PATRIOTIC ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,

ADOPTED AT PHILADELPHIA ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1876,

BY THE

NATIONAL LIBERAL LEAGUE.

SECRETARY

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

TOGETHER WITH THE CHIEF RESOLUTIONS OF THE LEAGUE, ITS CONSTITUTION AND LIST OF OFFICERS, AND ITS PROTEST AGAINST THE SHUTTING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION ON SUNDAYS.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

BOSTON, MASS:
PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL LIBERAL LEAGUE.

1876
OFFICERS
OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL LEAGUE, ELECTED AT PHILADELPHIA,
JULY 1, 1876.

FRANCIS E. ABBOT, ...................................................... Boston, Mass.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.
Hon. E. P. HURLBUT, Albany, N. Y.; Hon. SAMUEL E. SEWALL,
Boston, Mass.; Hon. NATHANIEL HOLMES, St. Louis, Mo.; Hon.
HENRY BOOTH, Chicago, Ill.; Hon. GEORGE W. JULIAN, Irving-
ton, Ind.; Hon. ELIZUR WRIGHT, Boston, Mass.; Mr. O. B. FROTH-
ingam, New York; Mr. WM. J. POTTER, New Bedford, Mass.; Mr.
R. P. HALLOWELL, Boston, Mass.; Mr. JAMES PARTON, Newbury-
port, Mass.; Mr. F. SCHUENEMAN-POTT, San Francisco, Cal.; Hon.
ABRAHAM PAYNE, Providence, R. I.; Rev. M. J. SAVAGE, Boston,
Mass.; Rev. B. F. SELSENTHAL, Chicago, Ill.; Rev. W. H. SPENCER,
Sparta, Wis.; Mr. SAMUEL L. HILL, Florence, Mass.; Mr. JAMES
LICK, San Francisco, Cal.; Mr. E. W. MEDDAUGH, Detroit, Mich.;
Hon. ROBERT DALE OWEN, New Harmony, Ind.; Mr. KARL
HEINZEN, Editor of Der Pionier, Boston; Mr. HORACE SEEVER,
Editor of the Investigator, Boston; RABBi ISAAC M. WISE, Editor of
the American Israelite, Cincinnati; Mr. D. M. BENNETT, Editor of the
Truth Seeker, New York; Mr. MORITZ ELLINGER, Editor of the Jewish
Times, New York; Mr. B. F. UNDERWOOD, Thorndike, Mass.; Rev.
ROBERT COLLYER, Chicago, Ill.

SECRETARY.
R. H. RANNEY, .......................... 1 Tremont Place, Boston, Mass.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY.
Miss JANE P. TITCOMB, ................................. 142 Chandler St., Boston.

TREASURER.
J. A. J. WILCOX, ............................. 8 Pemberton Square, Boston.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
F. E. ABBOT, ............................................... R. H. RANNEY,
D. Y. KILGORE, ........................................... J. A. J. WILCOX.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.
D. Y. KILGORE, Chairman, Pennsylvania; S. J. MATHEWS, Arkans-
as; J. L. HATCH, California; E. B. HAZEN, Connecticut; S. S. WAL-
LIHAN, Colorado; HARWOOD G. DAY, Iowa; HERMANN LIEBER,
Indiana; ROBERT J. INGERSOLL, Illinois; J. E. WALLACE, Louisi-
a; MONROE A. BANCROFT, Maine; A. WARREN KEISER, Missour;
FRANK J. MEAD, Minnesota; WILLIAM LITTLE, New Hampshire;
LORENZO W. BILLINGSLEY, Nebraska; GEORGE WILLIAM THORNE,
North Carolina; GEORGE LEWIS, Rhode Island; R. PETERSON,
Texas; SAMUEL WATSON, Tennessee; J. O. BAR-
RETT, Wisconsin.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.
H. S. WILLIAMS, Chairman, 24 Temple Place, Boston.
MRS. SARAH B. OTIS, ......................................................
HARLAN P. HYDE

PATRIOTIC ADDRESS
OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL LEAGUE
TO THE
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.
Adopted on the Fourth of July, 1876.

PHILADELPHIA, July 4, 1876.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:
Assembled in convention in this historic city and on this historic
day, we, the members of the National Liberal League, offer to
you our sympathetic congratulations on the completion of the first hundred years of the exist-
ence of our common country as one of the great nations of the earth.
With you, we remember in profound gratitude the toils, sacrifices, and achievements of
our forefathers; with you, we pay a tribute of deep veneration to the patri-
otsm, the self-abnegation, the valor, the endurance, the
resolute and the wonderful abilities which were the true fountainhead of our national being;
with you, we exultingly commemorate the speaking
of that bold word which a century ago launched into human history the
first great political proclamation of the natural rights of man, and electrified
the world with that subliminal Declaration of Independence which has made
the Fourth of July one of the deathless festivals of mankind. We share in
the universal outburst of joy and pride which has hailed with the shouts of
forty rejoicing millions the rising of this day's sun.

In full sympathy, therefore, with the spirit of this grand occasion and the
spirit of those whose noble passion for liberty made it grand, we respectfully
address you on a theme closely connected with their heroic and immortal
labor. The dominant purpose of their hearts and the proud achievement
of their hands were the foundation of a free commonwealth on the self-evident
equality of all men with respect to their natural rights. The Constitution
with which consummate sagacity they framed for the execution of this purpose
rests on no other basis; it was ordained and established in the name of “the
people of the United States,” and in no other name; it speaks by the col-
lective authority of all the individuals who compose “the people”; it recog-
nizes the will of “the people,” carrying into effect the dictates of their
natural reason and natural conscience, as the ultimate source and origin of
all political power. No one man, no one class of men, can show any natural
right to rule the rest, except the right which is might; and that right is
tyranny, usurpation, immorality, wrong. From this absolute absence of any
natural right to rule mankind, whether as lodged in one or in a few, results
the self-evident equality of all men in the right to “life, liberty, and the
pursuit of happiness.” That magnificent and inspiring principle is the soul
of the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution to which it ulti-
mately led: it was the soul of the Revolutionary War; it has been the soul of
all our subsequent history; and will be the soul of all our future greatness.

Strike out of the fundamental law of the land this recognition of equal indi-
vidual rights, and, before another hundred years shall have rolled by, the
proud fabric of the republic will have crumbled into impalpable dust.
Now a free Commonwealth thus conceived and established, a national Constitution thus framed and ordained, presuppose the separation of Church and State; they can exist only by virtue of this principle; they must perish if ever this principle should be abandoned. As an abstraction, it has become a stereotyped phrase of American politics, a mere truism which nobody disputes, a mere tradition which it is the fashion to pass from mouth to mouth and not examine too closely in its bearings on existing usages or institutions. What does it mean? That the natural intelligence and moral sense of mankind, but may be their views on religion, are adequate to all the proper purposes, functions, and powers of civil government; that it is never necessary to step outside of the circle of natural human faculties in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. These are the objects, and the only ones, which the Constitution was framed and ordained to secure; and the principle of the separation of Church and State means that they can be secured by the faculties which inhere in simple humanity, as such, and, of a surety, that they will be defeated by permitting the Church to interfere with the workings of a civil government based on faith in the sufficiency of these universal and natural human faculties to protect all the interests of society. Such a government as this is a purely secular one; that is, it confines itself strictly to the secular objects above enumerated, and remands the whole subject of religion to the people in their individual capacity. It can establish no national Church and have no national religion; it favors none, it persecutes none, it recognizes none; it deals only with the political interests of the people, and has nothing to do with their religious interests further than to maintain their religious liberty and liberties are absolute except the right to be protected by the Constitution, and the general theory taken for granted in every line of our national Constitution. Without it, there could be no "government of the people, by the people, for the people"; without it the liberties of the individual, the natural rights of man, would vanish altogether. So long as the State exists by the sole will of the people, the people's liberties are self-protected and therefore safe; but so soon as it becomes in any degree, directly or indirectly, dependent on the Church, the people's liberties in that same degree must depend on the will of those who govern the Church. What fate in that case awaits the people's liberties, history with terrible plainness tells. It is eminently fitting, therefore, on this great day of the nation's Centennial year, to recur to the fundamental principle of the Constitution, and to address to you our plea for a higher fidelity to it. The duties of the people with respect to the better protection of equal rights in religion are too little heeded or understood; and the public dangers which flow from this neglect are too grave, yet so insidious and unperceived, that no excuse is needed for this appeal. Not in the spirit of partisans, seeking some selfish advantage over their fellow-citizens, but rather in the spirit of patriots, concerned for the common welfare of their countrymen and the universal interests of mankind, do we now, weighing well our words, deliberately and solemnly affirm these propositions to be vital and momentous truths:—

