

Maryland Toleration Act; September 21, 1649 (Modified) **An Act Concerning Religion.**

(Definitions: assented-approved, commonwealth-an independent community, reproachful-expressing disapproval, levied-imposed, chattels-an item of property that is not real estate, amity-a friendly relationship, ordained-order or enacted)

1. In a well governed and Christian Common Wealth matters concerning Religion and the honor of God ought to be taken into serious consideration... Be it therefore ordered and enacted by Cecilius Lord Baron of Baltimore, Lord and Proprietary of this Province with the advise and consent of this General Assembly: That whatsoever person or persons within [Maryland] shall blaspheme God, that is Curse him, or deny our Savior Jesus Christ to be the son of God, or shall deny the holy Trinity or shall use or utter any reproachful... words or language concerning the Holy Trinity, or any of the three persons [of the Trinity] shall be punished with death and confiscation or forfeiture of all his or her lands and goods to the Lord Proprietary and his heirs.

2. And whatsoever person or persons shall use or utter any reproachful words or Speeches concerning the blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of our Savior or the holy Apostles...for the first offense [will] forfeit to the said Lord Proprietary and his heirs the sum of five pound Sterling...but in case such Offender or Offenders [do not pay] then such Offender or Offenders shall be publicly whipped and imprisoned during the pleasure of the Lord Proprietary or the Lieutenant or chief Governor of this Province for the time being. For every second offense [that person] shall forfeit ten pound sterling [and if they do not pay] they will be publicly and severely whipped and imprisoned. For a third Offense the offender shall forfeit all his lands and Goods and be forever banished and expelled out of this Province.

3. And whatsoever person or persons shall upon any occasion of Offense or otherwise in a reproachful manner or Way declare [or] call...any person or persons whatsoever [within Maryland that is a Christian] in a reproachful manner relating to matter of Religion shall forfeit and loose the some of ten shillings sterling, half will be forfeited and paid to the offending party, and the other half to the Lord Proprietary and his heirs. But if such person or persons [can not pay] the offender shall be publicly whipped, and shall suffer imprisonment without bail until he, she or they shall satisfy offended party by asking him or her forgiveness publicly before the Magistrate of chief Officer or Officers of the Town or place where such Offense shall be given.

4. Every person and persons within this Province that profane the Sabbath or Lords day called Sunday by frequent swearing, drunkenness or by any uncivil or disorderly

recreation, or by doing work that is not necessary shall for the first offense forfeit 2 sterling, and for the second offense 5 sterling, and for the third offense and every offense after he shall forfeit 10 sterling. [If that person can not pay] the offending party for the first and second offense will be imprisoned till he or she shall publicly in open Court before the chief Commander Judge or Magistrate, of that County Town or precinct where such offense was committed acknowledge the Scandal and offense committed against God and the good and civil Government of this Province, And for the third offense and every time after be publicly whipped.

5. For the more quiet and peaceable government of this Province, and the better to preserve mutual Love and amity amongst the Inhabitants, Be it ordered by the Lord Proprietary with the advise and consent of this Assembly ordained and enacted that no person or persons whatsoever within this Province, or the Islands, Ports, Harbors, Creeks, or havens professing to believe in Jesus Christ, will be troubled for his or her religion nor will be denied the free exercise within this Province nor will they be compelled to the belief or exercise of any other Religion against his or her consent, so as they be not unfaithful to the Lord Proprietary, or conspire against the civil Government established or to be established in this Province under him or his heirs.

7. And whereupon there is a forfeiture fine or penalty imposed an appointed official shall seize the goods and estate of the offending party and sell what is required to meet the forfeiture, fine, or penalty Restoring unto the offending party the Remainder of the said goods or estate after such satisfaction is made.

The freemen have assented.