

National Convention,

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION

TO SECURE THE

RELIGIOUS AMENDMENT

OF THE

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

HELD IN

CINCINNATI, JAN. 31, AND FEB. 1, 1872.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT.

PHILADELPHIA :

JAS. B. RODGERS CO., PRINTERS, 52 & 54 NORTH SIXTH STREET.

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the cause of God and cannot fail. It has the almightiness of Christianity in it, and shall ere long prove triumphant as certainly as that Christianity is true.

And in the firm, unwavering, undying faith in its ultimate triumph we mean with God's help to press on ; not satisfied with its accomplishment in this country alone, we shall contribute our mite towards its realization in all lands, and shall tell our children to tell their children and their children's children never to give up the struggle until every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.

Adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock in the evening.

CLOSING SESSION.

The Convention re-assembled at 7½ o'clock, and was opened with prayer, the President in the chair.

The Committee on Permanent Organization was appointed a Committee to nominate officers for the National Association for the ensuing year.

Dr. Jonathan Edwards, of Peoria, Ill., was introduced and delivered the following address :

ADDRESS OF DR. EDWARDS.

MR. PRESIDENT : I suppose we may as well begin at the beginning, even if some things be said which have been already said, and even if I repeat some things which were said at former conventions. Repetition is sometimes good. Even "pure minds" are the better for being—"stirred up by way of remembrance."

We have formed an association to effect an amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Our proposed amendment does not touch to change—much less to abrogate—one of the truths, the principles or the features of that great instrument. Nor does it imply that we are wanting in appreciation of it; that we are dissatisfied or are restless under its working hitherto. Whoever likes the Constitution will find that we like it, and the institutions that have grown up under it, in the same measure and probably for the same good reasons. He will find us joined with him in the loyal support of all the good that is in it, its implied assertion of the rights of man and its wise provision for the growth of the nation. For such political wisdom given to our fathers we devoutly thank God; and it is our conviction and our boast that this Constitution is the best national charter recorded on the pages of history. But our fathers were not infallible, and the Constitution which they made for us was not perfect. Our nation's growth and experience have suggested several important amendments which have been already adopted ; and, as it seems to us, the time has come to discuss the adoption of another. There are certain evils and certain signs of coming evil which give us anxiety. These evils and evil omens we trace back to an omission in the Constitution, and it is evident that if this omission be supplied the evils will be averted. And this is what we propose to

do. Our amendment, like all the others, is suggested by our experience, and, however it may seem to be late in the day, can never be out of date. There is no mention of God in the Constitution, no word which recognizes His sovereignty over human affairs or His interest in them. One of the great—one of the chief characteristics of our people at the time they entered into national compact is thus ignored. The underlying faith of our forefathers, a faith which must have given life and shape to their politics and their institutions, is thus not alluded to. I repeat, this is the omission which now engages our attention and which we wish to supply. We feel that such an omission does injustice to the people, who, because of it, are but partially described and but partially represented in their Constitution. It would seem as if they had not understood how great and how grave was the work of nation-making in which they were engaged, and that they gave to it only such earnestness as showed their desire for safety, peace and wealth—mere material interests—though our forefathers, as we know, were a serious, thoughtful people, accustomed to do everything of a public nature in the name and the fear of God; and though they settled the land and made their laws from the beginning as much for religious faith as for civil freedom, or rather, for the freedom of religious faith.

It has been thought that this omission was mere oversight. Indeed, tradition says that Alexander Hamilton told a minister of the Gospel in this city, on his return from the Convention, that the mention of God had been entirely forgotten! I wonder that great man did not call to mind the Bible warning to "all the nations that forget God." But whether they forgot it, or whether there was a secret intent to imitate France, the nation which at that day was the ideal of political progress as well as of politeness and science, it is not necessary, not important now to settle. It is more important to correct it than to account for it. The fact is that the Constitution is silent on the subject of God and religion, and we urge that this is a wrong, an injustice, a vicious impolicy.

The newspapers say we are trying to put God into the Constitution. Well, that does describe in part our aim and our work. It is bad for anything to be without God. Everything is the better for having Him in it. As the venerable father who addressed you last evening said, in words so fervid and so eloquent, I am in favor of putting or finding God everywhere; in the country and in the town, in the parlor and in the workshop, every day as well as Sunday. But there is also another thing we want to put into the Constitution. We want to put the people into it, the people in full, the people with their deep and noble reverence for God as the Greatest and the Best, and for His word as the underlying and paramount law. In these traits they certainly are not there now. If the Convention had only prefaced the Constitution with "In the name of God, Amen," as the Puritans did in the colony compact they drew up and signed in the cabin of the Mayflower, possibly this movement of ours had never been made.

