

and to bear testimony against all those encroachments, as he considers them, upon the true interpretation of the gospel of our Saviour. I demand for the society of people called Quakers nothing more than an acknowledgment upon the part of this convention, in this particular, as it has always been acknowledged in other particulars, of their right to the enjoyment of their religious belief in every respect and to the fullest extent.

I am astonished that the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd) should offer the amendment that he does. Has not a man a right, if he so reads and interprets the gospel of our Saviour, to say that he interprets these words, "It shall be given unto you without money and without price" to mean, "You shall not pay any man for preaching the gospel"? and has he not a right as a citizen of Maryland and of the United States and as a religious man, to be protected in so interpreting it? What right have you, by any portion of the organic law which you are here to frame, to impair in the least the exercise of that right, by treating him in a different way from what you treat every other citizen of Maryland and every other citizen of the United States?

Suppose I am a member of the society of Friends, and have been thus reared, and they are generally very well reared; suppose that I have been taught by my parents from my childhood thus to interpret the Scripture, and never on any account to give any sanction to what they call a hireling ministry; and suppose that I wish—I have not done so yet, but possibly I may—to get married; what right have you to prevent me from exercising that glorious privilege, without in the least interfering with my duties as a citizen of the State?

It has been suggested outside of the hall that a Quaker desiring to marry a lady outside of the church, my go over into Pennsylvania. We have no right to assume here that there is any such place as Pennsylvania. As a citizen of Maryland, I wish to get married in the State of Maryland, according to the laws of Maryland; and as a citizen of Maryland and as a christian, I demand that right. If you interpret the bill of rights as it should be interpreted, you give to me the privilege in one instance and deny me the right in another, by requiring that I, forsooth, a good citizen, shall not have the right that you have. I must violate my conscience by going before a hireling minister in order to have him perform this marriage ceremony, or on the other hand I must go out of the State to get married. You oblige me to do either the one or the other, me, a christian citizen of the State of Maryland, having every right to my interpretation of the gospel of our Saviour that you can claim, and being protected in that right by the organic law, so far as it has been made.

I wish the constitution to be made good throughout.

Gentlemen have claimed here that it is not necessary to say anything to the legislature in this respect; that it is only necessary to let the legislature go on, not doing forever the thing which they have thus far failed to do. Have we done nothing so far in this constitution in reference to legislation? Have we requested the legislature in no instance to do anything? Have we denied to them nothing? It is only because, if we do not make it obligatory upon the legislature, they may in the future, as they have in the past, entirely overlook this duty, that we ask to incorporate it into the constitution.

It has been admitted by the gentleman from Somerset (Mr. Jones,) that this is only a civil contract, and I believe he admits no more than the universal admission.

Mr. JONES of Somerset. I say in law; but I say that it is a ceremony as well.

Mr. PUGH. I mean in law. He believes it to be a religious ceremony. That is his opinion. Many others believe it to be nothing more than a civil contract, and that is their opinion. I agree with every syllable he says with reference to the validity, and what ought to be the law in reference to marriage. I do not dissent from a syllable he uttered. What I object to is the disposition to sneer against a society which, I consider, although small in numbers, has as clean a record from the days of their early persecution to the present time, as can be produced by any other society since our Saviour first visited the earth.

There is not a gentleman in this hall who will doubt that statement. There is not a gentleman here who will deny to them this eulogium. There is nothing can be said against their character.

All the arguments that have been used in this hall, against casting even by imputation a slur upon ministers of the gospel by putting an article similar to the old constitution into this one, will apply to this class. Why do you discriminate against these people, whom all the world call good people. That is all I demand, that they shall be placed upon the footing they have a right to claim, the exercise of their duties and opinions in obedience to the dictates of their religion, the right to interpret the gospel according to the light which they have, and to be guaranteed by the State of Maryland in the enjoyment of the rights which the State of Maryland guarantees to every other citizen of the State.

I will make no remarks with regard to the Jews, or the question of registration. There seems to be a generally prevailing impression in favor of the registration of marriages. For the reasons so ably urged by the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge,) I am in favor of that. I am in favor of the whole section of the gentleman from Harford, for