

Mr. HARBINE moved a reconsideration of the vote.

The question was taken, and The Convention refused to reconsider.

The PRESIDENT suggested to Mr. HARBINE, that he could accomplish his object, (i. e. to have a vote taken on his amendment,) by moving it as an additional section.

Some conversation followed.

Mr. HARBINE said, that the ideas of some gentlemen were very much inflated; and, that if there was any meanness in such a proposition, it was at least one which other States of the Union had not thought it beneath their dignity to adopt. He was not, however, tenacious about it. He had introduced it for the purpose of arresting debate in the legislature. He would, therefore, withdraw it, not because he thought the proposition too small to engage the attention of the Convention, but because he was not tenacious enough to adhere to it.

So the amendment was withdraw.

Some conversation followed on a point of order, between Mr. PHELPS and the CHAIR.

Mr. DENT moved to amend said thirty-first section, by striking out the last paragraph in said section, from the word "thereof," in the fourth line.

The motion was rejected.

The section, as amended, was then adopted.

CLERGYMEN, ETC.

Mr. THOMAS called the attention of the Convention to the fact; that, on a former day, the ninth section of the report of the legislative committee, had been informally laid over, owing to the unavoidable absence of the gentleman from Baltimore county, (Mr. Chandler.) That gentleman being now in his seat, he, [Mr. T.] would move that the Convention resume the consideration of the section.

The motion was agreed to.

The section was read as follows :

Sec. 9th. No Priest, Clergyman or Teacher of any religious persuasion, society or sect, and no person holding any civil office of profit under this State, except Justices of the Peace, shall be capable of having a seat in the General Assembly.

Mr. CHANDLER said :

Mr. President—Permit me, through you sir, to thank this Convention for the courtesy which they have been pleased to extend to me in deferring action upon this article until my return. Their kind feelings thus manifested towards one as humble as I feel myself to be, I can assure them is duly appreciated.

I propose sir, to strike out all in the ninth article, that refers to ministers, priests, and teachers of religion, as entirely unnecessary and unjust.

Sir, I offer this amendment with no little embarrassment.

First, because, having been detained from my seat in this body for the last two weeks, by serious illness in my family, I have had no opportunity whatever, for making the necessary pre-

paration, to support by proper argument the amendment which I now propose.

Secondly, Because, of the unnecessary jealousy entertained by many in reference to ministers of the gospel.

Thirdly, Last, though not least, the strong feelings, prejudices, and talents, arrayed on the other side of this question.

But feeling, as I do, that my position is just, I shall, though I may stand alone, advocate this amendment.

Mr. President, I believe, in these United States, and in the States separately, we profess to admire a Democratic form of Government?

Sir, what are we to understand by a Democratic form of government?

It guarantees, if I mistake not, *equal rights and privileges*, not to a *favoured few*, but to the *whole people*. Yet the article under consideration proposes *deliberately*, to disfranchise a very large and respectable class of our fellow-citizens.

Sir, if this self-denying, and self-sacrificing class of our fellow-citizens are to be cut off without ceremony from the right to participate in the affairs of Government, then I trust, that in your wisdom and magnanimity, you will introduce some organic provision in the Constitution, by which they shall forever hereafter, be exempt from the burthen of taxation, to support a Government, in which you thus solemnly declare they have no right to participate.

But sir, it seems strange, that from every quarter of this House, we hear it proclaimed in language beautiful and eloquent, by honorable gentlemen of profound erudition—"Equal rights and privileges to all." Then after this flourish of trumpets in behalf of popular rights, we see those same gentlemen calmly uniting their strength, to blot from political existence a numerous and influential class of our fellow-citizens, as wholly unworthy of all confidence and even dangerous to the Commonwealth.

Have gentlemen considered that twenty States of this Union have never adopted this obnoxious and oppressive provision in their Constitutions, and that another has since stricken it from their organic law—making in all, twenty-one States that, at the present time, have no such proscriptive measure. And yet we have heard of no internal commotion, or threatened danger to these States. On the contrary they get on as prosperously and as harmoniously, as States which have adopted this anti-republican provision.

But, sir, what great offence, what high crime have this class of our fellow-citizens committed, that they should be deprived of one of the dearest privileges of American born citizen—that of eligibility to office? Have they committed high treason? Have they been guilty of highway robbery? Are they murderers? No, sir; none of these crimes have been alleged against them; still in the opinion of the honorable committee, who made and presented this report, they are guilty of a crime, which should forever disfranchise them as citizens of this enlightened Commonwealth?

Sir, what is that crime? It is this. They have bowed in humble adoration to the God who made them; they have believed in his Son Jesus