1. The Constitution of the United States is built on the principle that the State can be, and ought to be, totally independent of the Church; in other words, that the natural reason and conscience of mankind are a sufficient guarantee of a happy, well-ordered, and virtuous civil community, and that free popular government must prove a failure, if the Church is suffered to control legislation.

2. The religious rights and liberties of all citizens without exception, under the Constitution, are absolutely equal.

3. These equal religious rights and liberties include the right of every citizen to enjoy, on the one hand, the unrestricted exercise of his own religious opinions, so long as they lead him to no infringement of the equal rights of others; and not to be compelled, on the other hand, by taxation or otherwise, to support any religious opinions which are not his own.

4. These equal religious rights and liberties do not depend in the slightest degree upon conformity to the opinions of the majority, but are possessed to their fullest extent by those who differ from the majority fundamentally and totally.

5. Christians possess under the Constitution no religious rights or liberties which are not equally shared by Jews, Buddhists, Confucians, Spiritualists, Deists, rationalists, and all other classes of citizens who disbelieve in the Christian religion.

6. Public or national morality requires all laws and acts of the government to be in strict accordance with this absolute equality of all citizens with respect to religious rights and liberties.

7. Any infringement by the government of this absolute equality of religious rights and liberties is an act of national immorality, a national crime committed against that natural "justice," which, as the Constitution declares, the government was founded to "establish."

8. Those who labor to make the laws protect more faithfully the equal religious rights and liberties of all the citizens are the "enemies of morality," but moral reformers in the true sense of the word, and act in the evident interest of public righteousness and peace.

9. Those who labor to gain or to retain for one class of religious believers and religious parties a preference or advantage, or to disfranchise by the community at large, are really "enemies of morality," unite Church and State in proportion to their success, and, no matter how ignorantly or innocently, are doing their utmost to destroy the Constitution and undermine this free and equal government.

10. Impartial protection of all citizens in their equal religious rights and liberties, by encouraging the free movement of mind, promotes the establishment of the truth respecting religion, while violation of these rights, by checking the free movement of mind, postpones the triumph of truth over error, and of right over wrong.

11. No religion can be truly whose continued existence depends on continued State aid. If the Church has the truth, it does not need the unjust favoritism of the State; if it has not the truth, the iniquity of such favoritism is free and found.

12. No religion can be favorable to morality whose continued existence depends on continued injustice. If the Church teaches good morals, of which justice is a fundamental law, it will gain in public respect by practising the morals it teaches, and voluntarily offering to forego its unjust legal advantages; if it does not teach good morals, then the claim to these unjust advantages on the score of its good moral influence becomes as wicked as it is weak.

13. Whether true or false, whether a fountain of good moral influences or of bad, no particular religion and no particular church has the least claim in justice upon the State. In favor, any privilege, any immunity. The Constitution is no respecter of persons and no respecter of churches; its sole office is to establish civil society on the principles of right reason and impartial justice; and any State aid rendered to the Church, being a compulsion of the whole people to support the Church, wrongs every citizen who protests against such compulsion, violates impartial justice, sets at naught.
the first principles of morality, and subverts the Constitution by undermining the fundamental idea on which it is built.

If these propositions are true (and who can say that they are not true, or not in strict conformity with the tenor and spirit of the Constitution?) we respectfully submit to you that they merit the attention of every enlightened and patriotic statesman, and of every just and large-minded citizen. They show that, as a nation, we are not today living in harmony with our own vast majority, it is certain to involve us once more in civil confusion, unless its causes are removed. Either our Constitution must be changed to suit our practices, or our practices must be changed to suit our Constitution.

The principle of secular "government" of the people, by the people, must be eventually abandoned, or eventually obeyed more faithfully. The issue touches the very existence of our political system, which cannot long survive in open violation of the very ideas which gave it birth. By exempting church property from taxation; by supporting chaplains out of the public treasury; by appropriating public funds for sectarian institutions; by permitting Bible teaching and other religious services in the public schools, and thus perverting the public school system, for which all alike are taxed, into an instrument of religious propaganda by only a part of the people; by using the judicial oath instead of simple affirmation; by enforcing on the public the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath, and by various other practices too numerous to mention, we unite Church and State, and fall to carry out the essential principle of the Constitution. The Church thus permitted to seize the whole power of the State, and compel large classes of citizens to contribute involuntarily to the support of religious opinions which are not their own. That is the result of all state favoritism to any particular religion; and it cannot be reconciled with the fashionable professions of regard for religious liberty.

All these real but unacknowledged connections of Church and State constitute at the same time private wrongs, public immoralities, and public dangers. They are private wrongs, felt to be such by rapidly-increasing multitudes of citizens, because they compel men to pay public homage to a faith which is not their own, and thus wound them deep in the conscience, and their self-respect. They are public immoralities, because they violate the great laws of justice, freedom, and equal rights, which are the very soul of political ethics. They are public dangers, because they sanction sectarian usurpations, inflame sectarian ambitions, and powerfully tempt to new sectarian encroachments; for they create an accumulating mass of prejudice, and threaten for trampling under foot the broad principle of the total separation of Church and State on which our whole government is founded; because they habituate the people to a semi-eclesiastical administration of the State, breed fanatic plots against religious liberty and equal religious rights, and chase thousands of our best and noblest citizens with a consciousness of oppression; in fine, because they sow the seeds of petty brawls in many places over political or religious questions which ought never to arise, and because of the gravity, in our national politics, touching the future relations of the Church to the public school system. These facts are the genesis of the movement which has culminated in the formation of the National Liberal League, and for the appeal which we now make to your reason and conscience.

In his "Farewell Address," George Washington bequeathed to you these grave and pregnant words of wisdom: "Towards the preservation of your government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretenses. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations which will imperil the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown."

