



The “Maryland Jew Bill”

AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER LAW

This booklet consists of facsimile pages excerpted from

Sketch of Proceedings in the Legislature of Maryland,

December Session, 1818,

on what is commonly called

The Jew Bill

FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF MARYLAND,

GIFT OF HAROLD AND SARAH ZALESCH

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CONTEXT:

When it was ratified in 1776, the Maryland State Constitution stated “No other test or qualification ought to be required on admission to any office of trust or profit than such oath of support and fidelity to the State ... and a declaration of belief in Christian religion.”

In effect, this meant that Jewish people and other non-Christians were barred from serving in state or municipal office, from becoming commissioned officers in the military, or from practicing law. Even after the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791, the State of Maryland did not change its practices as the provisions of the First Amendment were considered to apply only to the Federal government.

Solomon Etting, a prominent Jewish businessman began efforts to amend the Maryland Constitution in 1797. His repeated attempts were unsuccessful. In 1818, a freshman legislator from Hagerstown, Thomas Kennedy, took up the cause, though he had never met a Jewish person before winning his seat in the General Assembly. He introduced “An Act for the relief of the Jews of Maryland,” also known as “The Jew Bill.”

Kennedy was a follower of the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment, a philosophy characterized by belief in reason and the equality of all peoples. He was particularly influenced by the expression of Enlightenment principles as expressed in Thomas Jefferson’s writings on religious freedom. Most of his fellow lawmakers disagreed with him, and the act did not pass. **The pages of this booklet are excerpted from a pamphlet assembled in 1819 collecting arguments for and against the Jew Bill.**

It continued to come before the legislature through the efforts of both Kennedy and the Jewish community, and finally, in 1826, the bill won enough support to become law.

We’ve used



to indicate sections of particular interest, especially when they begin mid-page.

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*Sketch
copy
Catalogue*

SKETCH
OF
PROCEEDINGS IN THE
Legislature of Maryland,
DECEMBER SESSION, 1818,

ON WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED

The Jew Bill;

CONTAINING

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

“To consider the justice and expediency of extending to those persons professing the Jewish Religion, the same privileges that are enjoyed by Christians:”

TOGETHER WITH

The Bill reported by the Committee,

AND

THE SPEECHES

OF

THOMAS KENNEDY, Esq. OF WASHINGTON COUNTY,

AND

H. M. BRACKENRIDGE, Esq. OF BALTIMORE CITY.

Baltimore:

PRINTED BY JOSEPH ROBINSON,

Circulating Library, corner of Market and Belvidere-streets.

1819.

PREFACE.

IT is a fact not generally known among the American people, that in the State of Maryland, and in Maryland alone, a citizen professing the Jewish Religion cannot hold any office, civil or military, under the government of the State—and such is the force of prejudice, or of something worse, a Bill reported in the House of Delegates at the last session for their relief, was lost.

The disqualification is utterly at variance with the free spirit of our institutions—it is utterly inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution of the United States.—Under that immortal instrument a Jew, *even one resident in Maryland*, can be appointed to any office—he may be a representative to Congress—a member of the United States' Senate—a judge of the Supreme Court—command the Army or Navy—or even fill the highest station in the universe, the Presidential Chair;—and yet the same Jew cannot, under the government of Maryland, be appointed a Justice of the Peace; and though compelled to perform military duty, he cannot rise even to the rank of Ensign in the Militia—he cannot plead as an Attorney at the bar—nor in short hold any appointment under the State Government:—such inconsistencies are absurd—they ought not to exist amongst a free and enlightened people—they exist in no other State Government in the Union.

The subject will no doubt be again brought before the Legislature—it is a subject that ought not to be suffered to rest until the Children of Israel are restored to their just rights. If we are Christians we ought to do unto others as we would that they should do to us—if we are Christians we ought to pity rather than persecute them—

if we are Christians indeed, we must believe that the Almighty Creator will in his own good time restore them to their own land—and in the mean time it is our duty to be merciful even as He is merciful.

