

ble for taking the ground he did; for I misunderstood the gentleman from Harford (Mr. Russell) in the same respect. I have a great many friends among the persons styled Quakers, and I have been intimate with some of them, and know a good deal of their ceremonies; and I certainly understood him to remark this morning that it was necessary where they married without the pale of their church to go into some other State to avoid church censure. I intended to call attention to the particular fact; for I did not know at the time that he belonged to that sect. I know instances in our county where the sect called Quakers have been married by ministers there, and were subjected to church censure.

I would cheerfully vote for the proposition of the gentleman from Howard (Mr. Sands,) but I believe the original proposition to be more liberal than that. I would say, let them be married how they please, by whom they please, provided the matter is entered on the records of the county; for I think that is the great object to be arrived at at last. Let the fact exist in the records of our courts that they are man and wife.

I will go a little further. I will strike out all possibility of their being divorced afterwards. I will leave no grounds for divorce, but let marriage be final. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." If we adopt that in connection with this, I think it will do; that whether married by a constable, magistrate, judge, or even by a minister, if the gentleman from Caroline prefers that, it cannot be untied hereafter. That should be our great effort, so to tie the knot that it may remain tied. I should propose to amend the amendment of the gentleman from Howard to place that in it, that any person may be married in such manner as they please, and provided the same be entered upon the records of the courts of the county, they shall be man and wife. That is the way I want it to read.

Mr. SANDS. I agree with my friends from Baltimore, and with my friend from Somerset, that in the merely legal aspect of this question marriage is a civil contract. But it has other and almost as important aspects as the legal aspect. One very large denomination, at least, in the State of Maryland, regard marriage as a sacrament. Do you not think it would be shocking the religious sense of that entire religious body to have what they rightfully or wrongfully regard as a sacrament—for, rightfully or wrongfully, that is their religious opinion, and they have as good a right to it as you have to yours or I to mine—degraded into a mere contract that a constable or anybody else whatever may solemnize? Do you not fly right in the face of the religious convictions of that large body of people? Certainly you do. This is a rite or ceremony which has been as carefully

hedged about, and perhaps more carefully, than any other on earth.

Gentlemen talk about its being a civil contract. I say it is a religious relation; and I put it to my friend from Somerset (Mr. Jones,) who corrects me when I get wrong in the Bible, whether our Divine Master, in seeking a type for the union between him and his church, did not select this very marriage relation as the type of that intimate living union which subsists between the Divine Redeemer and his church? This is the union which should last forever and forever. This is the thing of all things most inviolate. This is the thing selected by the Divine Master to typify the intimacy of connection between him and his church.

And this is to be dragged into every grogshop, if you please, into every magistrate's office, every constable's little tent, every watchman's box. It is horrible. It is a desecration of the purest union that this world ever sees. Only think of the marriage ceremony, the sacred holy bargain of that ceremony, "whom God has joined together let no man put asunder." Only think of those holy words dropping from the lips of some half-drunken constable, lips profane, befouled, perhaps, the very moment before by some—

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. I rise to a point of order. Constables are not included in this proposition.

Mr. STIRLING. Some justices of the peace are just as bad.

The PRESIDENT overruled the point of order.

Mr. SANDS. I say, just think of this sacred and holy formula dropping from lips befouled, perhaps, the moment before by some coarse levity. You are making a mockery of the holiest thing that humanity knows.

As to the question of religious liberty, if the Quaker wants his religious liberty we are willing to give it to him, and say to him that if he wants to be married by a justice of the peace, or a mayor, or a judge, he may go and thus be married. Ought he not to be satisfied, and say: that is all I want; that is religious liberty to me, and I do not want to touch anybody else's religious views.

Mr. ABBOTT. Why not give all the same privilege?

Mr. SANDS. Anybody can turn Quaker, and anybody can get married as the Quakers marry, under this provision. I know of only one church, the great Catholic church, which regards marriage as a sacrament. How far the Episcopalians go I do not know. I am not theologian enough; and am not very well versed in the responses. But I know we have a large body of people among us who do regard this as a sacrament—not a ceremony, but a sacrament—just as much so as taking the bread and wine. I confess that to me even—I was going to say not a Christian, for although I believe in the system, I am not at all proverbial for any piety—even to me there