

that the language be, "we, the people of Maryland, &c." It is certainly becoming a people who have had bestowed on them by the ruler of the world, for three-fourths of a century the blessings we and our fathers have enjoyed in re-organising their government peacefully and prosperously, to set forth in appropriate words their gratitude to the sovereign of heaven and earth, the giver of every good and perfect gift. This is done in language such as is found in many of the constitutions of the States of this Union.

The residue of the preamble corresponds with that of our present Constitution. We therefore recommend the following:

"We the people of the State of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God, for our civil and religious liberty, and taking into our serious consideration the best means of establishing a good Constitution in this State, for the sure foundation and more permanent security thereof, declare."

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. CHAMBERS, of Kent, moved to reconsider the thirty-third article, (which is in the following words: "nor shall any person be deemed incompetent as a witness or juror, or disqualified to hold any office under the laws or Constitution of this State, except as hereinafter provided by the Constitution of this State, who believes in the existence of a God, and that under his dispensation such person will be held morally accountable for his acts, and be rewarded or punished therefor, either in this world or in the world to come,") 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 Constitution 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."

Mr. CHAMBERS made some remarks which will be published hereafter.

Mr. DORSEY said:

That the five minutes rule, prescribed by his despotic rulers, put it out of his power to do the semblance of justice to himself, or the subject before the Convention. But lest his silent vote might be regarded as evidence of a partial change in his opinion, or acquiescence in some degree to the views of his friend from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) who so zealously advocates a religious test as a qualification to office; he must offer a few words in reply to him. It did appear to him, (Mr. D.) that his friend from Kent, had strangely altered his views upon the subject of the amendment, inserted on the motion of him, (Mr. D.) in the "Bill of Rights," declaring that "no person shall be deemed incompetent as a witness or juror, or disqualified to hold any office under the laws or Constitution of this State,"

"who believes in the existence of a God, and that under his dispensation, such person will be held morally accountable for his acts, and be rewarded or punished therefor, either in this world, or in the world to come." When this amendment was inserted in the Bill of Rights, he opposed every part of it with equal violence, but strange to say, to-day, he proposes to leave the persons referred to competent to be witnesses and jurors, but only disqualifying them from holding offices. That is, we should permit them to hang us, or deprive us of our liberty or property; but not to be eligible to office. For such a discrimination, he was unable to account. His friend too, in his amendment proposes to re-enact the Jewish exemption, to which he had always heretofore been bitterly opposed. The inducement to these apparently inconsistent proceedings, his friend from Kent could, doubtlessly satisfactorily explain; but to him, (Mr. D.) it was at present somewhat mysterious. For himself, he was for a broad, horizontal rule, applicable to all religious denominations as embraced by his amendment. 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 formalities 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.

His friend from Kent had said, in his former discussion of this subject, that the Holy Scriptures were a part of the law of the land; and that blasphemy was punishable by acts of Assembly. To the first branch of this assertion, I must beg leave to enter my dissent. Such never was, in my humble opinion, and I trust never will be, the law of Maryland. As to the second it is true;