The speeches of Messrs. Kennedy and Brackenridge appeared some time ago in the Maryland Herald and in Niles' Register—that of the former gentleman embraces the subject theologically, the latter politically. It is much to be regretted that some other very eloquent and argumentative speeches which were delivered on the same occasion have not yet appeared in print.—Should the publisher be able to obtain them they shall also be presented to the public.

Baltimore, Nov. 1819.

LEGISLATURE OF MARYLAND.

SKETCH OF PROCEEDINGS

*In the House of Delegates at December Session, 1818,
on the Bill commonly called THE JEW BILL.*

WEDNESDAY, *December 9, 1818.*

ON motion by Mr. KENNEDY, Ordered that a committee of three be appointed to consider the justice and expediency of extending to those persons professing the Jewish Religion, the same privileges that are enjoyed by Christians.—Ordered that Messrs. *Kennedy, Brackenridge*, and *E. S. Thomas* be the said committee.

MONDAY, *December 21, 1818.*

Mr. KENNEDY delivers the following Report:—

The committee appointed to consider the justice and expediency of extending to persons professing the Jewish Religion, the same privileges that are enjoyed by Christians, have taken the same into their serious consideration, and ask leave to report:—

That with respect to the justice of the case submitted to their consideration, your committee think there can be no question; in society, mankind have civil and political duties to perform, but with regard to religion, that is a question which rests, or ought to rest, between man and his creator alone; there is no law can reach the heart—no human tribunal that has a right to take cognizance of this matter.

But, taking this subject up in a religious point of view, your committee would appeal with confidence to the autho-

is, to sever, entirely, the unnatural union between power and opinion—between politics and religion. Let us “give unto Cæsar those things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God those things that are God’s.”

This Speech closed the first day’s debate, it was continued on the two succeeding days; the principal speakers were Mr. KELL, of *Baltimore*—Mr. STEPHEN, of *Annapolis*, and Mr. HARRISON, of *Queen Anne’s*, and they were peculiarly eloquent and argumentative in favor of the bill, which was opposed by Mr. WILSON, of *Worcester*—Messrs. DORSEY and JENIFER, of *Charles*, and Mr. FOREST, of *Montgomery*—Mr. KENNEDY closed the debate with a few remarks, and the final question being put, “Shall the bill pass,” it was determined in the negative. Affirmation, 24—Negative 50.*

AFFIRMATIVE.

Col. James Brown, of <i>Q. Anne’s Co.</i>	Messrs. Worthington, } of <i>Freder-</i>
SPEAKER.	Hawkins, } <i>ick.</i>
Messrs. Pryor, of <i>Kent County.</i>	Maulsby, } of <i>Harford.</i>
Dalrymple, of <i>Calvert.</i>	Norris, } of <i>Harford.</i>
E. S. Thomas, of <i>Balt. Co.</i>	Steel, } of <i>Harford.</i>
Long, } of <i>Somerset.</i>	Henderson, } of <i>Caroline.</i>
King, } of <i>Somerset.</i>	Holbrook, } of <i>Caroline.</i>
Wroth, } of <i>Cæcil.</i>	Kell, } <i>City of</i>
Mackey, } of <i>Cæcil.</i>	Brackenridge, } <i>Balt.</i>
Claude, } <i>City of Anna-</i>	Yates, } of <i>Washing-</i>
Stephen, } <i>polis.</i>	Keller, } <i>ton Co.</i>
Harrison, } of <i>Queen</i>	Kennedy, } <i>son Co.</i>
W. R. Stewart, } <i>Anne’s.</i>	

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* Whether there were any political arrangement or caucussing on the question we know not, but it is a remarkable fact that only two Federalists in the whole House, voted for the bill—viz. Messrs. LONG and KING, of *Somerset*.

NEGATIVE.

