

to put in a word of commendation of a brave man of my own county, and I can scarcely resist the temptation to do so. I refer to the late chaplain of the 6th Maryland regiment, Rev. Joseph T. Brown. He was an industrious working mechanic, who became a local preacher of the Methodist Church. He left a prosperous business, a pleasant home, and an interesting family, to engage in the arduous duties of chaplain to the 6th Maryland regiment. While so engaged he was taken prisoner and confined at Richmond until he nearly lost his life. He has returned home with a shattered constitution; and it is more than I can do to go home and meet the gaze of that brave good man, without recording my voice and my vote against such an invidious distinction as has so long disgraced the Constitution under which we live. At the same time you disqualify him, you admit to the same place the poorest pettifogging lawyer, that ever hung out his shingle; and the physician that never could make a living at his business; the farmer and the mechanic that have not succeeded in their business; not to say men of the most degraded and despicable character. They are all admitted into the halls of legislation, while ministers are excluded, while that brave good man who has perilled his life in the service of his country, is excluded. I take this opportunity, not to make any argument, but to record my voice in favor of that good and gallant man.

Mr. CHAMBERS. One gentleman says that we have nothing to do with the morality of the State. Now, I differ altogether with my friend on that point. I think that if we have a proposition before us that involves the moral condition of the State, we are bound to respect it highly for that consideration.

It has been rung in our ears that this provision creates an invidious distinction. Well, sir, it is not the only instance in which the influence of the religious man upon other members of the community is noticed in our laws. A clergyman cannot go to the death bed of his parishioner and induce him to grant him his property. But anybody else is permitted to do so; the pettifogging lawyer and the worthless physician is not prevented from doing so.

Why not have them sent here? Because you want men sent here by the independent uninfluenced voice of the people in the respective districts or counties. We are told by one member here that these matters are all fixed at primary meetings. Now, a man with a very large congregation can have a majority at the primary meeting out of his own meeting house. The religious influence which he exercises on that class controls the action of the primary meeting; that action controls the election in the county; and the man is sent here simply because as a preacher

he has an influence by his clerical office, which other people cannot exercise.

But what I have chiefly to say is this: I suppose there is hardly a man on this floor who would suppose that a preacher of the gospel, whose soul and mind is as devoted to the legitimate business of his calling as it ought to be, will ever dream of becoming a member of a political body. It never has been known, and I humbly trust it never will be, when a man actively, zealously engaged in the performance of the duties of his office as minister of the gospel, when sinners abound to an extent which employs every moment of his time and every hour of his thoughts—I hope the time never will be known when he will desert that field, and enter into another utterly foreign to any purpose which relates to his vocation in life. You will never, therefore, get that class of clergymen who really devote themselves, according to their vows, strictly to the business of their calling.

Then, who will you get? Men—I will not say pettifogging clergymen—men who cannot find a community anywhere willing to give them a subsistence for the exercise of their calling; men who have a very indefinite idea—I will not say a very erroneous one—of the obligations which they owe to their Master; men who are willing to partially desert his interests for the purpose of taking part in politics. Such men may find places here. We have clergymen of all sorts; we have religion of all sorts; we have sects of all sorts. Some think that religion is a very small affair, and a little attention given to it once in a while is enough. Now, I do not want to have a provision in the Constitution, which, while we know it will never open the door for the entrance of any one of the elect and best of the class, is to admit exclusively the very inferior members of that class. You might just as well—for the practical consequence would be the same—insert in your Constitution a provision that the better order of the clergy shall never be permitted to hold a seat in the Legislature, while those who are less attentive to their duties, less sensible of their obligations, less capable of performing them, may be admitted.

It is said that ministers of the gospel are equally competent to fill this office. I say—no. They are equally intelligent, it is said. In what sense is that used? They may have more intelligence in regard to the Bible; they may understand that better. They may have belles-lettres intelligence to a greater extent than others. I say that if they understand their business and will attend to it, they do not understand politics as well as others. It is not such an intelligence which it is their business to acquire. A clergyman, in my humble judgment, who is a politician, is not entitled to respect.

Mr. SOOHR. Such as Bishop Hopkins.