

attend to the interests of the souls of men, and to cultivate the religious information and knowledge and feeling of the people. He is empowered to use every faculty of his mind and soul in the service of a Master whose kingdom is not of this world. His duties are exactly the opposite of those of a secular character. His interests, his object, his avowed purpose, the solemn obligation assumed by him when he takes his vows; his first duty is to contend against the world, as well as the flesh and the devil. Now, I ask if any one legitimate purpose for which a man goes to the altar, and there solemnly by his vows devotes himself exclusively to the service of his God, and the salvation of the souls of his fellowmen—I ask if one single purpose, one solitary object, one possible end, to which that vow and that devotion of his life commits him, is accomplished by his becoming a politician? The great business of his life is to serve his Master, by extending the interest of His kingdom to sinners. Does he accomplish that by quitting the field of this labor, and engaging in the strifes which will necessarily, not which may, accompany the position of a politician? I think no man can answer that question affirmatively.

And when, on the contrary, I ask, does not the engaging in politics go to defeat every object of his existence as a minister, go to counteract every purpose to which he professes to devote himself and his whole life; does not an entry into politics necessarily defeat to that extent every object which he has thus promised to make the great object of his life, what must be the answer? In the first place what is he to do? He has to electioneer for the place. I am not to be told that he may or may not do it. We are to take men precisely as we find them. A minister of the gospel, when he lays aside his ministerial character, is neither more nor less than any other individual in society. When he ceases to act in his character of minister he becomes a common citizen.

I cannot now refer to the page of the reports of the last Convention; but I had the honor then to express my views on this subject. There was a minister from Baltimore county, a highly respectable citizen, who sat immediately in front of me. Immediately alongside of him sat one of his co-delegates. I allowed myself to make a little fancy sketch of the clergyman and the layman going about the district in an open buggy, with a bottle of whiskey with them; the minister to talk with the wives and children, while the layman did the necessary politics with the husbands and fathers. The morning afterwards I had occasion to call at the room of the minister, where I found some eight or ten gentlemen assembled. As soon as the door was opened I was met with the exclamation—"Why, here he is now," showing that they had been talking about me. I did not un-

derstand what was meant, and asked what was the matter. One of them—Mr. Buchanan—came up to me and said—"Judge, did anybody tell you about the minister and myself going about the county electioneering?" I said—"No." "Why," said he, "if you had been present you could not have given a more accurate description of what passed; we thought somebody had told you the whole story." Now, is not that a sad predicament for a minister to be placed in?

There would not be one instance in a thousand when his clerical character would not be lost sight of. A minister of the gospel should live a life of purity, holiness, devotion to his duty, disregarding all secular considerations, all collisions of sentiment, all acts of engaging in politics; he can have some other duty or employment, provided it does not operate against the interest of his flock. No time, occasion, or necessity should, in his view, compare with the interests of immortal souls intrusted to his care, and for which he is accountable before God, for which he must account at the great day, if they are lost because he did not attend to them, while he was devoting himself to other matters. A minister thus entitles himself to respect, and will be respected everywhere. But when he forgets his vocation and devotes his time and attention to other matters, he cannot but expect the natural consequence to be that which awaits every man who misemploys his time and talents, and devotes them to illegitimate purposes.

There are other considerations, however. This is not the only thing a minister is restrained from. You restrain ministers from receiving donations, because they have an influence which other people have not; an influence which they ought to have, not for political purposes, but which controls the minds and judgments and feelings of men. I have no doubt at all the gentleman I alluded to in the last Convention had not been in the county more than a year or so, and yet he was the first man on the poll. Of course every man that belonged to his church voted for him. This influence necessarily attached to him on account of his profession, not in consequence of his political opinions or capability.

There are, therefore, various objections to striking out this provision. And unless I perceive a feeling to second the very unreasonable proposition of my friend from Baltimore (Mr. Daniel), I will decline for the present to say more upon the subject. I have expressed my views at large on another occasion, and do not deem it necessary to repeat them now. The reasons are so numerous and so palpable that I deem it unnecessary to enlarge upon the subject.

Mr. STRLING. When this matter was under consideration in the Committee upon the Legislative Department, I was in favor of