Messrs. Blackistone,	} of <i>St. Mary's</i> .	Messrs. Eccleston,	} of <i>Dorchester</i> .
Heard,		Le Compte,	
Greenwell,	} of <i>Kent</i> .	S. Frazier,	} of <i>Cæcil</i> .
Plater.		Moffitt,	
Tilghman,	} of <i>Anne Arundel</i> .	Patten,	} of <i>Prince George's</i> .
Knight,		Semmes,	
Hinson,	} of <i>Calvert</i> .	Digges,	} of <i>Worcester</i> .
Marriott,		Somerville,	
Estep,	} of <i>Charles</i> .	Clagett,	} of <i>Frederick</i> .
T. H. Dorsey,		Quinton,	
C. Stewart,	} of <i>Balt. Co</i> .	Wilson,	} of <i>Montgomery</i> .
Beckett,		Williams,	
Kent,	} of <i>Talbot</i> .	Cockey,	} of <i>Alleghany</i> .
C. Dorsey,		Saulsbury,	
Jenifer,	} of <i>Somerset</i> .	Willis,	} of <i>50</i> .
Brawner,		Whitby,	
Garner,	} of <i>Washingt.</i>	Schnebly,	} of <i>Washington</i> .
Showers,		Washington,	
Snowden,	} of <i>Caroline</i> .	Gaither,	} of <i>Alleghany</i> .
Orrick,		Linthicum,	
Goldsborough,	} of <i>Alleghany</i> .	Forrest,	} of <i>Alleghany</i> .
T. Frazier,		Tomlinson,	
W. Hayward,	} of <i>Alleghany</i> .	Shaw,	} of <i>Alleghany</i> .
Murry,		S. Thomas,	
Dashiell,		Tidbal,	

A few days after the decision in the House of Delegates, a motion was made in the Senate by Mr. WINDER, for leave to bring in a bill to be entitled "An Act to repeal such parts of the Constitution and Bill of Rights as establish a religious test as a qualification to office," which gave rise to a very eloquent and animated debate—Messrs. WINDER, TANEY, WINCHESTER, JACKSON and MAXCY, supported the leave—which were opposed by Mr. SPENCER, (President) Messrs. CRESAP, CARMICHAEL, EMERSON, GALE, HUGHLETT, PARNHAM and WEST, so that the leave was refused. Many arguments in favor of the leave were unanswered and unanswerable, except as is often the case by dead numbers at a vote.

APPENDIX.

In order to shew the opinion held and expressed in different parts of the United States, on the civil proscription against the Jews in Maryland, the following extracts are subjoined—they are selected from many in possession of the publisher.

FROM THE
NATCHEZ (MISSISSIPPI) INDEPENDENT PRESS.
RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

WE have long since ceased to be believers in the perfectability of human nature; we no longer expect the day to come, at least we are convinced it will not be our lot to see it, when ignorance will lose its adherents, and bigotry its disciples—when might will give way to right, and when not only the higher virtues, but the minor morals and courtesies of life will be universally understood and practised—when, in fact, mankind, conquering their “sateless thirst of gold,” and quelling the ebullitions of ignoble ambition, shall study to smooth, and adorn, and beautify existence. Such day dreams, we repeat it, have vanished before appalling realities. We have seen, in our own country, the love of liberty, which burnt with such a holy ardor in the bosoms of our ancestors, at times dimmed by the intenser flames of faction—we have seen that generous devotion to country, to which they sacrificed the boons of fortune, succeed by sordid, calculating avarice—we have seen that noble spirit of independence which spurned at a foreign yoke, followed by a servile sycophancy to bank directors, and the minions of money—we have seen that reverence that was once paid to age, to office, to talents, and to services, give place to a disgraceful confusion of years, and rank, and abilities, and worth; and those whose station, or whose intellect, whilst it conferred on them the power, rendered it their duty to elevate public sentiment and exalt the national character, whelming themselves in the slough of filthy popularity, and wallowing with the meanest in the mire. Yet have we never despaired of the commonwealth. We have thought it impossible that the sons of such sires as ours should ever become so degenerate as to suffer themselves to be blinded by the rage of party, after the selfish

motives of their pretended friends should be fully detected—we have not believed that they would long submit to a monied aristocracy, when they had felt the galling of their fetters; nor that they would always consider vulgar manners and vociferous slang as the best recommendation to respect and confidence; nor be flattered by that kind of condescension which endeavours to conciliate popular favour by sinking itself to a level below that of the people. Yes, there is a fund of good sense in the people of the United States, which is not yet exhausted, and which will ultimately redeem them—there is a body of intelligent, sedate, and frugal and industrious citizens—a yeomanry, who will not be wheeled out of their rights, and from whom they cannot be wrested.

