

Pardon us Sir, for insisting that the maintenance of this principle is essential to the very life of the Church of Christ. If we abandon it, we lay open the Church to the whole tide of earthly influences, and all hope of accomplishing the mission of Christianity is lost.

From this your Excellency can see, how entirely inapplicable is the very strange argument by which you would make it appear that we, "by throwing ourselves upon our rights of conscience and the guaranties of the Constitution, might hoist the Rebel Ensign and defy the authorities to pull it down." The guaranties of the Constitution, as you yourself show, and we admit, do not extend to the protection of any parties acting against the good order, peace and safety of society. We claim no rights of conscience beyond the limitations of the Constitution.

To hoist any earthly ensign, more particularly one, whose display is in direct violation of one of the laws of the State, and would so manifestly disturb the public peace, would sap the very life principle of our organization. No such inference as that Sir, can be drawn from this proceeding.

But we may infer that if Major Genl. Schenck has the right to prescribe the terms under which alone, he may worship God, then by parity of reasoning he may do the same for every other congregation in this City.

He may suppress the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and take away the Insignia of the Roman Catholic Service.

He may even go further and upon the ground that there are some in each congregation unfriendly to the Administration, he may forbid entirely Assemblages for Worship.

Your Excellency, occupying a position of such influence and responsibility, should above all others, consider to what these things tend.

The parties may be few and the interests small, concerned in this case. But the evil leaven will spread.

And the time may come when it will be wished that occasion had been taken to stay this baneful principle while in its incipency — its first-birth in this land.

These inalienable rights of relation between God and man, may yet be preserved in their integrity.

But if this time pass, and this cause be not sustained, the efforts and endurance of a generation will hardly suffice to restore to us our birth-right of religious liberty.

For these reasons and upon these grounds, we call upon your Excellency to exert your influence not only in our behalf, but in support of a great principle of our Government and of our common Christianity.

The Community has decided upon this case, and with great unanimity has condemned this infraction of religious right and privilege.

By endeavoring to do away with this evil you will but respond to the sentiment of this City and State, and of every community to which the whole facts are known.

If we fail to secure our rights then we must suffer — we can only make our appeal to the Most High — the Great Head of the Church.

Very Respectfully, Your Excellency's obtt Servts.

John M. Bush

Charles J. Baker

John W. Buff

J. B. Brinkley

S. G. Miles

Charles Towson

Joseph P. Shipley

W. R. Barry

Stewards

M. E. Church

Mr. B. Parsons being absent from the City could not sign it.