The warning here uttered was not unnecessary. For years this "spirit of innovation upon the principles" of the Constitution has been at work. A party, whose public advocates include scores of men high in political and ecclesiastical position, has been regularly organized to secure the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution which shall formally recognize "Almighty God as the author of national existence and the source of all power and authority in civil government," "Jesus Christ as the ruler of nations," and "the Bible as the fountain of law and the supreme rule for the conduct of nations." This party publishes a weekly newspaper, and have just held a convention in this city, in furtherance of their object. We thus see the full "spirit of innovation upon the principles" of the Constitution, against which the venerable Washington has so solemnly warned us, seeking already to "undermine what cannot be directly overthrown," and aiming a fatal blow at the greatest of all the great principles of that instrument,—the principle of the total separation of Church and State. The effect of this amendment, if adopted, will be to make evangelical Christianity the established religion of the United States, and to that extent to make its churches the Established Church. Such a change would be more than a mere "innovation,"—it would be a revolution, the destruction of this democratic republic and the substitution of an ecclesiastical theocracy.

We therefore deem it our solemn duty to follow the wise counsels of Washington, and to "resist with care" the insidious workings of that "spirit of innovation" which now boldly assails the very foundation of our free government by attempting to "undermine what cannot be directly overthrown." We see that the pretexts of the ecclesiastical revolutionists is the alleged duty of "preserving the existing Christian features of our government": that is, the exemption of church property from taxation, the reading of the Bible in the public schools, the Sabbath, and so forth; and as long as these absurdities continue, the advocates of the Christian Amendment of the Constitution overlook a strong argument in their assaults upon the great charter of our liberties; that these abuses, having no foothold in the Constitution, possess no guarantee of continuance in the supreme law of the land; and that all who are determined to perpetuate them must soon or later rally to the standard of the Christian Amendment. We see, therefore, that the existence of these abuses is to-day a standing invitation and summons to revolutionize the government, a perpetual temptation to disloyalty of a fanatical and therefore most dangerous kind. In this attitude of affairs, true statesmanship requires the removal of evils whose consequences can only be miseries, crimes, and political strife embittered by religious hate.

With these facts and principles before us, we have voted in convention to petition Congress to recommend to the several States for adoption such a "Religious Freedom Amendment" to the Constitution as shall effectually secure our Church and State in fact as well as in theory, and protect all individuals in their equal religious liberties and rights. We now appeal to you to give your support to this great measure by your signatures, your voices, and your votes; and we present these brief reasons for our appeal:—

1. The "Religious Freedom Amendment" is not in any sense a change of the Constitution or an innovation either with regard to its spirit or its special provisions. On the contrary, it is a measure in precisely the same spirit as
now prevades the Constitution, being based on the identical principle which, as we have shown, everywhere underlies it,—a measure which will only give greater extension to this principle, and make it supreme in the governments of the several states as well as in the national government.

2. The proposed amendment, being designed solely to preserve and perfect the existing secular character of the Constitution, is a thoroughly and wisely conservative measure, in the very best sense of the word. It aims, not to undermine, but to confirm and strengthen and enlarge what already exists.

3. If the proposed amendment is not adopted, impartially protective to all religious sects, while prohibiting special State favors to any. It is not hostile to any religious principles, nor to the exercise of these equal religious liberties and rights of all American citizens. Whoever is in favor of these equal rights and liberties is stopped from accusing it of hostility to his own denomination. It is not hostile to nothing but the claim of tyranny.

The question of the proposed amendment is an eminently timely one for us to consider at present. The public school amendment of the Hon. James G. Blaine, already proposed in Congress and evidently destined to come up for action long before, is a compromise between the ecclesiastical and the secular theories of government. If passed, it will not have the effect of secularizing the public schools, but will leave undisturbed the chief evil to be reformed. The public school amendment is a measure which, like Mr. Blaine's, will keep the Bible in the schools, and thereby fail to separate Church and State in the public school system, ought to be adopted. But the great danger of the hasty adoption of this compromise amendment, with all its looseness and ambiguity, renders it timely and expedient that a thoroughly secular amendment be adopted with delay upon the public attention, that the case may not go against liberty by sheer default.

The "Religious Freedom Amendment" is a necessary measure, judged by a high and broad and enlightened statesmanship. For a hundred years the general tendency of our national development has been in the direction of a gradually increasing liberation of the State from pre-existing ecclesiastical trammels; but quick and watchful eyes are not wanting to detect the signs of a turn in the tide. The long conflict over the slavery question absorbed the political energies of the nation, and left dormant the other great conflict in the arena of political activity. The campaign of last spring in Ohio: the President's speech at Des Moines in September; and his annual message to Congress in December: Mr. Blaine's public school amendment proposed in Congress and the countless others elsewhere: the public school planks in the platforms adopted by numerous State and national party conventions; and the certainty of a fresh discussion of the school question in the Presidential campaign of this summer and autumn,—all these and other signs point to an impending agitation on issues involving the relations of Church and State which can only end in a new Constitutional amendment. True statesmanship suggests that the amendment be such as shall really end the agitation. But, unless the entire Constitution is to be revolutionized, no amendment can do this which does not absolutely separate Church and State. Other solutions will be partial, sectarian, transient; that solution alone can be final. We therefore hold that the "Religious Freedom Amendment" is the only measure which can permanently eliminate the Church question from party politics, because it is the only measure which can settle that question in harmony with the Constitution. Does not true statesmanship point to its early adoption?

Fellow-citizens, we must go backward or forward: to stand still is as impossible for nations as for men. Two Constitutional amendments are offered to you for your choice, embodying two opposing principles between which human ingenuity will search in vain to find a mean. One fatally entangles the State with the Church, and plunges this young republic into all the bitterest embarrassments of the Old World. The other proclaims the absolute emancipation of the State from all these embarrassments, and sets her forever free, with her face to the future. The one violates the whole spirit of the Constitution, strikes a deadly wound at the very heart of Liberty, and foredooms the nation to a career from which it may well shrink back aghast. The other carries the Constitution up to a higher and nobler fulfillment of its own matchless ideal, makes Liberty and Love kiss each other, and sets the crown of a resplendent destiny on the nation's brow. One or the other, by the irresistible logic of ideas and events, must in some form be ultimately incorporated in our fundamental law: when, and how soon, it is for you, the people of the United States, to say. But our duty is discharged. Our cause is still that of our forefathers, whose great Declaration of Independence echoes forever "through the corridors of time"; and here, on the hundredth anniversary of that mighty word, we as solemnly declare the State's total independence of the Church. Will you ratify this new word of freedom?

RESOLUTIONS
Adopted July 3 and 4, 1876.

I. Resolved, That the National Liberal League, convened at Philadelphia from July First to July Fourth, 1876, respectfully petitions the Senate and House of Representatives, in Congress assembled, to recommend to the several States for adoption such a "Religious Freedom Amendment" of the United States Constitution as shall effect the total separation of Church and State in all branches and departments of the government. National, State, and municipal, and protect all American citizens in the enjoyment of their equal religious rights and liberties; that petitions be circulated throughout the country in support of this petition, and, if possible, a million signatures to the same be obtained; and that the Board of Directors of the National Liberal League are hereby instructed to carry this resolution into effect.

II. Resolved, That we recommend and urge the formation of a local auxiliary Liberal League in every city, town, and village of the country where ten brave men and women can be found to take the lead in the movement for the purpose of instituting earnest and combined agitation in favor of equal rights respecting religion, and in favor of such a Constitutional Amendment as shall guarantee them.

III. Resolved, That all American citizens, whether orthodox or heterodox, Christian or non-Christian, possess an equal natural right to hold, to utter, and by all orderly and peaceable means to propagate their private religious opinions; that they all possess an equal right not to be taxed, directly or indirectly, for the support of religious opinions they do not hold; of religious societies of which they are not voluntary members; or of religious services they do not personally approve; that they all possess an equal right to employ their time,
and the whole of it, as they judge fit, just so long as they commit no positive trespass on the equal rights of others; that they all possess an equal right to enjoy for seven days of the week all public libraries, art-galleries, museums, parks, gardens, thoroughfares, or other institutions or facilities for the support of which they are taxed, and not to be debarred from such enjoyment on Sunday because a part of the people do not choose to avail themselves of these things on that day; in fine, that they all possess an equal right to live under a government which shall respect all men’s private religion, but favor no man’s.