The slow progress and the occasional retrogradation of the principles of rational liberty, which the history of our country exhibits, have, as we observed in the outset, damped our enthusiasm in regard to the sudden attainment, by the major part of men, of just notions on the subject, or rather of the general prevalence of just maxims over human conduct—for in no country could the experiment have been commenced under happier auspices. We inherited from our fathers the most high minded notions of civil and religious liberty—and had we accomplished as much in the extirpation of prejudice, as they did, we should have, indeed, taken a long stride on the road towards 'perfectability.' But so far from having trodden on their heels, we have almost lost sight of their footsteps.

We did think, nevertheless, that on one subject some advances had been made; and that, as superstition had heretofore received a shock in the explosion of the doctrine of witches, to drown whom, was one of the godly recreations of the early puritans of New-England, so we fancied that bigotry was, in our time, relaxing, and that the idea had gradually become prevalent throughout the Union that it is out of the province of the civil law to regulate a man's faith, which it is best to leave him to settle with his God; and that, on the ground assumed by the poet, that

'His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right;'

it is both wise and just to allow to all peaceable and loyal citizens the same political rights. In the formation of the constitutions of the original states, we know of only two which have made a religious test a requisition in public officers—Massachusetts and *Maryland*. The constitution of the United States is a stranger to such an imposition. Other states may have such a law, but we are ignorant of it—most of them have expressly guarded against any preference of religious sects, or an inquisition into any one's religious persuasion. The declarations of some of the

states are so magnanimous, and so emphatic, that we cannot refrain from copying them. It is laid down in the Bill of Rights of the State of New-Hampshire, that—

“When men enter into a state of society, they surrender up some of their natural rights to that society, in order to ensure the protection of others; and, without such an equivalent, the surrender is void.

“Among the natural rights, some are, in their very nature, unalienable, because no equivalent can be given or received for them. Of this kind are the *rights of conscience*.

“Every individual has a natural and unalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience and reason; and no person shall be hurt, molested, or restrained in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience, or for his religious profession, sentiments, or persuasion; provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or disturb others in their religious worship.”

The language of Pennsylvania is not less explicit:

“That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can, of right, be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, against his consent; that no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given, by law, to any religious establishments or modes of worship.

“That no person, who acknowledges the being of a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, shall, on account of his religious sentiments, be disqualified to hold any office or place of trust or profit under this commonwealth.”

Delaware has also taken a decided stand against ecclesiastical encroachment. The first article of its constitution sets forth—

“Although it is the duty of all men frequently to assemble together for the public worship of the Author of the Universe, and piety and morality, on which the prosperity of communities depends, are thereby promoted; yet no man shall or ought to be compelled to attend any religious worship, to contribute to the erection, or support of any place of worship, or to the maintenance of any ministry, against his own free will and consent; and no power shall or ought to be vested in, or assumed by any magistrate, that shall in any case interfere with, or in any manner control the rights of conscience, in the free exercise of religious worship, nor a preference be given by law to any religious societies, denominations; or modes of worship.

“No religious test shall be required as a qualification to any office, or public trust, under this state.”

Among the states admitted since the adoption of the federal constitution, Vermont, Tennessee and Ohio have expressed the same irrefragable position, in nearly the same terms. The declaration of Tennessee asserts,

“That government being instituted for the common benefit, the doctrine of non resistance against arbitrary power, and oppression, is absurd, slavish, and destructive to the good and happiness of mankind.

"That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship ALMIGHTY GOD according to the dictates of their own conscience; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can in any case whatever control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishments or modes of worship.

"That no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under this state."

