

mingling that subject with subjects of State government and politics. We are come together to make an organic law to affect our civil and political rights only. And while we have protected as largely and comprehensively as we can the conscientious and religious scruples and opinions of men, when restrained within proper limits so that they do not become licentious, we should have an eye single to the construction of our State fabric as a political fabric only, for the protection, preservation and enjoyment of political and civil rights.

I have my theory of the Christian religion. That theory is one of the mediation of Christ, by and through which mediation only do I hope, and upon which I anchor all my hopes. But will the Universalist concur with me in that opinion? No sir; he rejects it. Will the Unitarian concur with me in that opinion? No, sir; he rejects it. And I do not know how many other sects will do the same thing. But they meet me when they make the declaration of their belief in the existence of God—not in the existence of a god, not in the god of the Romans, not in the god of the heathen—but one single God, the Supreme Architect and Creator of this universe and all things there are in it; the Christian's God; the God, if they believe in a revealed system of religion, of the old dispensation. I believe in that revealed system, in the old dispensation; if a man believes in that he will meet me there. And believing in that old dispensation, he meets me still further, when he says—"I believe in the existence of God and in my moral accountability to that God, either by penalties to be incurred in this life, or by punishments in a future life."

I conclude with the idea that I originally attempted to convey to this House: that high as our veneration may be for our own system of religion; dearly as we may cherish it; and, believing it to be of Divine origin, highly as we may prize it above all other systems of religion ever devised and taught, yet we should not undertake, in a spirit of intolerance, to require other men to subscribe to the same religious faith. The proposition I have submitted, at the suggestion of my friend from Somerset (Mr. Jones) is as far as I am willing to go; to admit every man who believes in the existence of God, the God I believe in, the God you believe in, the true and only God, and in a future accountability to that God.

Mr. THOMAS. I am in favor of the amendment submitted by the gentleman from Baltimore county, and trust it will be adopted. If the Convention will refer to page 117 of the Proceedings of the Convention of 1850, they will find that on the 7th of December, 1850, Mr. Biser introduced the following order, which was adopted:

"Ordered, That the Committee to con-

sider and report a Declaration of Rights, enquire into the expediency of engrafting a section in the Declaration of Rights, that no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office of public trust; that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed in this State; and that no person shall be rendered incompetent to be a witness on account of his opinions on matters of religious belief; but the liberty of conscience hereby secured, shall not be construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace or safety of this State."

At page 223, the Convention will find the report of the Committee on the Declaration of Rights, originally submitted by that great and good man Judge Dorsey, in which article 35 is as follows:

"That no other test or qualification ought to be required, on admission to any office of trust or profit, than such oath of support and fidelity to this State and the United States and such oath of office as shall be directed by this Convention, or the Legislature of this State."

It will thus be seen that the Convention of 1850, in their original report upon this subject, which was adopted, excluded religious tests of all kinds whatever. I had prepared an amendment intended to secure the same result but I will not offer it, as it is covered by the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore county. (Mr. Ridgely.) By reference to page 202 of the Proceedings, under date of May 8, 1851, there will be found this entry:

"Mr. Chambers, of Kent, moved to reconsider the thirty-third article, to be found on page 293 of journal, for the purpose of moving the following amendment to the same, by striking out from the word "or," in the second line, to the word "State," inclusive, and by inserting as an additional article the following:

"That no other test or qualification ought to be required on admission to any office of trust or profit, than such oath of office as may be prescribed by this Convention or by the laws of the State, and a declaration of belief in the Christian religion; and if the party shall profess to be a Jew, the declaration shall be of a belief in a future state of rewards and punishments."

It will be seen, by reference to page 785 of the second volume of the Debates of the Convention of 1850, that upon this motion a lengthy debate occurred between Judge Chambers, on one side, and Judge Dorsey, Mr. Ridgely and Mr. Howard on the other; in which the gentleman from Baltimore county (Mr. Ridgely) took the same ground that he has announced here to-day. I adopt the language of Judge Dorsey on that occa-