

And I think we may very well dispense with the formality of such a profession upon the test book in this State.

Mr. CLARKE. The gentleman from Somerset, (Mr. Jones), argues that the adoption of my amendment will draw an invidious distinction between classes. I think it does no such thing; it only gives parties an option as to what declaration they will make. I have no doubt that if my friend from Kent (Mr. Chambers) was here to-day, he would be found advocating, as he did in the last Convention, the retention of this clause in this article, and if called upon to take an oath of office he would declare his belief in the Christian religion. My friend from Somerset, (Mr. Jones), prefers the other form; and if called upon to take the oath of office would probably take it in that other form. Men have their choice; but it does not follow that because you take it in one form or the other, that you do or do not believe in the Christian religion. The result will be that those holding the same belief in the Christian belief will be found on one side of the book, and the others will be found on the other side of the book.

Mr. STIRLING. There is no such thing known to the records of this State as a subscription to a religious oath; there is no signature; it is a mere verbal declaration.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. I beg the gentleman's pardon; you have to sign your name to the declaration in the test book.

Mr. STIRLING. I do not think the records will show that.

Mr. CLARKE. In the Legislature you have to sign your name.

Mr. STIRLING. To the oath of office, but not to the declaration of belief.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. It is done in our county, I know.

Mr. STIRLING. It may be so in the counties, but it is not so in Annapolis. The universal practice in the General Assembly is this: after the member has subscribed to the oath of office, the presiding officer says—"You do declare your belief in the Christian religion"—and the only answer to that is to bow the head.

The question was then taken upon the amendment of Mr. CLARKE, and it was agreed to.

The question was then taken upon the amendment of Mr. RIDGELY, as amended, and it was agreed to.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mr. STIRLING. I move to farther amend this article by inserting between the words "than" and "such" the words "such oath of allegiance and fidelity to this State and to the United States as may be prescribed by this Constitution and;" so that the article will read 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 allegiance and fidelity to this State and to the United States as may be prescribed by this Constitution, and such oath of office and qualification as may be prescribed by this Constitution or by the laws of the State, and a declaration of belief in the Christian religion, or a declaration of belief in the existence of God and in a future state of rewards and punishments."

I had thought the words "oath of office" would cover all that was necessary. But in deference to the suggestions of members of the Convention, I submit this amendment to make this article more explicit. I do not think it is absolutely necessary, but I prefer it in order to make it more explicit.

Mr. MILLER. I move to amend the amendment by striking out the word "allegiance" and inserting the word "support," so that it will read "such oath of support and fidelity," &c.

I do not propose to make any remarks upon the question of allegiance, because that subject is under consideration in connection with article 4 of the bill of rights. This particular clause of the bill of rights prescribes the test or qualification for holding office. The amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling) proposes to raise here the question of allegiance, which we have not yet disposed of in connection with the fourth article. I propose to put in the word "support" instead of "allegiance," in order to make this article correspond with what was originally reported in the Convention of 1850, as the article upon that subject; "that no other test or qualification ought to be required, on admission to any office of profit and trust, than such oath of support and fidelity to this State and to the United States," &c. I think that is all we ought to require.

Mr. MILLER called for the yeas and nays on his amendment, and they were ordered.

The question being then taken by yeas and nays, on striking out the word "allegiance" and inserting the word "support," it resulted—yeas 14, nays 42—as follows:

Yeas—Messrs. Bond, Brown, Clarke, Dail, Duvall, Harwood, Henkle, Hodson, Horsey, Jones of Somerset, Lansdale, Mitchell, Miller, Morgan—14.

Nays—Messrs. Abbott, Baker, Cushing, Daniel, Earle, Ecker, Farrow, Galloway, Greene, Hatch, Hebb, Hopkins, Hopper, Jones of Cecil, Keefer, Kennard, King, Larsh, Markey, Mullikin, Murray, Negley, Noble, Nyman, Parker, Ridgely, Robinette, Russell, Schlosser, Scott, Smith of Carroll, Smith of Worcester, Sneary, Stirling, Stockbridge, Swope, Sykes, Thomas, Todd, Valliant, Wickard, Wooden—42.

The amendment to the amendment was accordingly rejected.

The question then recurred upon the amend-