But it is not necessary to multiply instances of the able exposition of a selfevident truth. As it was not required when a soldier was enlisted in the armies of the Revolution, that he should give an account of his religious tenets before he could be permitted to shed his blood in the defence of liberty; as it was not demanded of a citizen when he was called upon to give up his property to support those heroes who were fighting the battles of his country, to what God he prayed to prosper her arms, before he was allowed to contribute to the achievement of her independence; little does it become us now, to say to one who has borne the heat or burthen of the combat, because he eats not of the same bread, nor drinks from the same cup that we do—"Thou art not one of us." The religion that we profess shrinks, with abhorrence, from such dastardly ingratitude—a religion which descended from Heaven, cannot behold it without loathing. If christianity need the strong arm of government to sustain or to extend it, it cannot be the religion of God. Other religions have been spread wider than ours at the point of the sword; it is the boast of christianity that it has prevailed by its own intrinsic energy. So inimical, indeed, is persecution to the genius of our religion, that whenever it has been successfully attempted, whenever the voice of honest conviction has been stifled, the spirit of christianity has fled to the skies, and the earth has been left, for a season, in darkness. Nor is it merely the disgrace which the overweening zeal of mistaken friends has brought on the religion of Jesus, that moves our indignation—nor the imputation of ingratitude which it attaches to our country—a correct policy repudiates all connexion between church and state. Apart from the danger to be apprehended from a hierarchy, the morals of society are assailed by religious preferences. The consciences of men are ensnared by those who should be the guardians of their virtue. A man who can be seduced from his faith by the terror of the law, or by the enticements of office, can be an acquisition to no sect, a desirable member of no association—but by making an adherence to heretical doctrines an impediment to political advancement, the virtuous and respectable portion of

the proscribed *cast* are precluded from benefiting society in stations for which they may be eminently fitted.

It is with much chagrin that we have witnessed the defeat of a bill, introduced into the *Maryland Legislature*, to repeal that clause of the constitution which prohibits Jews, and all others declining to make a profession of their belief in the Christian religion, from holding any office of trust or profit under the state. It is the more inexcusable in MARYLAND to have inserted, and to retain so niggardly and narrow minded a provision in the charter of its freedom, that a large proportion of its citizens are Catholics—Irish Catholics, or their immediate descendants—who have experienced themselves the infliction of religious persecution; and who are continually awakening our sympathies towards their suffering brethren in Ireland, whose principal grievance consists in a similar interdict. Massachusetts too, is, in a measure, liable to the same reproach. It could hardly have been expected that the “sons of the Pilgrims,” the descendants of fugitives from persecution, should themselves, in forming a free constitution, have established a religious test—or that a state, where the means of education abound, and whose religious liberality has been inveighed against by the *soi-disant* orthodox from Dan to Beersheba, should still be so intolerant. We hope for the honor of our age and nation, that both Maryland and Massachusetts, will purge their codes from such a stain upon the page of legislation. As it is, in those states, Jews and other sectarians enjoy hardly more political privileges than in Turkey.

From the “VIRGINIA REPUBLICAN,” published at Danville.

In our paper of last week, we published a few remarks respecting the treatment manifested towards the Jews. We view with the greatest abhorrence the persecution of this people; and hold it to be inconsistent with the true principles of Christianity, which enjoins us to “love one another.” But what have the Jews done, that they should be denounced? who has the power—or who has the presumption to assume a power, which alone can belong to the Almighty? We answer, those who bear the character and name of Christians, but upon whose foreheads are written in indelible characters—the mark of the beast.

Christ the great founder of our glorious religion, has in accents the most eloquent, as they are just and politick, recommended Charity to the attention of his followers; he has laid down plans

heart too plain to be misconceived—and give mankind every reason to suspect, that monarchical government is founded on superstition.

We cannot close our remarks upon this impressive subject, without appealing to the hearts of our readers, whether what we have advanced is consistent with justice. At the same time we have to regret that there exists in the United States persons, who would be as severe on the Jews as the Europeans are, if they possessed the same opportunities; but, thank God, it is otherwise, we hope never to see such principles encouraged in the U. States. Jews are human flesh as well as Christians. We must, however, to the eternal disgrace of the state of MARYLAND, mention the late attempt of its legislature to disfranchise the Jews. Their efforts were effectual, and dishonour must rest upon them.

