

# The Index.

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## THE LIBERAL PLATFORM

ADOPTED AT ROCHESTER, N. Y., OCT. 26, 1877.

1. TOTAL SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE, to be guaranteed by amendment of the United States Constitution: including the equitable taxation of church property, secularization of the public schools, abrogation of Sabbatarian laws, abolition of chaplaincies, prohibition of public appropriations for religious purposes, and all other measures necessary to the same general end.
2. NATIONAL PROTECTION FOR NATIONAL CITIZENS, in their equal civil, political, and religious rights: to be guaranteed by amendment of the United States Constitution, and afforded through the United States courts.
3. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION THE BASIS OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IN THIS SECULAR REPUBLIC: to be guaranteed by amendment of the United States Constitution, requiring every State to maintain a thoroughly secularized public school system, and to permit no child within its limits to grow up without a good elementary education.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AMENDMENT

PROPOSED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U. S. CONSTITUTION.

### ARTICLE I.

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 DEMANDS OF LIBERALISM.

1. We demand that churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from just taxation.
2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in Congress, in State Legislatures, in the navy and militia, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.
3. We demand that all public appropriations for educational and charitable institutions of a sectarian character shall cease.
4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the government shall be abolished; and especially that the use of the Bible in the public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.
5. We demand that the appointment, by the President of the United States or by the Governors of the various States, of all religious festivals and fairs shall wholly cease.
6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and in all other departments of the government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation under the pains and penalties of perjury shall be established in its stead.
7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.
8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated, and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights, and impartial liberty.
9. We demand that not only in the Constitutions of the United States and of the several States, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis; and that whatever changes shall prove necessary to this end shall be consistently, unflinchingly, and promptly made.

The above is the platform of THE INDEX, so far as the editor is individually concerned. But no other person, and no organization, can be justly or truthfully held responsible for it without his or its explicit approval.

FRANCIS E. ABBOT.

### GLIMPSSES.

COLERIDGE wrote few things so boldly true as this: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving his own opinion best of all."

THE DESK on which Jefferson himself testified that he wrote the Declaration of Independence has been presented to the United States by Hon. Robert C. Winthrop. It is to be hoped that the silly people who declare that Thomas Paine wrote the Declaration will now subside.

A WESTERN paper prints this Hibernicism among its standing notices: "To prevent the occurrence of errors, please write legibly on one side only." Are we to infer that illegibility is preferred on the other side? We modestly conjecture that perhaps the editor desires his contributors to "write legibly and on one side only."

AT THE annual meeting of the Free Religious Association, Rev. Wm. Henry Channing is to speak of Dr. Channing's place and services in the movement for inaugurating mental liberty in religion. Geo. W. Curtis has been invited to speak of the same aspect of the work of Theodore Parker, and it is hoped may accept the invitation.

THE PORTLAND Press remarks with considerable point: "It is well to remember that B. A. Morton, just arrested for forgery, is president of the National Liberal League [Party]. Had he been a church member, half the newspapers in the country would have before now had articles on the hypocrisy of professing Christians." It is too true that professedly liberal journals show even a greater eagerness to defend fellow-believers proved to be morally corrupt than do the church papers themselves.

A LOUISVILLE, Ky., despatch of April 25 was to this effect: "To-day, for the first time in ten years, the Sunday law prohibiting labor of any kind was enforced. Between twelve and two o'clock this morning, the police visited all places open, including newspaper offices, and took the name of every person doing work for presentment to the grand jury. The list includes all classes,—editors, compositors, pressmen, newsboys, saloon-keepers, and hackmen. The law is very stringent, allowing no work or business to be done except household duties."

A CURIOUS ENVELOPE, addressed "To some Publisher of a Celebrated Religious Journal, published in Boston, Mass.," was sent to the office of THE INDEX, a few days ago, by the Post-office authorities in this city. They evidently consider THE INDEX as the most "celebrated religious journal" of the Hub of the Universe! The envelope proved to contain printed verses, entitled "Farewell to the Ocean," by "R. Rice, the American Poet, Cambridge, N. Y.," of the most ridiculous description. Our acknowledgments are none the less due, and none the less tendered, to the United States Post-office Department for its flattering opinion of THE INDEX!

