

man from Kent (Mr. Chambers,) why is it that it has been so long tolerated in Congress? If the public mind had been directed to this evil, it seems to me that Congress would have been the first place where the remedy should have been applied, where the evil should have been redressed? Yet, from the earliest history of this government, you find ministers of the gospel returned to the popular branch of the national legislature, and also in the Senate of the United States. I have in view now some two or three such—Mr. Cabell, of Georgia, Mr. Hilliard, of Alabama, Mr. Bates, of Delaware, and hosts of others.

Mr. CHAMBERS. Mr. Bates was a lawyer.

Mr. PURNELL. And a minister, too, for I have heard him preach often; and I must do him the credit to say that he was a pretty good lawyer-preacher. Now, if the evil was so great as it seems to have been, in the view of the gentleman from Kent, Congress was the place to have applied the remedy. If the liberties of the people, or the stability of the Government, were endangered by the introduction of that class of people into the Congress of the United States, that would have been the place to reform the abuse; that would have been the place from which to have excluded them. But no evil seems to have resulted from their admission there. You do not find hosts of ministers in the Congress of the United States, conspiring and confederating together to overthrow the Government, or discussing the different doctrines of their churches. But you find them there participating in the legislation of the country in the manner best calculated to promote the general interest, without permitting any sectarian feeling whatever to enter into their deliberations, or to control their actions.

So far as relates to our own State there is a large and respectable class of men, ministers of the gospel, who, although not perhaps attached to any particular congregation, yet are local ministers, and in that connection are excluded from entrance into the legislative halls of the State. But, as has been properly remarked by the gentleman who last addressed you (Mr. Stockbridge,) they are tax-payers; are subject to military duty; subject to all the municipal duties that devolve upon the citizens of the various counties; and yet they are excluded from the legislative halls of the State. Now, it seems to me that they are eminently qualified for that position. They are educated men, with some few exceptions. They are well fitted to go upon your committees, and elaborate subjects of legislation, moral subjects which often occupy the attention of the Legislature; subjects of education, and all subjects of that character; and at the same time they are well qualified to participate in the legislation and debate upon those subjects, not only in committee but in the legislative halls.

So far as moral influence is concerned, I

think that which they would exercise would be exemplary, and would be productive of good. In regard to the evils which might result to the individual or to the community, so far as electioneering is concerned, the picture which the gentleman from Kent has drawn was certainly a very strong one, and it might be practically carried into effect. But I take it for granted that there would not be such a rush of ministers to become candidates for position in the Legislature, if that was the case. If they were nominated in the primary meetings in the counties where they reside, there would be no impropriety in their accepting the nomination, and if elected, of going to the Legislature and participating in their deliberations, without entering into the caucusses, without canvassing the counties in which they live, with this bottle, of which the gentleman speaks, in their pockets, or in their carriage-box. There would be no necessity for anything of that kind. They could remain at home in their closets, acting in that sphere which is becoming to them, and which alone ornaments their profession.

I shall vote for the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Daniel,) because I think the evils contemplated by the framers of the original Constitution, if they ever existed, have long since passed away. I think that the fear of the evil of connecting church and State has long since exploded; that there is no necessity for this provision now. I think the good sense of the people will at all times control this subject; and that there can be no danger whatever that there ever will be a sufficient number of ministers in the halls of legislation in this State, or any other State, to control its whole deliberation.

Why are not other professional men, doctors for instance, allowed to go on in debate and elucidate the whole diagnosis of their profession? Because it is impertinent and would not be tolerated. Why are not lawyers in legislative halls allowed to go on and indulge in a long harangue about all the technicalities of their profession? Because it would not be tolerated. And so it would be with ministers of the gospel; they would not be permitted to introduce and discuss the various doctrinal points which might divide them. They would be confined to the subjects under consideration, and like all other members would be controlled and bound by the rules of the house.

I think this invidious distinction has prevailed long enough. I think the time has arrived when it should no longer be tolerated, but should be extinguished and blotted from the organic law of the State. It is with that view that I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. SCOTT. I think the argument is about exhausted, and I shall not occupy the time of the Convention long upon this subject. But this appears to me to be a proper period