IV.

Resolved, That morality is the supreme interest of civil society; that its foundations lie in the natural relations of man to man; that its great laws of right and wrong shine by their own light, and are only darkened when thrust under the bushel-basket of ecclesiastical patronage; that truthfulness, honor, integrity, courage, self-respect, patriotism, are natural and not theological virtues; and that such virtues as these, fostered by the establishment of a thorough civil service reform and the abolition of machine politics, are the sole fountain of that purified public morality for which every upright citizen longs.

V.

Resolved, That, so long as the Church insists on retaining its present political privileges, in violation of justice, liberty, and equal rights, it is guilty of oppression, sets an example of public unrighteousness, renders its social influence immoral to that extent, and thus helps to demoralize the community at large.

VI.

Resolved, That the principle of State Secularization means that the free State has its own sufficient basis in the laws and needs of human nature, totally independent of the Church;—that this basis is the social necessity of maintaining equal rights in religion, genuine morality in politics, and educated intelligence in all the citizens,—and that this object is defeated by permitting the Church or any other organization to usurp its authority in any degree.

VII.

Resolved, That we affirm the immense moral importance of the principle of State Secularization, and the moral obligation of all good citizens, irrespective of their religious creeds, to join heartily in the movement to carry it more consistently into practice.

VIII.

Resolved, That the State Secularization question can never be got out of politics until it is settled for ever by being settled right.

IX.

Resolved, That the Liberal League movement has nothing whatever to do with the Christian or any other religion as such, either to favor or to oppose it; that it is directed simply against certain glaring political usurpations of the Church, certain actual and grievous interferences by it with the State; that the purpose of this movement is eminently positive, defensive, and constructive, not negative, aggressive, or destructive, since it only seeks to carry out more faithfully the principle of divorce between Church and State on which the Constitution was founded, and thus fulfill Washington's ideal of a purely secular State; that the Christian or anti-Christian character of this movement is solely a question of private interpretation, to be answered by each member of the Liberal League according to his own definition of Christianity; that all citizens who favor the total separation of Church and State are in good faith cordially invited to work with us; and that no Christian can accuse the Liberal League of being anti-Christian without thereby confessing that Christianity as he himself understands it condemns the separation of Church and State.

X.

Resolved, That the National Liberal League has nothing to do with existing political parties as such. We will neither coquet with them nor be used by them; we propose a great political object in which all good citizens of every party should unite; we will seek to further this object by no secrecy, underhandness, or political trickery of any kind, but frankly appeal to public opinion and public support. Other things being equal, we will vote for such candidates as favor this object, and withhold our votes from such as oppose it; but we shall do this in the independent exercise of our individual judgments, and enter as a League into alliance with no political party.

XI.

Resolved, That universal education is the only safeguard of universal liberty; that no child in the republic should be permitted to grow up without at least a good common school education; that the public school system cannot be sustained in equal justice to all except by confining it strictly to secular instruction; that all religious exercises should be prohibited in the public schools; that the permission of such exercises in them is a perversion of public funds raised for educational purposes to the purposes of religious propagation; and that to allow in these schools the present practice of Bible-reading, prayer, and singing of religious hymns, or the use of textbooks which are so written as to inculcate religious dogmas of any kind, is a great moral wrong to large classes of citizens.

XII.

Resolved, That the non-committal Constitutional Amendment, proposed in Congress by the Hon. James G. Blaine and reserved for action until next winter, which simply provides that no public lands or public funds devoted to school purposes shall “ever be under the control of any religious sect,” or “be divided among religious sects or denominations,” 1 still leaves Protestant sects undisturbed in their present collective mastery over the public school system, and therefore ought not to be adopted, unless so amended as to prevent any sect or number of sects from exercising control over the public schools.

XIII.

Resolved, That the Bible, being regarded as a book of sacred character and of religious authority by only a part of the people, is to all intents and purposes a sectarian book; and we protest against the permission of its use in the public schools on the pretense of its being a non-sectarian book, as a manifest evasion of the truth, and a wilful disregard of the equal religious rights of the people.

XIV.

Resolved, That in no flippant or defiant spirit, but rather with a deep desire that the national government should be just to the whole people, we protest against the recent proclamation of President Grant, inviting the people to celebrate the Fourth of July by religious observances. We deny emphatically the right of the President to issue a civil proclamation of any religious fast or festival, to assume as President a strictly ecclesiastical function, to entangle the State with the Church by interfering with the people's free control of their own religious observances, and to cast the stigma of government disapproval on those citizens who do not choose to comply with this unwarranted, officious, and impertinent invitation. We declare the manifestly increasing disposition of the government to meddle in matters of religion, and to yield to the instigation of ambitious sectaries who take this method of establishing their own civil supremacy, to be a tendency of vast peril to the perpetuation of religious liberty. We remind President Grant of the nobler example of his great predecessor in office, Thomas Jefferson, who, according to the historian, “refused to appoint days of fasting and thanksgiving,
on the ground that to do so would be indirectly to assume an authority over religious exercises which the Constitution has expressly forbidden. A recommendation from the Chief Magistrate, he thought, would carry with it so much authority that any person or sect disregarding it would suffer some disadvantage. And we pointedly remind President Grant of his own advice to the people last September at Des Moines, substantially referred to in December in his Annual Message to Congress, but now so glaringly disregarded by himself—"KEEP THE CHURCH AND THE STATE FOREVER SEPARATE."

XV.
Resolved, That we would most scrupulously respect the right of churchgoers to enjoy their Sunday-worship unmolested and undisturbed; and we ask them to respect the equal right of those who do not choose to join them to enjoy their own Sundays in equal freedom.

XVI.
Resolved, That the closing of the International Exhibition on Sundays is a fresh usurpation of political power by the Church,—a gross infringement of the equal religious rights and liberties of the people, who have all been taxed by public appropriation for the Exhibition,—a bitter and grievous wrong to the poor and laboring classes, who are thus in great measure debarred from enjoying the precious advantages which they of all classes have the best right and the most need to enjoy,—and a monstrous denial of the religious equality of all citizens who disbelieve in the alleged sacred character of Sunday.

XVII.
Resolved, That F. E. Abbot, B. F. Underwood, George W. Julian, D. Y. Kilgore, James McArthur, W. J. Potter, R. P. Hallowell, Mrs. Dr. Pratt, and Mrs. Kilgore, are hereby appointed a committee to attend the next meeting of the United States Centennial Commission on Wednesday, July 5, to present the protest of the National Liberal League against the closing of the International Exhibition on Sundays.

XVIII.
Resolved, That the conversion of the United States government into a Missionary Society by the present administration, which has made it an avowed object to "Christianize the Indians," and carries it out by employing sectarian missionaries as paid officials of the government, is another in the long and growing list of encroachments on the principle of secular government.