A LETTER from Dr. Charles Darwin, the world-famous author of the *Origin of Species*, dated April 15 and just received, contains a passage which we venture to quote, as showing the estimation in which THE INDEX is held by those whose opinion is most valuable abroad: "I always read a large part of your excellent journal, and should certainly read every word, had I time and strength sufficient. But reading much more than the papers, etc., which are necessary for my scientific work nowadays tires me greatly. Most heartily wishing you success in your admirable endeavors in the good cause of truth, and wishing you prosperity in all ways, I remain," etc.

THE *Independent* says: "We wonder if Unitarians sufficiently note the fact that their persistence as a denomination of any strength depends very much on the vitality of a few men no longer young. Unitari-

anism has no strength except in a few cities, and already in those cities Episcopacy is sapping their church-walls. What were Unitarianism in Boston without James Freeman Clarke, now seventy years old, and Edward Everett Hale, aged fifty-eight, and C. A. Bartol, aged sixty-seven? What were Unitarianism in New York without Dr. Bellows, aged sixty-six, and Dr. Collyer, aged fifty-seven? And who is there to take their places?" The *Independent* might make a similar remark of other denominations, in all of which the greatest reputations belong to men well advanced in years. We could name many young Unitarian ministers who, twenty years hence, will probably be no less distinguished than those above named; but they are already so radically inclined that a question may well be raised whether their "Unitarianism" will not be "Free Religion" then.

THE VINELAND, N. J., *Independent* of May 6 thus comments on the late scandalous "Reception" in New York: "D. M. Bennett, who was confined in the Albany penitentiary for circulating a pamphlet through the mails, entitled *Cupid's Yokes*, has been released, his term of sentence having expired. A reception was held at Chickering Hall on Sunday evening, to welcome the editor of the *Truth-Seeker* back to liberty. The enthusiasm was tremendous, the radicals glorying overmuch about their 'martyr,' claiming that he was shut up because he was a free-thinker, and not because *Cupid's Yokes* was obscene. The call for the meeting asserted that the pamphlet is a 'perfectly decent and philosophical treatise on marriage,' which is either a wilful or ignorant stretch of the imagination. There is not a vulgar word in the pamphlet *per se*, but the inferences and implications are on a par with the morality of the brothel. As for being 'philosophical,' there is no more philosophy about it than in the shallow babblings of a street-corner loafer, who attempts to solve great social and political questions. The pamphlet contains no positive information of a beneficial character, while its general tendency to demoralization would lead a respectable man to curtail rather than increase its circulation."

THE SPRINGFIELD *Republican* of May 1 said: "Rev. George Chainey, of the Church of the Unity at Evansville, Ind., tendered his resignation last Sunday in somewhat remarkable language. At the conclusion of the sermon, in which he declared that all the answer he could make to the question, 'What is God?' was, 'I don't know,' and took other ground beyond the bounds of Christianity, and disapproved Unitarian societies that did not do so, he read his letter of resignation, which was even more startling than the sermon. He said that, having heard that his radicalism had been disapproved by members, and desiring to have a fair understanding with the congregation, he offered his resignation. When he came to the church, the understanding was that he should be at liberty to preach his latest thoughts. At that time, he had no idea that he should completely abandon supernaturalism in religion, but his later studies and meditations had led him to do so, and it was but right that the church should have an opportunity of passing upon his fitness to remain. If he did remain, there were conditions he should require, as the church declared itself Christian and that it labored for the kingdom of God. He could not continue as the pastor of a Christian Church, for, said he, 'I am not a Christian'; and about the kingdom of God he expressed his disbelief in the usual interpretation. He had felt for some time that prayer by him was a mockery, and hence he had offered no supplications, but had instead made vocal meditations and would never pray again. Another thing he would never do was to invoke a benediction, and as for the hymns sung in the church they would better sell the books to a rag-man to be made over into honest white paper."