Our proposed Amendment is confined chiefly and almost exclusively to the Preamble of the Constitution. We wish it there distinctly declared that this people found this Government with a reverent regard to God and His revealed will.

Strictly speaking, the Preamble is not the Constitution. It is a solemn statement that goes before the Constitution, in which the people who make the Constitution describe themselves, define their aims and their work, and

so, as it were, announce and introduce themselves to the nations of the earth. It is mere statement, I admit, but it is a statement of facts which are important, and which are of practical value ; such facts as furnish a good point of departure for those who shall afterwards make or expound laws. For instance, the Preamble, as it now stands, indicates that the nation is, as yet, but imperfectly compacted ; that, after ten years of such life and progress as could be secured under the confederation, it is found necessary "to form a more perfect union"—intimating that all after legislation to weaken or dissolve this union will be unconstitutional. This union, with sundry great moral, social and civil benefits depending upon it, "the people," (not the States,) the Preamble tells us, met in convention to secure, and to this end ordained the Constitution, and we have found in our national history presumptions emanating originally from this Preamble, working mightily and continually in favor of the rights of the people, and in favor of national unity, integrity and eminent domain, as against State sovereignty, sectional interests, excessive official power and patronage, and the influence of overgrown corporations. Just here we propose to do our work ; that, among these preliminary statements of the source from which the Constitution emanates, there be one which refers to the religious convictions under which our people acted in convention. What we shall gain by such a statement will be a general presumption in favor of Christian morals and usages.

Thus far we have not touched the body of the Constitution. We have but modified the portico, yet already the building is more proportionate and more enduring for what we have done. There will follow, for mere consistency's sake, one or two slight changes in the Constitution, yet these are only remote and incidental, not at all essential, and not interfering with the rights of conscience any more than it now does.

The first and principal change that occurs to me as proper to be made is in the prescribed form of oath. The President must be sworn into office—that is, he must say, "I do solemnly swear." This is now his oath. Kissing a book is a custom, not a law, I believe ; but, whether this ceremony be custom or law, it is unmeaning, undignified, childish and ridiculous. But merely saying "I swear" is not swearing. It may indicate the thing he would do if he could, but it is not the thing itself. If I say I steal, does that convict me of theft ? Does not the law require proof of some overt act ? So of swearing. There must be an act and a formula to constitute an oath, and for these we look into our Bible. The right hand is to furnish the act : as it is said of base, unworthy men, "Their right hand is a right hand of falsehood." And the name of God is to furnish the formula : "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God . . . and shalt swear by His name." This is not a mere question of unimportant forms, or of trifling details. It is a great peace measure, since "an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife." It is a measure of high prudence, a guarantee for fidelity in administration, in contracts and in witness bearing. And it ought to be so constructed as to form a sacred bond between the conscience of him who takes it and the Throne of God, the bar of final accountability. If the oath be not the foundation of society, it is at least the cement with which those foundations are laid.

I do not now think of any other change that would be necessary under our Amendment in the body of the Constitution.

But the Constitution being now silent upon the subject of religion, as has

been said, it is urged against us that our movement is unnecessary. The people are believers in God and Christianity, and the statesmen, at least the politicians, will always be only too careful to legislate in accordance with their faith as well as with their tastes and their interests. So, as you have already heard it well stated, the people were believers in liberty, but for want of some constitutional utterance that was definite and decisive we had to pass through a civil war of frightful proportions ere it was settled that freedom was national among us. Shall we wait to learn in some similar schooling that Christianity is one of our formal characteristics?

But, in fact, the Constitution is not silent upon the subject of religion. I have said that its silence was an injustice and an evil, but the great grievance is that it has spoken and spoken wrong. What you have given you in your law books as the Constitution is silent, but this is not the whole of that document. There are other chapters of the Constitution which are not generally seen by the people, perhaps not even suspected. Treaties made with foreign nations are counted as parts of the Constitution and possess the same power as the rest of the Constitution to render null and void anything contrary to them in the laws or the constitutions of the States severally. Now, it was stated last evening, that early in the history of our Government our diplomats abroad misrepresented us to a foreign court by saying we were a nation without any religion at all. But the case is far worse than this. In one or two treaties, which our President and Senate made for us in due form, we have given to the world as fundamental law with us that the United States is in no sense founded upon the Christian religion, and, in effect, that our institutions will not prove embarrassing to a good Mussulman. We stand upon our constitutional record as not materially different from a nation of Mohammedans. And is this no injustice, no libel? It is both; and our movement for the Religious Amendment indicates that we are not disposed to submit to it.

