

It was the disgust publicly manifested by some of its members at the sight of the National ensign accidentally left in the Room where they assembled, that obliged the Authorities charged especially with the duty of upholding that flag, in a war now waged for its destruction, to notice in some appropriate way the insult it had thus received -

And herein is the obvious answer to all the complaints of an unfair discrimination against your particular Congregation, in making it alone the subject of the order in question. It would have been obviously unjust and inappropriate to have passed any order embracing all religious assemblages, merely because of the conduct of one.

Is there any thing in the order itself which warrants the construction you have put upon it as "setting at naught the dearest and most sacred right that man can enjoy - that of 'Worshipping God' or as being 'a direct interference with the right of public 'Worship, greater than which was never exercised in any Country'." Now I would most respectfully ask, does it prohibit or interfere with your 'Worship of the Almighty under any Creed or according to any form you may see fit to adopt? These are rights justly precious every where in the sight of our people, and no where more prized than here in Maryland.

But in God's name does the sight of our Country's stand and obstruct or impair the enjoyment of such rights? How is it, let me ask, that they have been so amply provided for? How is it that here, above all the earth besides, this religious liberty, this freedom of Conscience and title to equal protection, which you seem to think have been so outraged by the presence of the American Ensign, have all been so carefully secured to us? How but under the auspices of the free Government symbolized by that very flag, and which those who have shared most abundantly in its blessings are now treacherously striving to destroy.

If the order for its display in the Room where you assemble is an interference with the rights of Conscience and a violation of the Bill of rights securing to every man his peculiar religious faith without molestation, then by a parity of reasoning, to order the removal of any other emblem with which you might choose to adorn your place of 'Worship would be equally obnoxious to the same objection. You might therefore hoist the Rebel Ensign tomorrow and defy the Military Authorities to pull it down, throwing yourselves upon your rights of Conscience and the guarantees of the Constitution.

I am aware that in your Declaration published simultaneously with your separation from the Conference, as also in your letter to Genl. Schenck you dwell with some emphasis upon the determination of your Congregation to exclude every thing but the Gospel; to repudiate "any interference with matters of State"; to meddle not "with questions of a political nature"; and to hold "no connection with any Ecclesiastical Body that does."

So far as this evinces a purpose to banish politics in the ordinary acceptation of that term from the domain of the Church - to exclude from the Pulpit all such topics as usually divide political parties living under and recognizing the same Government,