paul says: "The powers that be are ordained of God." The purpose of government is thus defined: The punishment of evil doers and the praise of them that do well. Further: "The ruler is the minister, the deacon of God to thee for good; an avenger executing wrath upon him that doeth evil; for this cause pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers attending continually unto this very thing." (Romans 13:1-10.) It is evident that the All Wise Creator instituted this machinery we call the state in order to safeguard the interests of his children, by fostering and building up that which is right and helpful and by opposing and forbidding as fully as possible that which is injurious and wrong. As the best commentators show, this means that the will of God is expressed from time to time in and through the actual constitution of the state. (Moule, on Romans, p. 355.) And the apostle Peter charges Christians to honor the King. He also bids us be in subjection to rulers, as sent for vengeance on evil doers, and the praise of them that do well.

It is not necessary here to say anything on the question of the relation of Church and State. But it may be noted that I am a member of that body of Christians which through all the centuries has opposed the union of Church and State, and has demanded that each shall keep to its assigned sphere. But this does not mean that these two institutions shall work at cross purposes; and it does not mean that the state has nothing to do with the moral welfare of mankind.

The purpose of the state, according to the Preamble of our Constitution, is to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, and promote the general wel-

fare. The Supreme Court of the United States has declared that "Honesty, morality, religion and education are the main pillars of the state, for the protection and promotion of which government was instituted among men." It is needless to say that these things are the chief interests of human life, and must be sought in every legitimate and effective way.

According to the Christian principle, we are here to take thought for others' welfare. We know that it is not the will of the Father in heaven that one of his little ones should perish. We are charged to make straight paths for men's feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. We are here to maintain an unrelenting warfare against the things that hurt man and disturb the peace of society. We are to regard government as the agency of Providence in the protection of the weak, the punishment of the evil doer and the promotion of human well being. The Christian man is supposed to have the spirit of Christ; he wants all men to be helped and blessed; he is not willing that any child shall be wronged and trampled under foot; he wants every stumbling block taken up out of the way of the people; he longs to cast out of the cities of earth the things that defile, that work abomination and that make a lie; he has the vision of a Holy City on earth where no evil is permitted; and he prays for the time when every life shall have fair opportunity to grow up tall and straight and pure and clean. The Christian man sees in the state an agency of God for the promotion of some of these ends at least; he realizes that "law is a rule of civil conduct, prescribed by the supreme authority in the state, commanding what is Right and Prohibiting what is Wrong;" he knows that in the sphere of his social and civil life his religion is to manifest itself and his ideal is to be realized; in a word, in and through the state he seeks to establish justice, to ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, take up stumbling blocks and make straight paths for men's feet. The machinery of government is an agency of God for these great ends; and the Christian spirit is the power that can move men to seek these ends. The fact is, Christianity is becoming effective insofar as men are seeking these ends in every way that is open to them as men and citizens. The fact is also that the power of the

Gospel is seen wherever men are moved and inspired to take thought for others and to labor for the common welfare.

Of course, the Christian who has the spirit of Jesus will not seek to employ the arm of government in compelling men to believe any kind of doctrines. Neither will the man who believes in the power of truth denounce and despise the men who may not agree with him in all things. These things belong to the inner realm of conscience and motive, and with these the state has nothing to do. But with social conditions, with conduct that is injurious to others, with evil systems and demoralizing institutions, the state has everything to do. And it is in the effort to improve social conditions, to take up stumbling blocks, to make it possible for every child to grow up straight and tall, and to have justice done in the world that the Christian must prove the reality of his faith and love. Two or three applications of our principle is all that space permits.

Suppose one part of the community, that is intelligent and understands the laws of health, is seeking to make it possible for all men to live in health and security. But suppose that another part of the community, that is ignorant of the laws of health and cares little for the common safety, insists on throwing their slops in the street after the good old troglodyte fashion. Must the intelligent part of the community watch their children sicken and die with fever till the ignorant and stubborn part of the community have become Christians? If they are sensible will they not organize a Board of Health and either compel the other fellows to leave the community or have some regard for the health of others?

Suppose a few corporation managers without soul and conscience employ little children in their mills and mines in the most demoralizing conditions and at starvation wages? And suppose the employment of such children is found to be utterly demoralizing in that it is depriving them of an education, is undermining their constitution and is unfitting them for citizenship in the state? Must we allow this evil of child labor to go on unchecked till we have created a soul in the mill owners and have developed in them a trace of conscience? Mr. Maupin, will you not agree with me that the most Christian and most sensible thing we can do is to pass a good strong law which shall prohibit the employment of little children in mines and factories and shall punish most severely the mill owners who grow fat out of the ill paid labor of children?