It is said, if you make these alterations they will necessarily be followed by a great deal of legislation. Well, if so, let us have it. The people who vote for the amendment will also vote the laws which may be needed to give it efficacy. No trouble, no disturbance of the peace need be apprehended. But what legislative difficulties are anticipated? First, the union of Church and State. Truly this is a giant evil. It is well worth while to give warning of anything and everything that threatens, however remotely, to bring that about, and we will all join you in doing so. I suppose there could not be found a corporal's guard in this large convention that look upon such complications and corruptions as a union of Church and State would amount to with any other feeling than detestation and dread. We all sincerely and most heartily repudiate any design or desire to effect it. As promptly as any one, we would both resent and resist it. And yet it might not be amiss to suggest that injurious relations with the Church are not the only entanglements the State has to fear and the patient has to guard against. China is a vast specimen of a purely paternal government. Old Rome identified state and army, citizen and soldier. Carthage was all for commerce. The French say that modern England is a nation of shop-keepers, and the Company of India combines administration and traffic. Do you dislike and dread state and family, state and army, state and shop, as well as state and church? All these in their turn are dangers to which we are exposed, yet who sounds the alarm, who prepares the protest, who rallies the opposition? It is just possible that the outcry against Church

and State may spring rather from hatred to revealed religion than from an intelligent patriotism. But where is the sign, the omen of such Church and State mischief coming upon us? Who will begin and who will finish this union of Church and State? If you think the Roman Catholic can do it in spite of the watchfulness of the Protestant; or that one Protestant sect can do it amid the jealousy of all the other sects; or that all these sects would combine to effect a joint union with the state, you have a notion of human nature and of church nature different from what I have. Church and State in union, then, are forever impossible here, and, were it never so easy, we all repudiate it on principle. There are enduring, ever valid reasons against it. But religion and state is another thing. That is possible. That is a good thing—and that is what we aim to make a feature in our institutions.

The languages of the earth are taught in a variety of grammars. It may be useless, if not impracticable for the State to link itself with a grammar, but it will be worse than useless, it will be wholly impossible to do without a language. There are many languages spoken in our great country, yet here the State elects English to be its official tongue. It has never passed a law to this effect, but the language of the first settlers has been quietly accepted and used until at length it has the general force of law. The foreigner may speak what tongue he pleases, but he must act the citizen in English, he must vote in English, he must have laws drafted, debated and enacted in English.

There are many schools of medicine—homeopathic, allopathic, hydropathic, and what not. It might be exceedingly injudicious for the State to commit itself to either of these and to establish it exclusively; but medicine, the healing art, it must recognize, and from time to time employ for its servants and its soldiers. There must to this extent be State and Medicine.

In like manner we want State and Religion—and we are going to have it. It shall be that so far as the affairs of State require Religion, it shall be revealed Religion, the Religion of Jesus Christ. The Christian oath and Christian morality shall have in this land “an undeniable legal basis.”

We use the word Religion in its proper sense, as meaning a man's personal relation of faith and obedience to God. There is another use of the word, a narrow ecclesiastical use of it, brought down to us from the Middle Ages and from Popery. They said a man was religious who entered into renewed and redoubled relations to the Church, as when he became a monk, for instance. It is possible this was the sense contemplated by our Constitution when it prohibited religious tests as a qualification for holding office. The State determined to take no part and to show no preference among the controversies of the Church, nor to make the Church in any of its usages or requirements a condition for her honors and her services. But, as we use it, Religion is not the Church, but a deep principle, like life, which underlies and pervades the State and the family as well as the Church. We hold that there may be religious families and religious states as well as religious churches, and that families and states, as well as churches, are all the better for being religious.

Now, we are warned that to engraft this doctrine upon the Constitution will be found oppressive; that it will infringe the rights of conscience; and we are told that there are Atheists, Deists, Jews and Seventh-day Baptists who would be sufferers under it. I accept it as a compliment that we are called upon to consider objections of this sort, if there be any ground for them. We are the conscience party, the free conscience party. We are the very people

to be held responsible if we trespass upon the conscience of others. And it will be found that we do not intend to do this, and that we do not do it in fact.

