

sion, because I cannot express myself in half as good words as he did, in the position he took against the qualification proposed by Judge Chambers. He said:

"If there was any principle in the religious test proposed, its operation should be universal; it should admit of no exceptions. He belonged to the same church with his friend from Kent, and was he trusted, as sincerely anxious for the universal propagation of the Christian religion as he was. They only differed, he thought, in the means of accomplishing it. He regarded religion as an inward, a spiritual work, reserved by the Deity to himself, and to his own agents specially selected for that purpose; of which profane legislation or legislators formed no part. (He used the word "profane" in no offensive sense, but as contra-distinguished from clerical or ecclesiastical.) He had always thought civil or profane legislation was to control our temporal concerns, to make good citizens, not to make good Christians. By legislative restrictions, persecutions, pains, penalties and forfeitures you may make criminals and hypocrites; but not Christians. Profane legislation is an outward work, a conformity to which is enforced by outward means, by force. Christianity is a spiritual and inward work, incapable of creation or extension by outward force or violence, emanating from mere will.

"This declaration of a belief in the Christian religion has not, as far as my knowledge and observation extend, ever excluded a man from office, who was unworthy of it; hypocrisy and falsehood enable him easily to surmount the barrier—whilst the upright, conscientious man, who deserves the office, would be excluded. It is unjust and impolitic on another ground: you alienate from your government the affections of all those who are not Christians; you hold out to them the strongest temptations to disloyalty."

Endorsing as I do the sentiments of Judge Dorsey expressed on that occasion, and adopting them as my own, I shall vote in favor of the proposition of the gentleman from Baltimore county, (Mr. Ridgely.)

Mr. CLARKS. I desire to offer an amendment to the amendment submitted by the gentleman from Baltimore county, (Mr. Ridgely), and which I think will meet the views of all gentlemen. There are a great many persons in this State who desire to have in this Constitution a recognition of the Christian religion, provided it does not clash with the rights of other parties. The Christian religion being the religion of the State, there are a great many gentlemen who desire, if they ever take office, to profess their belief in it, provided it does not clash with the rights of other people, and does not at all stand in the way of others assuming the responsibilities of office in the

State. I move to amend the amendment, so that the last clause of this article shall read—  
"And a declaration of belief in the Christian religion or in the existence of God and in a future state of rewards and punishments."

The amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore county is to strike out the declaration of belief in the Christian religion, and to require only a declaration of belief in the existence of God and a future state of rewards and punishments. My amendment proposes to allow a party to make a declaration of belief in the Christian religion, if he chooses; or if he does not desire to do that, he can make the declaration proposed by the gentleman from Baltimore county, and say—"I declare my belief in the existence of God, and in a future state of rewards and punishments." It covers all cases; it permits any one to declare his belief in the Christian religion, but does not make that the sole test. If he does not desire to take that, then he has the alternative of declaring his belief in the existence of God, and a future state of rewards and punishments. Instead of confining the declaration simply to that proposed by the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore county, I propose to give the party an option I think, therefore, my amendment will meet the views of all sides.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. The sole objection I have to the amendment of the gentleman from Prince George's, (Mr. Clarke) instead of the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore county, (Mr. Ridgely) is that it creates two classes, establishes two tests, and is after all an invidious distinction. I agree most fully with the views of the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Stirling) in reference to the fact that it is for the sovereign people of the State to limit and prescribe the qualifications of office, and say upon what terms they will admit persons to hold office in this State. It is not a matter of right on the part of any man to hold office; it is only a matter of expediency. Still, I submit whether it is expedient to keep up this distinction of two classes instead of excluding every religious test but the declaration of belief in the existence of God, and a future state of rewards and punishments. There can be no question that the overwhelming majority of the people of Maryland are professors of a belief in the Christian religion. Those who dissent from that belief are few. Now, is it worth while, when we are abolishing so many distinctions, to seemingly keep up two classes, by requiring two tests? Why place upon our statute books two tests—the one a declaration of belief in the Christian religion, the other a declaration of belief in the existence of God and a future state of rewards and punishments? Those who sign the one will