WHEREAS, The United States statutes relating to the Treasury Department, Section 3517, expressly provide that—"Upon the coins there shall be the following devices and legends: upon one side there shall be an impression emblematic of liberty, with an inscription of the word 'Liberty,' and of the year of the coinage, and upon the reverse shall be the figure or representation of an eagle, with the inscription 'United States of America,' and 'E Pluribus Unum,' and a designation of the mint, "

WHEREAS, The Director of the Mint, without authority of law and on his own motion alone, has seen fit to inscribe on several of the coins, particularly on the new silver quarter-dollars and half-dollars, the legend "In God we trust," therefore,

Resolved, That the Director of the Mint deserves the severe censure of the people and dismissal from his office for this great abuse of the trust reposed in him.

Resolved, That placing such an inscription on the national coinage is analogous to striking the stars from the national flag and inserting the cross in their stead, or throwing down the statue of Liberty from the dome of the national Capitol and setting up that of the Virgin Mary in its place; and that such cunning, stealthy, and dangerous encroachments of the sectarian spirit on the secular character of the government should call forth the loud and swift rebuke of an outraged people.

XX.
Resolved, That we hereby appeal to the country for funds to carry on the vitally important work for which we have organized; that we believe there is abundant wealth and abundant enthusiasm ready to aid us, just as soon as our objects are thoroughly understood and widely known; and that we rely confidently on the generosity of the patriotic public not to permit this great cause to languish for want of the all-essential means.

XXI.
Resolved, That we accept the offer of the Boston Index to be our official organ of communication with the public, for the publication of announcements, acknowledgments, and other official papers of the Board of Directors; but that we assume no responsibility for anything else published in its columns, and claim no control or influence in its general editorial management.

XXII.
Resolved, That the Directors are instructed to ascertain, if possible, by direct inquiry, whether the Presidential candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties are in favor of strictly secular government and of the special measures we advocate; and to communicate the result to the public.

XXIII.
Resolved, That the resolutions of sympathy with this movement presented by Professor Loos on behalf of the German 'Union of Radicals' are received with pleasure and respect; and that, while the National Liberal League expresses no collective opinion on the points inquired about, we hold ourselves individually free to favor or to oppose any measures not included in the specified objects which we have endeavored to accomplish.

XXIV.
Resolved, That this League receives from the Michigan State Association of Spiritualists its able and earnest statement of the objects of the National Liberal League, and tenders thanks for its assurance of co-operation in the promotion of these objects.

XXV.
Resolved, That, recognizing the obvious fact that the support of the objects of the National Liberal League must depend chiefly upon the strength of public sentiment in their favor, we hereby tender our thanks to those brave journals which now, in the comparative infancy of our movement, are giving it their encouragement and influence on account of its intrinsic excellence.

XXVI.
Resolved, That we hereby tender our thanks to the publisher and editor of the Boston Investigator for their brave and earnest advocacy of the secularization of the government, in past years when the Liberal League was unknown and when their efforts were but poorly appreciated.

XXVII.
Resolved, That we regard the bust of Thomas Paine now on our platform, executed in marble by Sidney H. Morse, for presentation to the city of Philadelphia, and designed for permanent preservation in Independence Hall, as a noble and fit testimonial to his heroic and patriotic public career.
PROTEST

OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL LEAGUE AGAINST CLOSING THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION ON SUNDAYS, PRESENTED AT THE MEETING OF THE
UNITED STATES CENTENNIAL COMMISSION ON THE
EXHIBITION GROUNDS AT PHILADEL-
PHIA, JULY 6, 1876.

PHILADELPHIA, JULY 4, 1876.

To the President and Members of the Centennial Commission:

Gentlemen,—At one of the sessions of the National Liberal League, just
organized at Concert Hall in this city, a committee, consisting of F. E. Abbot,
Potter, R. P. Hallowell, Mrs. Dr. Pratt, and Mrs. Kilgore, was appointed
and instructed to present to your honorable body the protest of the League
against the closing of the International Exhibition on Sunday, together with
a list of the officers and members.

In obedience to these instructions, the undersigned members of this Com-
mittee respectfully present the following, as the leading reasons of this
protest:

1. The Exhibition is a National affair, sustained in large measure by the
impartial taxation of the whole American people, without the least regard to
their religious beliefs: and the equal rights of the whole people ought to be
scrupulously protected by the officers to whom its management is intrusted.
But it is a denial and infracture of their equal religious rights to exclude the
whole people from the Exhibition on Sundays, merely because a part of the
people believe Sunday to be a holy day. Such a belief justifies those who
hold it in staying away from the Exhibition on Sundays; but it does not justif-
ily them in keeping others away from it. The Church has no right under
the Constitution to impose any part of its creed on the State, or to
claim for those who believe it any temporal advantage over those who dis-
believe it.

2. The closing of the Exhibition on Sundays is a grievous practical wrong
against the working classes, who especially need and would prize the educa-
tional influences offered in this magnificent display of the products of all
countries, but who are now debarred from visiting it on the day when it is
most convenient for them to do so, and who must in consequence either
keep away altogether, or visit it on a day when they suffer an additional tax
by the loss of their wages. The right of the working-man in this country to
visit the Exposition on Sundays is certainly as good as that of the Emperor
of Brazil and his attendants, for whose convenience, it is reported, the Sun-
day restriction has been removed and the alleged sacredness of the day
violated.

Respectfully yours,

F. E. Abbot.
B. F. Underwood.
George W. Julian.*
Damon Y. Kilgore.
James McArthur.
William J. Potter.
Richard P. Hallowell.
Mary Pratt, M. D.
Carrie B. Kilgore.

* Mr. Julian authorizes the addition of his name to this protest, although he was not
present at the time to sign it.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

NATIONAL LIBERAL LEAGUE,

Adopted July 1, 1876

PREAMBLE.

Whereas, The Constitution of the United States, from beginning to
end, in spirit and in letter, is framed in accordance with the principle of
the total separation of Church and State; and the Treaty with Tripoli,
signed by George Washington as a part of the supreme law of the land,
declares emphatically that "the government of the United States is not in
any sense founded on the Christian religion;" and

Whereas, Notwithstanding these facts, the administration of the national
government, and the administrations and constitutions of the several State
governments, maintain numerous practical connections of the State with the
Church, thereby violating the spirit of the United States Constitution and
the glorious traditions which dedicate this country exclusively to the natural
rights of man; and

Whereas, The welfare and peace of the republic, the equal religious
rights and liberties of its citizens, and the most precious interests of civil-
zation, alike require that all the political and educational institutions of the
nation which are supported by taxation should be more faithfully conformed
to the spirit of its fundamental law:

Therefore, We, the members of the Centennial Congress of Liberals, con-
vened at Philadelphia from July 4th to July Fourth, 1876, hereby associate
ourselves together as a permanent organization, and adopt the following

CONSTITUTION.

Name.

Article I.—The name of this association shall be "The National
Liberal League."

General Object.

Article II.—The general object of the National Liberal League shall
be to accomplish the TOTAL SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE: to the
end that equal rights in religion, genuine morality in politics, and freedom,
virtue, and brotherhood in all human life, may be established, protected, and
perpetuated.

Specific Object.

Article III.—As means to the accomplishment of this general object,
the specific objects of the National Liberal League shall be:
1. To urge the adoption of such a "Religious Freedom Amendment" of the United States Constitution as shall effect the complete secularization of the government in all its departments and institutions, State and National, and shall secure to every American citizen the full enjoyment of his opinions on the subject of religion, whatever they may be, without molestation, disability, or deprivation of any civil or political right.