The parties whose conscience we are charged with troubling, taken altogether, are but few in number. This determines nothing as to who is right, but the fact remains, and is worthy of note, that, taken altogether, they amount to but a small fraction of our citizenship. They are not even as many as those among us who do not speak the English language.

And then, further, they are almost wholly of foreign importation, and that of comparatively recent date, so that they did not share in the first settlement of this country; they did not brave the hardships, they did not profess the principles which have made that settlement memorable. They never, anywhere, developed, or even dreamed of such a nationality as ours, such a written guarantee for stability, liberty and progress. In the lands where they lived before coming hither, they had less of liberty than they enjoy here, but their notions of conscience and liberty were too vague for them even to feel themselves aggrieved. They breathed no protests, they suffered no martyrdom. These come to us, who have made for them the freest land ever beneath the sun, and warn us not to infringe their rights of conscience—rights which they had to come here even to learn! They are afraid that those who taught them freedom are going to oppress them!

Well, let us attend to the case. They do not, as yet, feel oppressed. They will not pretend that, on the whole, they are not very well off—better off than before they came—as well off as they expected to be. Under our present Constitution and laws they can vote, can hold property, can marry, can plead and be impleaded, can fare better than in any other country. But they cannot do everything, have everything, be everything. Well, in this they are not alone. There are many rights and privileges which are but imperfectly accorded to all our citizens. There are many things which we may not do, however conscience clear we may be of our right, our interest, or our pleasure in them. We may not smoke a cigar in the streets of Boston.* We may not buy a lot among the fine houses of Broadway, or the fashionable avenues of New York, and there set up and operate a foundery, a tin-shop, a bone-boiling establishment or a soap chandlery. If we try it we shall find both ourselves and our business treated as a nuisance. People do not like the smoke, the noise, the fumes of such establishments. The majority are against you, and in this country and all republics majorities govern. To be in a minority involves more or less of inconvenience. In business, in politics, in fashion, in morals and in religion, whoever differs materially from the majority will certainly be made to feel it more or less in due time. All law, all government, will press somewhere occasionally, and it is the good citizen who maintains both his conscience and his independence by submitting to the pressure. Our objectors, as I said, are not alone in their disabilities.

One class of our earliest and best citizens is composed of Quakers, who are in name and in principle opposed to all war. It is doubtful whether a Quaker can, with a good conscience, be President of the United States and thus be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy. Yet the majority of our people thus far remain firm in the purpose to keep an army and navy, and, what is more,

* Such was the law not long since enforced in Boston.

on occasion to use them. There is also another body of our citizens of good stock and well ordered lives and sound principles, men who in other lands were identified with freedom of conscience—we heard from them this morning, the Covenanters—who in this land do not feel themselves at liberty even to vote. And some of our countrymen are conscientious monarchists. The State protects all who are peaceable, but it cannot do otherwise than reflect the mind of the majority. Our objectors, then, may learn that they are merely a body of men who are in their turn feeling the inconvenience of dissent. And they may be reminded that under our proposed Amendment all the essentials of their citizenship will be none the less secure to them than they are now.

The Atheist is a man who denies the being of a God and a future life. To him mind and matter are the same, and time is the be-all and the end-all of consciousness and of character.

The Deist admits God, but denies that He has any such personal control over human affairs as we call providence, or that He ever manifests Himself and His will in a Revelation.

The Jew admits God, Providence, and Revelation, but rejects the entire scheme of Gospel redemption by Jesus Christ as sheer imagination, or—worse—sheer imposture.

The Seventh-day Baptists believe in God and Christianity, and are conjoined with the other members of this class by the accident of differing with the mass of Christians upon the question of what precise day of the week shall be observed as holy.

These all are, for the occasion, and so far as our Amendment is concerned, one class. They use the same arguments and the same tactics against us. They must be counted together, which we very much regret, but which we cannot help. The first named is the leader in the discontent and in the outcry—the atheist, to whom nothing is higher or more sacred than man, and nothing survives the tomb. It is his class. Its labors are almost wholly in his interest; its success would be almost wholly his triumph. The rest are adjuncts to him in this contest. They must be named from him; they must be treated as, for this question, one party. Now look at it—look at this controversy. The question is not between opinions that differ, but opinions that are opposite, that are contradictory, that mutually exclude each other. It is between Christianity and Infidelity. It is between Theism and Atheism, between the acknowledgment of a God and the denial that there is any God. We cannot too seriously ponder this, since the rights of conscience are held to be involved. The atheist does not believe in the soul; he denies that there is any such thing as conscience; yet he comes to those who confess both to insist upon his rights of conscience! I have a few plain, earnest words about all this.

