

ORIGIN OF THE NATIONAL REFORM ASSOCIATION

Representatives from eleven Protestant denominations met in convention at Xenia, Ohio, February 3, 1863. This convention organized itself into "The National Reform Association." It adopted the following as its constitution:

"CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL REFORM ASSOCIATION

"Believing that Almighty God the source of all power and authority in civil government, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Ruler of Nations, and that the revealed will of God is of supreme authority in civil affairs;

"Remembering that this country was settled by Christian men, with Christian ends in view, and that they gave a distinctly Christian character to the institutions which they established;

"Perceiving the subtle and persevering attempts which are made to prohibit the reading of the Bible in our Public Schools, to overthrow our Sabbath laws, to corrupt the Family, to abolish the Oath, Prayer in our National and State Legislatures, Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving, and other Christian features of our institutions, and so to divorce the American Government from all connection with the Christian religion;

"Viewing with grave apprehension the corruption of our politics, the legal sanction of the Liquor Traffic, and the disregard of moral and religious character in those who are exalted to high places in the nation;

"Believing that a written Constitution ought to contain explicit evidence of the Christian character and purpose of the nation which frames it, and perceiving that the silence of the Constitution of the United States in this respect is used as an argument against all that is Christian in the usage and administration of our Government;

"We, citizen of the United States, do associate ourselves under the following ARTICLES, and pledge ourselves to God and to one another to labor, through wise and lawful means, for the ends herein set forth:

"Article I.

"This Society shall be called the 'NATIONAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.'

"Article II.

"The object of this Society shall be to maintain existing Christian features in the American Government; to promote needed reforms in the action of the government touching the Sabbath, the institution of the Family, the religious element in Education, the oath, and public morality as affected by the liquor traffic and other kindred evils; and to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will declare the nation's allegiance to Jesus Christ and its acceptance of the moral laws of the Christian religion, and so indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our government on an undeniably legal basis in the fundamental laws of the land."

National Reformers Attack Religious Liberty

"We Want state and religion; and we are going to have it. It shall be that so far as the affairs of the state require religion, it shall be religion, the religion of Jesus Christ."-*Jonathan Edwards, in National Reform Convention, New York City*" Feb. 26, 27, 1873.

"Constitutional laws punish for false money, weights, and measure. So Congress must establish a standard of religion, or admit anything called religion."-*Professor C. A. Blanchard, in Pittsburgh Convention, 1874.*

"To be perfectly plain, I believe that the existence of a Christian Constitution would disfranchise every logically consistent infidel."-*Rev. W.J. Coleman, in Christian Statesman, Nov. 1, 1883.*

"Give all men to understand that this is a Christian nation, and that, believing that without Christianity we perish, we must maintain by all means our Christian character. Inscribe this character on our Constitution. Enforce upon all who come among us the laws of Christian morality."-*Christian Statesman, Oct. 2, 1884.*

"Let those who will, remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, from motives of love and obedience; the remnant must be made to do so through fear of law. We have no option."-*Christian Nation, Sept. 28, 1887.*

"We propose to incorporate in our national Constitution the moral and religious 'command. 'In it [the Sabbath] thou shalt do no work,' except the works of necessity, and by external force of sheriff we propose to arrest and punish all violators of this law."-*Rev. M. A. Gault, in letter dated June 3, 1889.*

Threats of Trouble

"You look for trouble in this land in the future if these principles are applied. I think it will come to you if you maintain your present position. The foolhardy fellow who persists in standing on the rail road track may well anticipate trouble when he hears the rumbling of the coming train."-*Rev. W. T. McConnel, in "open letter" to editors, of The American Sentinel, in Christian Nation of Dec. 14, 1887,*

Banishments Again

"Those who oppose this work now will discover, when the religious amendment is made to the Constitution, that if they do not see fit to fall in with the majority, they must abide the consequences, or seek some more congenial time."-*Dr. David McAllister, in National Reform Convention at Lakeside, Ohio, August, 1887.*

"We might add, in all justice, if the opponents of the Bible do not like our government and its Christian features, let them go to some wild, desolate land, and in the name of the devil, and for the sake of the devil, subdue it, and set up a government of their own on infidel and atheistic ideas; and then if they can stand it, stay there till they die."-*Rev. E. B. Graham, in Christian Statesman (official organ of the National Reform Association), May 21, 1885.*