2. To advocate the equitable taxation of church property; the total discontinuance of religious instruction and worship in the public schools; the repeal of all laws enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath; the cessation of all appropriations of public funds for religious institutions or purposes of any kind; the abolition of State-paid chaplains; the substitution of simple affirmation under the pains and penalties of perjury for the judicial oath; the non-appointment of religious fasts, festivals, and holidays by public authority; the practical establishment of simple morality and intelligence as the basis of purely secular government; and the adequate guarantee of public order, prosperity, and righteousness; and whatever other measures or principles may be necessary to the total separation of Church and State.

3. To promote the formation and multiplication of local auxiliary Liberal Leagues throughout the country in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, in order to institute combined and vigorous agitation for the adoption of the "Religious Freedom Amendment," and, pending its adoption, to secure through State and municipal action the accomplishment of the various special reforms above enumerated.

4. To defend through the courts, by the combined efforts and means of the Liberals of the country, any American citizen whose equal religious rights are denied, or who is oppressed, on account of any opinions he may have held or expressed on the subject of religion.

5. To promote, by all peaceable and orderly means, active propaganda of the great principles of religious liberty and equal rights, devotion to truth for its own sake, and universal brotherhood on the ground of a common humanity; more particularly, to establish a Liberal Lecture Bureau for the mutual benefit of hearers and lecturers, by which the formation of local liberal societies may be facilitated and stimulated, and by which liberal lecturers of sufficient ability and unblemished moral character, without the least discrimination on account of their religious opinions, may be encouraged, furnished with employment, and helped to devote themselves to the liberal cause.

6. In all other proper and practicable ways, to aid in the final emancipation of the State from the control of the Church, and to foster the development of that natural intelligence and morality which constitute the necessary and all-sufficient basis of secular government.

**Membership.**

**ARTICLE IV.** Any person who shall pay one dollar into the treasury shall be entitled to a certificate, signed by the President and Secretary, as an ordinary member of the National Liberal League. Any person who shall pay twenty-five dollars or more into the treasury shall be entitled to a similar certificate as a life-member. All the persons present as members at the Centennial Congress of Liberals, at which this Constitution was adopted, are hereby declared permanent or charter-members of the National Liberal League.

**ARTICLE V.** The Annual Congress of the National Liberal League shall be held at such time and place and with such sessions as the Board of Directors may announce; and public notice of the Congress shall be given at least one month previously. The first Annual Congress shall be held in the year 1877. Other conventions of the League may be held at such places and times as the Board of Directors shall appoint.

All charter-members and life-members of the National Liberal League, and all duly accredited delegates from local auxiliary Liberal Leagues organized in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, shall be entitled to seats and votes in the Annual Congress. Annual members of the National Liberal League shall be entitled to seats, but not to votes, in the Annual Congress.

**Article VI.** The officers of the National Liberal League shall be a President, six or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, a Board of Directors, an Executive Committee, and a Finance Committee. All these officers shall be elected at the Annual Congress, and shall hold their offices for one year, or until others are chosen in their stead. The Board of Directors shall have power to fill any office of the League that may become vacant before the meeting of the Annual Congress succeeding their own election.

**President.**

**ARTICLE VII.** The President's duty shall be to preside at the Annual Congress and other conventions of the League, and to meet the Board of Directors; and to countersign all orders upon the treasurer duly drawn by the Secretary.

**Secretaries.**

**ARTICLE VIII.** The Secretary's duty shall be to keep the records, compile lists of members, and other papers of the League, and also of the Board of Directors; to report promptly to the Board of Directors all facts communicated to him by the Secretaries of local auxiliaries, and to present careful and full minutes of the same for the Annual Congress; and to conduct such correspondence as usually pertains to his office. It shall be the duty of the Assistant Secretary to assist in this work under the Secretary's direction.

**Treasurer.**

**ARTICLE IX.** The Treasurer, after giving security satisfactory to the Board of Directors, shall receive and hold all funds of the League, subject to orders duly drawn by the Secretary and countersigned by the President. He shall report the state of the finances of the League at every Annual Congress, and often if required by the Board of Directors or Finance Committee; and upon the election of a successor he shall deliver to him all the property of the League that he may hold.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

**ARTICLE X.** The President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Chairman of the Finance Committee, shall constitute the Board of Directors, which shall be instructed with the general management and control of the affairs of the League from year to year. They shall make a full report of their doings on the first day of each Annual Congress. All appropriations from the treasury shall be by vote of the Board of Directors.

**Executive Committee.**

**ARTICLE XI.** The Executive Committee shall be composed of one member from each State and Territory of the Union, and shall act under the instructions of the Board of Directors. It shall be the duty of each member of the Executive Committee to select and associate with himself four other good citizens of his own State or Territory, as the Executive Sub-Committee for that State or Territory, and he shall be himself the Chairman of the same and promptly report its organization to the Secretary of the National Liberal League. Each Sub-Committee shall appoint a Local Agent in as many of the cities and towns of its own State or Territory as possible. It shall be
the duty of each Local Agent, with the help and co-operation of the State Sub-Committee, to organize, if possible, a local auxiliary Liberal League in his own city or town, to report its organization promptly to the Chairman of the State Sub-Committee, and to promote by its means the general objects of the National Liberal League.

The Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be elected as such by the Annual Congress, and shall be ex officio a member of the Board of Directors.

**Finance Committee.**

**ARTICLE XII.**—The Finance Committee shall be composed of three members, elected by the Annual Congress. It shall be their duty to devise ways and means for raising such funds as may be needed for the successful prosecution of the work of the League, and to carry them into execution with the help of the Board of Directors.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee shall be elected as such by the Annual Congress, and shall be ex officio a member of the Board of Directors.

**Local Auxiliary Liberal Leagues.**

**ARTICLE XIII.**—The Board of Directors shall have authority, as often as they may, to receive a written application signed by ten or more persons and accompanied by ten dollars, to issue a charter for the formation of a local auxiliary Liberal League.

**ARTICLE XIV.**—Charters so issued shall contain Constitutions substantially similar to this Constitution, but adapted to local wants, providing for regular and frequent meetings to promote the mental and moral culture and general social enjoyment of the members, for Children's Fraternities to promote the welfare and happiness of their children, for Relief Committees to supply the needs of sick, poor, or distressed members, and in general for whatever may conduce to the private benefit as well as the public usefulness of the local Leagues.

**ARTICLE XV.**—Local auxiliary Liberal Leagues organized under charters issued by the Board of Directors shall be absolutely independent in the administration of their own local affairs. The effect of their charters shall be simply to unite them in cordial fellowship and efficient co-operation of the freest kind with the National Liberal League and with other local Leagues. All votes of the Annual Congress, and all communications of the Board of Directors, shall possess no more authority or influence over them than lies in the intrinsic wisdom of the words themselves.

**ARTICLE XVI.**—Every local auxiliary Liberal League organized in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution shall be entitled to send its President and Secretary and three other members as delegates to the Annual Congress.

**ARTICLE XVII.**—It shall be a special duty of the Secretary of each local auxiliary Liberal League to furnish the secretary of the National Liberal League with a complete list of all the members with their post-office addresses in full, and a list of the officers, and also to furnish him with information of all important action, of his own local League.

**Amendments.**

**ARTICLE XVIII.**—Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any Annual Congress of the National Liberal League by a three-fourths vote of the qualified members present. But no amendment shall be made, unless the proposed amendment shall have been published together with the required public notice of the Annual Congress which is to act upon it.

---

**Extracts from Letters by Distinguished Citizens.**

From the Hon. E. P. Hurlbut, of Albany, N. Y.