I do not believe that every man is an atheist who says he is one. I distinguish between minds that doubt or deny the existence of God, and those who doubt or deny the sufficiency of the logic usually employed to prove it. And I love to think genuine atheism impossible to the human soul. But now bring forward your atheist, your man who confesses to neither God, angel, nor spirit, your man who believes in all unbelief, and in nothing else, and I know at once what his position is. His religion is irreligion; his morals are only natural morals—the morals of the body, the animal in man, which, in his view, is all there is of man. His speculations do not rove or float among the dreams of philosophy, but they run into the concrete forms of

politics—into the platforms of parties and the enactments of legislatures. Atheism is always political. What are the rights of the atheist? I would tolerate him as I would tolerate a poor lunatic, for in my view his mind is scarcely sound. So long as he does not rave, so long as he is not dangerous, I would tolerate him. I would tolerate him as I would a conspirator. The atheist is a dangerous man. He not only rejects and opposes my faith, but he aims to overturn every institution, and to dissolve every relationship growing out of my faith. He would destroy the very foundations, pull down everything, and build up nothing. But he shall be tolerated. He may live and go free, hold his lands and enjoy his home, he may even vote, but for any higher, more advanced citizenship, he is, as I hold, utterly disqualified. And we are aiming, not to increase, but to render definite his disqualification; to give to our Government and all our free institutions a guarantee that he shall never have control over them. Yes, to this extent I will tolerate the atheist, but no more. Why should I? The atheist does not tolerate me. He does not smile either in pity or in scorn upon my faith. He hates my faith, and he hates me for my faith. He is bent on exterminating me and my faith altogether. "Crush the wretch!" said Voltaire of my Saviour and His cause. And this is still the atheist's motto and his aim. I have received letters and tracts which show this very clearly. Were I to read to you the shocking blasphemies, the words of hate and of murder which they contain, you would shudder in horror. He means to make all these words good among us as soon as he can. And I am asked to accord rights of conscience to a man who says to me, "Come, let me show you how I can use the knife with which I purpose one day to cut your throat." "Come, let me explain to you the force of some nitro-glycerine which I have prepared to blow you up!" I can be as calm and as willing in the one case as in the other. And I am asked to tolerate the atheist's creed under peril of violating the rights of conscience. And this tolerating of atheism means, I suppose, that our Constitution and laws shall be so framed as to imply that there is as much of truth, probability and good in atheism as in Christianity! Tolerate atheism in this sense, sir? Never, never! We know what atheism is, and what atheism does. We know what it builds, and how it operates with its "Natural Morals," its "Death an Eternal Sleep," its "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Twice, at least, in the world's history has it shown what it is capable of doing. Twice across the plains of gay and sunny France has it driven its car of progress, and the whole track has been rapine, and blasphemy, and blood. I can tolerate difference and discussion; I can tolerate heresy and false religion; I can debate the use of the Bible in our common schools; the taxation of church property, the propriety of chaplaincies and the like, but there are some questions past debate. Tolerate atheism, sir? There is nothing out of hell that I would not tolerate as soon. The atheist may live, as I said, but, God helping us, the taint of his destructive creed shall not defile any of the civil institutions of all this fair land! Let us repeat, atheism and Christianity are contradictory terms. They are incompatible systems. They cannot dwell together on the same continent. And let us note that this atheism among us is busy. It is aggressive, with societies, with organs, with agents; with their papers and their preachers. But recently they have imported a man, the papers say, at a salary of \$15,000, to go through the land lecturing and organizing, telling us how to Germanize and

un-Americanize our country. Their organizations raise money, issue publications, form public sentiment and secure votes against our Sunday laws, our blasphemy laws, our temperance laws, our cruelty laws, our laws for social purity and home sanctity, our oath-sealed guaranty for truth and fidelity, and to bring us all down to mere natural morals. We too must organize and make effort. "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!"

Another anticipated difficulty which is urged against us is to determine what Bible to recognize. This difficulty is but imaginary. There is but one Bible. What is called the Catholic or the Protestant Bible is but the Catholic or the Protestant version of the one original Bible. And with every strong conviction that the Protestant version is the better one, I am free to say that any Bible is better than no Bible.

