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About the Freedom of Religion

Pennsylvania Gazette, 16 July 1788 (excerpt)

The United States of America, says a correspondent, present a most comfortable prospect to the European world, since the adoption of the new fœderal constitution. In every nation of the *old* world RELIGIOUS LIBERTY is denied to some of their subjects or citizens. The *established* church in each is the favorite of their respective governments. The most virtuous, the most learned, and the most judicious dissenter, in Great Britain or Ireland, is excluded from a share in the government, unless he will sacrifice his virtue by complying with TESTS and CEREMONIES, which he considers as impious or unmeaning. Numberless attempts have been made to unshackle that numerous, learned and pious body of people, *the British dissenters*, but in vain. This, then, is their country. Over the face of this country settlements were scattered, in the last and present century, by the forefathers and relations of these very dissenters. The Presbyterians, the Quakers, the Congregationalists, the Anabaptists, the Roman Catholics, and several other churches, all of whom now enjoy the most perfect religious liberty, free from the jealousy and oppression of an established church; and all of whom have the freest access to places of honor or profit in the government. The new fœderal constitution confirms and secures to all for ever these great blessings, by providing, in the most clear and positive terms, that no religious test shall ever be required of any officer of the United States. . . .

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