I regret that I cannot promise you any work of the pen in aid of the cause you have so much at heart, and so ably advocate; but if I can attend at Philadelphia, I may report myself to the League, as one sympathizing in its objects. If my name—long withdrawn from the public, and unknown to the present generation—can serve your association, you are at liberty to use it in the manner suggested; though I shall regret receiving of my honors without being able to help in your work. Some thirty years ago, when the Constitution of New York was about to be revised, I labored for the abolition of the religious test, and secured it, in favor of witnesses in courts of justice. I am no longer young, and my hopes for our institutions are not so sanguine as they were then; still they are worth fighting for on account of the theory alone. Perhaps a generation may arise worthy to uphold them, the present exhibiting more of ignorance and less of innocence than consists with popular rule.

From the Hon. Samuel E. Sewall, of Boston.

I am so much in favor of the general objects of the National Liberal League that I cannot refuse to be nominated as one of its vice-presidents, if it is thought that my name will help the cause in any degree. I must add that at this moment the third section of the proposed amendment, as it seems to me, requires some modification. With the first and fourth, I concur hearty and entirely. Every year that passes renders the adoption of new constitutional protection for religious freedom more and more urgent.

From the Hon. Nathaniel Holmes, of St. Louis, Mo.

I concur entirely in recommending the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and in the general objects and purposes of the movement, so far as I am at present informed of them; and if you and other friends of the cause think the use of my name as vice-president can be of any service, I shall not withhold my consent. It is probable I may be in Philadelphia about the time mentioned; and if so, I shall take pleasure in attending the Congress.

From the Hon. Henry Booth, of Chicago, Ill.

I am heartily in favor of the total separation of Church and State by the proposed amendment of the Constitution; and you are at liberty to use my name as one of the vice-presidents of the League to be organized for that purpose, if you think proper.

From the Hon. George W. Julian, of Irvington, Ind.

I have yours of the 4th, requesting the privilege of nominating me as one of the vice-presidents of the National Liberal League. Of course you are at liberty to do so. It will not win me popular applause; but I would accept the position as one of high honor, and it affords me real pleasure to comply with your personal wishes, and to thank you for the compliment which they express. As to your proposed "religious freedom amendment," I decidedly approve of it. Some very slight verbal changes might be made; but it covers the whole ground more fully, and accomplishes the desired
purpose more completely and explicitly than any proposition I have noticed. It would totally and absolutely separate Church and State, and nothing less than this should be accepted.

From the Hon. Elizur Wright, of Boston, Mass.

The importance of the work to which the Congress of Liberals is called cannot be over-estimated, as it seems to me; and I should count it a great no probability that I shall be able to attend it, or have any sparse means or strength to devote to the great cause in which it is enlisted. The proposed amendment to the Constitution, it seems to me, must commend itself to every fair-minded man as worthy of a place in that instrument, if it really means to be a guarantee of the rights of conscience. Only the enslaveurs of souls can possibly object to it. Since it is in fact that many people are laboring to turn the Constitution into a theological creed, the sooner we know that they cannot succeed the better. Nothing short of the "Religious Freedom Amendment," it seems to me, can settle this question as it should be; and all sincere religiosity should be in favor of it for the sake of religion itself. . . . If it is only to "stand up and be counted," of course you may depend upon me; and I shall not back down from anywhere you see fit to put me in as a name.

From Mr. O. B. Frothingham, of New York City.

My name for the other purpose you entertain is wholly at your disposal. I shall be proud to be associated with the men you mention, and proud to hold such a position in such a cause.

From Mr. William J. Potter, of New Bedford, Mass.

Certainly, put my name on the vice-presidents' list, if I can thus serve the movement... As to the desirability of the general object of the Liberal League movement, the secularization of the State and of the State schools, and the importance of the proposed Constitutional amendment—this is the specific, practical aim of the National Liberal League, there is no difference of opinion between you and me. If there be any difference between us, it is not upon the proportion which this work bears to the whole free religious movement; but I believe in the work itself, though not able to give to it that intense devotion which it has found in you.

From Mr. R. P. Hallowell, of Boston, Mass.

I am heartily in favor of the establishment of a Liberal League that shall be national in fact as well as in name. With the understanding that Mr. Frothingham and Mr. Potter are to be identified with the proposed national organization, I consent to serve as one of the vice-presidents.

From Mr. James Parton, of Newburyport, Mass.

I am honored by your proposing me for vice-president of the League. Publicity in all its forms and for all its reasons is painful to me, but in this case I will do everything I can. I have lived but to promote it. Make me vice-president if you think it best.

From Mr. Friedrich Schueneeman-Pott, of San Francisco, Cal.

I certainly most cordially consent to your kind proposition to add my name to your list of vice-presidents of the forthcoming Centennial Congress of Liberals. Although, to my utter regret, I shall be unavoidably prevented from being personally present in Philadelphia, my whole heart and soul will be with you, and I shall be looking for the occasion, and "quaeque in me est ingenii, quod sentio quam sit exiguum" will always be, as it has been before, devoted to our common cause.

From the Hon. Abraham Payne, of Providence, R.I.

On my return from New York, I find yours of the 4th. You are at liberty to use my name for the purpose proposed.

From the Rev. Minot J. Savage, of Boston, Mass.

Believing as I do in the main principles that compose the platform of the Liberal League, and sympathizing with the object of the National Congress of Liberals soon to meet in Philadelphia, you have my hearty consent to use my name as one of your vice-presidents. The State will be what it ought to be only when it is made purely secular.

From Rabbi B. Felsenthal, of Chicago, Ill.

By your proposal to nominate me as one of the vice-presidents of the National Liberal League, I feel much flattered. That I indorse heartily all the aims and objects of the League I need hardly assure you.

From the Rev. W. H. Spencer, of Sparta, Wis.

We Spartans have talked about forming a Liberal League and sending your names, but it seems so superfluous and formal a thing to do, as our society is of itself a big Liberal League practically, that we have not organized for that special purpose. Of course I approve of the work for which the Leagues are organized, though I confess I do not probably regard it as of so much and pressing importance as I think you do. . . . If you think my name respectable enough to sandwich between the famous preachers and judges you mention, I can have no objection, but would it not?

From Mr. Samuel L. Hill, of Florence, Mass.

I certainly have no right to imagine it of any importance, favorable to the cause you wish to promote, to have my name put as one of the vice-presidents of the Centennial Congress of Liberals. However, I shall not object to your proposing it, if you wish to. The enclosed check for one hundred dollars I can believe may be useful.

From the Rev. J. L. Hatch, San Francisco, Cal.

Yours of May 10 would have been sooner answered, but for the fact that Mr. Lick has had several weeks been quite ill, and no one was allowed to see him. He is somewhat better now, though still quite feeble. I called upon him yesterday at his hotel, the Lick House, and gave him your letter requesting the use of his name as one of the vice-presidents of the National Liberal League. He authorized me to give you his cheerful assent.

From E. W. Meadleigh, Esq., of Detroit, Mich.

You are at liberty to elevate me to the vice-presidency, or to use me in any other way that in your judgement will help, in the slightest degree, the good cause... I have repeatedly read your proposed amendment to the Constitution, and do not see how it can be improved.

From the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, of New Harmony, Ind.

If you think my name as one of the vice-presidents can be of any service, pray use it. You know I am sure, how entirely I agree with the spirit of the proposed amendment. Coming down to particulars, I think the words — "or in which religious practices shall be observed" — had better be omitted, seeing that the entire ground is covered without them. James' definition of "true religion and undefiled" does not embrace any sectarian dogma, and it is almost the only meaning of the word to be found in the New Testament. I regret that, having already engaged rooms on Lake George for the summer, I shall not be able to be present at your July meeting.
From Mr. Karl Heinzen, editor of "Der Pionier," Boston, Mass.

