

A Friend of Society and Liberty, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 23 July 1788

...However, as I said before, any man, rich or poor, protestant or catholic, can be chosen, if he is thought fit by the state legislature, or the people at large, and when he is chosen nothing can prevent his taking his seat and performing his high duties. In other countries *religious* tests would prevent him, though he were ever so wise, ever so good, or ever so much beloved and esteemed. In Spain a protestant would be disqualified, in Ireland a presbyterian or a catholic would be disqualified, in England a catholic, presbyterian, or any dissenter from their church, would be disqualified. But our new fœderal constitution admits all, whether protestant, or catholic, or presbyterian, or episcopalian, &c. for it expressly says there shall be *no religious test*. Blessed circumstance, for which above all others the favored people of these states should ever raise their grateful voices in praise and thanksgiving to the author of every good and perfect gift. The fœderal connexion, established on these liberal and generous principles, will lead to a sort of fœderal union among the various churches which it has pleased God to raise up in the world. Here none can be particularly favored, none can be particularly oppressed, none can be interfered with—all are equal—all independent of each other. They will not render to each other nor to the government, tithes, nor tenths, nor free gifts (as they have been preposterously termed) nor any species of taxes, as religious men or societies. Nothing will be expected, nothing will be required but peace and good will, and brotherly loving kindness. This excellent quality of the new government will warm and expand our bosoms whenever we reflect upon it. The liberality and virtue of America in establishing perfect equality and freedom among all religious denominations and societies, will no doubt produce to us a great reward, for when the news of it shall reach the oppressed dissenters from the established churches of Britain, Ireland, Holland, Germany, France, Spain and Italy, and they shall find that it encourages both protestants and catholics, they will at once cry out, America is "*the land of promise.*" There alone can the sincere votaries of religion enjoy their lives, their civil and religious rights and property, without suffering from their attachment to that church in which they have been *born and bred*, and which they believe to be *right and true*. Ye Sovereigns of the European world, continue your religious oppressions at your peril. So sure as you persist, thousands of your present subjects, transplanted to the fertile fields, the healthful villages and populous cities of America, shall remind you of your impiety and error, when it shall be too late for you to retrieve the loss.

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