From the Charleston "SOUTHERN PATRIOT," Oct. 1819.

After comments on the late disturbances in Germany, and remarks on the condition of the Jews under the petty European governments, the writer continues:

"But it may be said that when we speak of *distinctions*, we should turn our attention at home, and look at the conduct of *Maryland*, who appeared to have caught the spirit of the German governments. Yes! it may be said, as a reproach to our country, the people of *Maryland* permits a civil proscription to stand in their constitution to the dishonor of our age—to the disgrace of their own state and our free institutions. Our National charter, our various state constitutions, contain no such feature of bigotry and intolerance. Sentiments of liberality and toleration have not penetrated the bosoms of a portion of the American people, who yet boast of their *equal privileges*. Equality, in their political creed, means the enjoyment of civil rights, by the more numerous part of the people only, and their denial to those who are few in number. If this odious clause of the constitution of *Maryland* be not expunged, how can any of her citizens boast, without a blush, of living under liberal institutions, that confer on all equal privileges? With what argument could any one of them meet a subject of one of those European governments, (whose narrow policy and bigoted spirit, their own state has so well emulated,) who may be disposed to ridicule the pretensions of *Maryland* to the possession of a free constitution?"



Could he reply, that in granting equality of civil privilege, we mean to include those only who profess our religious faith? Could such an *argument* be employed by any one of common sense in a liberal age? Yet such is the *practice* of Maryland.—Hasten citizens of Maryland! and blot from your charter this disgraceful feature! Cease to perpetuate distinctions, that do not belong to an enlightened and liberal era, and cannot belong to a country distinguished for its freedom, and whose national charter places all on the same equality.”

The Editor of the “GENIUS OF LIBERTY” published at Winchester, Virginia, after adverting to the degraded condition of the Jews in the free city of Lubech, and on the excesses committed there, continues :

“How shrinks the soul with horror at the recital of such intolerant, inhuman, damning scenes, when committed across the Atlantic, but when brought nearer our own doors, we can look upon them in almost tacit acquiescence. This famous decree of the free city of Lubech, is but little further advanced in the system of persecution, than are the existing laws of our neighbouring state, Maryland, which some liberal philanthropick minded men unsuccessfully attempted to repeal, at the last session of the legislature.—O Maryland! look on this picture, and wipe from your skirts the everlasting disgrace, which will otherwise eternally stain the escutcheon of liberty, by a speedy repeal of those intolerant laws, which plunge a respectable portion of your citizens into complete political slavery.”

From the Philadelphia “FREEMAN’S JOURNAL.”

“It is with much regret we observe the illiberal principles, which have pervaded the Legislature of Maryland, in rejecting the bill commonly called the Jew Bill, which went to put the descendants of Abraham, as regarded their civil rights, on the same footing with those *who go under the name of Christians*. In Maryland, a Jew cannot hold any office whatever. These things ought not to be in this country, the asylum of the oppres-

more countenanced by one of the States in the American republic, and in the 23d year of American Independence.

A correspondent who announces the result to me, observes, "I blush for christianity and for christians, so little have they regarded the first injunction of their divine master."

But what effect has this intolerant act of Maryland produced on the Jews? Can they prevent a Jew from being the President of the United States if he is chosen? No. Can they prevent him for being a Member of Congress? No. Or hold an office under the general government? No. What can their bigotry effect? Why, they can prevent a Jew from holding a legislative or municipal office; and there, fortunately, their power ends. I trust, therefore, that the Jews in Maryland will continue to discharge every duty as men and citizens—will be the first in the ranks in defence of their country—the first in patronizing learning, charitable and religious institutions, and by acts of liberality and propriety, prove themselves worthy of every right—and thus will these intolerant men, feel as *little* as they really *are*.