Suppose we find that a few corporation managers, men without conscience, but with unlimited capital, are forming great combinations to beat down competition, to corner the necessities of life, to fix the prices of commodities, to compel every man in the same line of trade to join the combination or go to the wall, and to be trade buccaneers and commercial pirates. And suppose it should appear that in such an order of things the individual trader has no chance in life, and is fast being reduced to the condition of a serf and underling. Now, must we wait till our Rockefeller and Astors have come to understand the whole Gospel of Christ and have learned to apply the truth to every detail of their commercial life? Will you not agree with me that the most sensible and Christian thing to do is to enact good straightforward laws which shall make it impossible for men to play the part of commercial pirates and prosper and grow rich?

Suppose, once more, it should be found that a gang of robbers infests a certain road—from Jerusalem to Jericho—and are in the habit of robbing and half killing all travelers who pass that way. What shall we do under the circumstances? Shall we build a hospital along that road to care for these robbed and wounded unfortunates? Shall we maintain that hospital till we have sent missionaries to these robbers and they are all converted? Will you not agree with me that the wise and Christian thing to do is to call upon the Jerusalem police to clean out that nest of robbers and to make that road safe for every child who may pass that way? Is not that a pretty sensible way of making our religion effective?

And last of all, suppose it should appear that a certain institution in modern society—say the saloon traffic—is responsible for a large proportion of the crime, pauperism, insanity, filiothy and misery of the world. Suppose it should appear that, according to the best authorities, this traffic is responsible for 84 per cent of the crime, 75 per cent of the pauperism, and 67 per cent of the insanity. Suppose, further, it should appear that many of the men engaged in this business, who care nothing for the things of religion and take no thought for the real welfare of their fellows, while admitting that it is a bad business, yet continue in it for the sake of the money profits. Must we allow this business to continue unchecked,

to catch the boys and ruin them, to place temptation before men, to throw heavy burdens upon society in caring for the criminals and paupers and defectives, and to be the chief source of social demoralization and human misery, till all the men engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicants have accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and have learned to apply his principles to all the details of their lives? Will you not agree with me that the wise and Christian thing to do under the circumstances is to enact such laws as shall make it impossible for men to manufacture and sell that which tends to demoralize men and to cast heavy burdens upon society? Must we not say that the best way to prove the power of our faith and the reality of our religion is to prohibit the saloon and to take up this stumbling block out of the way of the people?

The church as an institution is here to serve mankind in the realm of the inner and spiritual life; it is here to inform the mind, to purify the insight, to train the conscience, to arouse the will; it is here to win men's hearts, to save their souls, to seek the lost and love them into the Kingdom of God. The state as an institution is here to serve mankind in the outer and social realm of life; it is here to be the institute of rights, to conserve human conditions, to maintain justice between man and man, to regulate men's conduct insofar as it affects the well being of society; it is here to protect the weak against the strong, to direct the strong and restrain the vicious, to promote the common welfare and safeguard the common peace. In the Christian conception of things, the church and the state are both divine institutions; each with a divine and human mission, each fulfilling an essential function in the life of man and the progress, and yet both co-operating in the one end and both seeking the well being of man. In this modern world the Christian finds himself a member of both the church and the state; under these circumstances what must he do? One course of action only is logical and Christian: he is to work in and through these institutions in the interests of man and the promotion of the kingdom. He is to work in and through the church upon the inner spiritual life of man, dealing with such things as human hearts and motives, with human consciences and wills. He is to work in and through the state upon the outer social life of man, dealing with such things as human actions and conduct, with social conditions and institutions. In and through the church, I, as an amble follower of the Master, will do what I can to inform the mind, to show men the duty of temperance, to persuade them to forego all use of intoxicants, and to build them up in faith and love. In and through the state, I, as a Christian citizen, will do what I can to remove all temptation from men, to provide helpful and not hurtful conditions, to take up all stumbling blocks and to make straight paths for men's feet. And in my judgment one line of action is just as Christian as the other. Too long we as Christians have limited our interests and have confined ourselves too exclusively to man's spiritual and heavenly life. Now the time has come for us to serve the whole life of man and to ensure such conditions as shall make it possible for every life to grow up straight and tall and pure.

We cannot say that Christianity has failed because it has not yet won all men and taught them how to live as citizens of the kingdom. We must rather say that Christianity has not yet been tried in its fullness and power. We cannot say that Christianity is failing because it uses the divine agency known as government to promote human well being and to secure better conditions for the people. We must rather say that these are ways in which the power of Christianity is proving itself as the power of God unto social salvation and human progress.

Assuring you of my deep and abiding interest in the cause of union labor, and affirming my conviction that every child of the race should have a fair chance for life and for its best things; assuring you also of my high personal consideration for yourself, and thanking you for the privilege of thus stating my social religion, I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

SAMUEL Z. BATTEN.

PAINTERS.

Painters' Union No. 47 held its regular meeting Tuesday night at Morrison hall, which was well attended. Twenty-five new members were initiated and twenty-one applications are still pending. Prospects look bright for the coming season.—Indianapolis Union.

A dispatch received from Yasnaya Polyana says that Count Tolstol, who is ill with influenza, has suffered a relapse.