If you think that my acceptance of a nomination as one of the vice-presidents of your League in Philadelphia can do any good to your cause, which as far as it goes is also my own, I can have no objections to it. But I deem it my duty to tell you that I am a decided atheist and materialist, and must leave it to your consideration whether this may be obnoxious or not.


If possible, I will be present at the Congress, to work with you; if I cannot, I will write you a letter. If you form a Liberal League to unite this element, I am willing to be one of them, officer or private, as it may be deemed most advantageous to the cause. Anyhow I will work with you.

From Mr. D. M. Bennett, editor of the "Truth Seeker," New York City.

I confess I should feel honored by the distinction you named, in connection with the Liberal League, and would readily accept the position. But I fear I will be unable to be with you... Any honor, however, you may see fit to confer upon me will be gratefully appreciated.

From Mr. Horace Seaver, editor of the "Investigator," Boston, Mass.

I see by your kind note of the other day that you wish to make a vice-president of me! I thank you for the honor, though I am not at all ambitious in that line; but as I am friendly to every movement that is liberal, and of course to the League, if you think that my name can be of any advantage, you can use it in the manner you suggest.

From Mr. Moritz Ellinger, editor of the "Jewish Times," New York City.

In reply I would state that I shall cheerfully contribute all that is in my power to the success of the cause in which, I believe, we labor in common. Dispose of my name and my humble services as you deem proper.

From Mr. B. F. Underwood, Thedford, Mass.

I appreciate and thank you for the honor, and have only to say that, if you think my name will help promote the object of the League, you are at liberty to add it to the list of Vice-Presidents to be presented to the Congress. I need not assure you of my earnest, hearty sympathy with the purposes of the Liberal League. I know of nothing now presented for the consideration of the American people more important than the secularization of the government, so that there shall not be even a remnant of that union of Church and State which has, wherever it has prevailed, been a prolific source of mischief to free institutions. It is absolutely necessary to secure to all citizens, without regard to belief, equal rights and impartial religious liberty. The proposition to secure guarantees against any connection between Church and State, as well as to remove everything inconsistent with a purely secular government that now exists, by constitutional amendments such as you have proposed, meets with my entire concurrence, and will have my hearty support. We need only persevere in the noble movement, and success will yet crown our labors.

From the Rev. Robert Collver, Chicago, Ill.

I am entirely willing to go on the list, with your explanation. I think we mean the same thing.

From Mr. Wendell Phillips, Boston, Mass.

I entirely agree with the proposed amendment, and shall give it my hearty support. But many years since I decided not to join any more societies. I have done my share of such work and responsibility, so excuse me from the vice-presidency.

From Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, Boston, Mass.

[This letter was received and publicly read at the Centennial Congress of Liberals, July 31.]

BOSTON, June 30, 1876.

DEAR MR. ABBOT:

I shall not be able to attend the meetings of the National Liberal League at Philadelphia; but if its object is solely to eliminate from our Constitutions and Statute-Books whatever shows the remotest leaning toward a union of Church and State, or that is designed or calculated to give preference to any form of religious belief over another, or that subjects the religious opinions of any person to a proscriptive test, or that grants to religious bodies peculiar rights and privileges whereby their property is exempted from being equally taxed with other property, then I cordially give it my approval. And I do not see why it should not strongly commend itself to all classes, as a matter of justice and equality, whatever may be the opinions they entertain concerning religion. Nay, those opinions, being widely variant and utterly irreconcilable, furnish ample reason why they should be left to stand or fall upon their own merits, and why there should be no supremacy on the one hand or subordination on the other. They belong to the domain of conscience, and, cost what it may, conscience must be left free. What can be more reasonable than this? To reject it is to strike at the foundation of popular government, and to inaugurate the reign of priestcraft, usurpation, and tyranny.

The function of the State is purely secular. It is to see that equal rights are enjoyed, and the general welfare promoted; but it has no right to decree, for example, that any book or any day or any place is holy, or to except church-property from taxation, or to appropriate any portion of the public money for sectarian purposes, or to enforce the reading of the Bible in the public schools, or to proclaim when it behooves the people to fast for their sins or feast for their abundance, or to require any religious test for office, suffrage, naturalization, or giving testimony in the courts. Yet it has assumed this as a part of its prerogatives; thus establishing a dangerous precedent, in contravention of republican principles, and, in my judgment, in violation of the spirit of Christianity itself—Christianity as taught by its founder, and not as exemplified in our day and generation.

Let the League make it clear in its spirit and utterances that it has no ulterior object in view; and that it does not seek a conflict with any form of religion or with any religion as such, but is in antagonism only with what seeks to fetter the conscience, to define what is heresy, to mingle sectarian with secular affairs, and to keep in countenance that union which is specially to be abhorred: namely, the union of Church and State. In that case, occupying as it does common ground, it cannot fail to advance the cause of free institutions.

Yours for the freedom of body and mind,

WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

FRANCIS E. ABBOT.
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AMENDMENT,*
PROPOSED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE
FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U. S. CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1.

SECTION 1.—Neither Congress nor any State shall make any law respecting an establishment of religion, or favoring any particular form of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or permitting in any degree a union of Church and State, or granting any special privilege, immunity, or advantage to any sect or religious body, or to any number of sects or religious bodies; or taxing the people of any State, either directly or indirectly, for the support of any sect or religious body, or of any number of sects or religious bodies; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

SECTION 2.—No religious test shall ever be required as a condition of suffrage, or as a qualification to any office or public trust, in any State. No person shall ever be deprived of any of his or her rights, privileges, or capacities, or disqualified for the performance of any public or private duty, or rendered incompetent to give evidence in any court of law or equity, in consequence of any opinions he or she may hold on the subject of religion. No person shall ever be required by law to contribute directly or indirectly to the support of any religious society or body of which he or she is not a voluntary member.

SECTION 3.—Neither the United States, nor any State, Territory, municipality, or any civil division of any State or Territory, shall levy any tax, or make any gift, grant, or appropriation, for the support, or in aid, of any church, religious sect, or denomination, or any school, seminary, or institution of learning, in which the faith or doctrines of any religious order or sect shall be taught or inculcated, or in which religious rites shall be observed; or for the support, or in aid, of any religious charity or purpose of any sect, order, or denomination whatsoever.

SECTION 4.—Congress shall have power to enforce the various provisions of this Article by appropriate legislation.

*The above is the form of Constitutional amendment proposed by the Boston INDEX of January 6, 1876, and is fuller than the earlier form proposed in the same journal of January 1, 1874.

THE INDEX,
recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as the leading exponent of American Liberalism, is the

OFFICIAL ORGAN
of the National Liberal League.

EDITOR:
FRANCIS ELLINGWOOD ABBOT.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS:
O. B. FROTHINGHAM, W. J. POTTER,
W. H. SPENCER, Mrs. E. D. CHENEY,
G. J. HOLYOAKE, D. H. CLARK.

PRICE $3.20 A YEAR.
Address "THE INDEX," 1 Tremont Place, Boston.
[1876-07-04; 24-page brochure, “Patriotic Address to the People of the United States, Adopted at Philadelphia on the Fourth of July, 1876, by the National Liberal League”. This was an organization whose premise was the separation of church and state.]