And yet another objection is that the laws of Moses will have to be re-enacted and enforced among us, and that these laws are not at all fitted to our times, our freedom, our civilization. I confess that I am not at all afraid of Moses. I find among his institutions the germs of our own glorious Republic, and the provisions and the spirit of our best laws. But the objectors do not seem to have read the Bible enough to see what a self-interpreting book it is. It records a prophecy and afterwards records its fulfilment. It records a promise and afterwards states when and how the bestowment was effected. It records a ritual and afterwards records what abrogated it and took its place. It gives of itself the clue to distinguish what is of enduring value and moral obligation from what is local, typical, transitory. Now, if there be anything in the laws of Moses which the coming of Christ and the subsequent overthrow of Judaism did not abrogate, let them be pointed out—there cannot be many of them—and we are prepared to accept them and have them re-enacted.

Thus much as to objections and objectors.

As to our movement and our National Association, I have to say:

1. That it is most catholic. It is a matter of general interest. It equally concerns Democrat and Republican, Catholic and Protestant, Unitarian and Trinitarian. I do not say that all these are actually, as yet, combined in it; but all might be thus combined without any compromise of what is distinctive among them, and I trust that ere long they will be. No broader platform was ever erected in American politics.

2. It is a practical measure. It is no dream of mere enthusiasts or fanatics. It does not aim simply to nationalize some shibboleth of some sect. It presents not a question of words, but of underlying comprehensive principles. If these can in due form be secured, it seems to us that the foundations of our nation's character will be secured, the law of our nation's beneficent and unending progress will be secured.

3. It is an essential measure. It is as essential as the Oath is essential, as Christian morals are essential, as Christianity is essential. It will not do to say, we had better leave things as they now are. Things are in a state of change, of transition; they will not stay as they now are. It will not do to say, let us trust the voice of a Christian people for the perpetuity of Christian principles and usages among us; for, in despite of their voice and their influence, the moulding, over-riding force of our national Constitution has more and more eliminated the notion of God and of moral character from our recent State Constitutions and from the decisions of our courts. If we do not carry

this measure, we take the side of atheism. You are called upon, fellow-citizens, to make your election between Christianity and Atheism. "Under which king, Bezonian?" You cannot be too soon in making your response. I cannot doubt what your decision will be.

Our movement means business. We are, as yet, possibly not perfect in all the details of our great measure. We are willing to receive suggestions from our friends. We are willing to gather hints even from our enemies. But we mean to carry this measure if it takes all that ten generations you heard mentioned last evening. Our faith is in God, in His word and in the co-operation of all good men.

I believe I have thus touched upon as many points as I dare without the fear of trespassing upon your long patience.

The following address was next delivered by Professor J. R. W. Sloane, D. D., of Alleghany, Pa.

ADDRESS OF PROFESSOR J. R. W. SLOANE.

The object which has assembled this Convention is one whose importance it would be very difficult to exaggerate. The open, distinct and avowed purpose of the "National Reform Association" is to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as shall furnish a legal basis for legislation upon those elements of our national life that are specifically Christian; such, for example, as Christian marriage; the Sabbath as a day of rest for the laboring man, and of peaceful worship for the religious man; the Bible in the schools; the judicial oath in our courts of justice; chaplains in our army, navy, and public institutions under the control of Government; special days of fasting and thanksgiving, etc.

That a free people should be somewhat sensitive respecting changes in their Constitution is at once natural and proper. The Constitution represents stable government, and stable government is essential to national prosperity and progress. It is not desirable that frequent changes should be made in the National Charter. Nevertheless, the Constitution of a free Government not only may, but must, from time to time, be altered and amended according to the varying and progressive changes of the national life; otherwise it will prove a barrier to national progress, and eventually provoke resistance and revolution. Plant an oak in a vase, and either the vase will kill the oak, or the oak will burst the vase. The garments of the boy of fifteen will not do for the muscular, developed man of twenty-five. The Constitution framed for the thirteen colonies before the steamship, the locomotive, or the telegraph had appeared, will not meet the requirements of our nation to-day, into which so many new forces, both moral and physical, have entered. The only appropriate question which can be asked is, as to the importance, necessity and practicability of the proposed amendment. If it meet some great felt and conscious necessity of the nation, if it be clearly foreseen that its adoption will be productive of beneficent results, then it is at once the dictate, both of reason and of statesmanship, that it be accepted. That such an emergency has arisen is the profound conviction of many of the most thoughtful minds of the country. Our fathers designed to found here a great, free and Christian republic. We have made it free from ocean