To show, by comparison, the difference in the characters and feelings of men, I subjoin extracts from letters which I received from Messrs. Adams, Jefferson and Madison on the subject of the Jews. I believe no person in the Legislature of Maryland, friendly to intolerance, will question their talents, character, or services; nor doubt the right which they have of possessing a very important influence, in a country over which they have presided as chief magistrates; and which country, at this day, exhibits a proud proof of the effect growing out of their wise, patriotic and liberal measures—These letters cannot be read without interest; and such friends of the inquisition as may, unfortunately, be found in Maryland, would do well to make them the *vade mecum* of their faith,



Extract of a letter from THOMAS JEFFERSON, dated Monticello, May 28, 1818.

"Your sect, by its sufferings, has furnished a remarkable proof of the universal spirit of religious intolerance inherent in every sect, disclaimed by all while feeble, and practised by all when in power. Our laws have applied the only antidote to this vice, protecting our religious as they do our civil rights, by putting all on an equal footing. But more remains to be done—for

although we are free by the law, we are not so in practice. Public opinion erects itself into an inquisition, and exercises its office with as much fanaticism as fans the flames of an auto da fe. The prejudice still scowling on your sect of our religion, although the elder one, cannot be unfelt by yourselves. It is to be hoped that individual dispositions will, at length mould themselves to the model of the law, and consider the moral basis on which all our religion rests, as the rallying point which unites them in common interest, while the peculiar dogmas branching from it are the exclusive concern of the respective sects embracing them, and no rightful subject of notice to any other. Public opinion needs reformation on this point, which would have the further effect of doing away the hypocritical maxim of "intus ut lubet, foris ut moris." Nothing I think, would be so likely to effect this, as to your sect particularly, as the more careful attention to education, which you recommend; and which, placing its members on the equal and commanding benches of science, will exhibit them as equal objects of respect and power."

*Extract of a letter from JOHN ADAMS, dated--
Quincy, July 31, 1818.*

"You have not extended your ideas, of the rights of private judgement, and the liberty of conscience, both in religion and philosophy, further than I do. Mine are limited only by morals and propriety.

I have had occasion to be acquainted with several gentlemen of your nation, and to transact business with some of them, whom I found to be men of liberal minds; as much honor, probity, generosity, and good breeding, as any I have known in any sect of religion or philosophy.

I wish your nation may be admitted to all the privileges of citizens, in every country of the world.

This country has done much, I wish it may do more, and annul every narrow idea in religion, government and commerce.

Let the wits joke; the philosopher sneer! What then! It has pleased the Providence of the "FIRST CAUSE," the Universal Cause, that Abraham should give religion, not only to Hebrews, but to Christians and Mahometans, the greatest part of the modern civilized world!

TEXT OF THE JEW BILL THAT BECAME LAW IN 1826, WHEN IT PASSED A SECOND TIME:

An Act for the relief of the Jews in Maryland

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland. That every citizen of this State professing the Jewish Religion and who shall hereafter be appointed to any office or public trust under the State of Maryland shall in addition to the oaths required to be taken by the Constitution and Laws of the State, or of the United States, make and subscribe a declaration of his belief in a future State of Rewards and Punishments, in the stead of the declaration now required by the Constitution and form of Government of this State.

And be enacted. That the several clauses and sections of the declaration of rights, Constitution and form of Government and every part of any law of this State contrary to the provisions of this act, so far as respects the Sect of people aforesaid shall be and the same is hereby declared to be repealed and annulled on the confirmation hereof.

And be it enacted That if this act shall be confirmed by the General Assembly of Maryland after the next election of Delegates in the first Session after such new election as the Constitution and forms of Government directs, in such case this Act and the alterations of the said Constitution and form of Government shall constitute and be valid

By the Senate

February 26th 1825

This engrossed Bill the original of which passed the Senate on the 25th February 1825 was this day read and assented to

By Order Wm Kilty, Clk

By the House of Delegates

February 26th, 1825

This engrossed Bill the original of which passed this House on the 24th of February 1825 was this day read and assented to

By order John Brewer, Clk
Samuel Steven

Jewish Museum of Maryland
15 Lloyd Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



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