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## *William Bladen Publisher and his Printer Thomas Reading*

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Bladen accepted the responsibility of the press, and also, doubtless, whatever profits accrued to its operation above a salary or royalty paid to the printer. Exactly what were the relations, however, between Bladen and Reading is not known, but whatever may have been the arrangement under which they worked, it seems to have been altered as early as the year 1704, for then and afterwards Reading was spoken of as public printer and Bladen was mentioned no longer in connection with the business of the establishment. It will be seen later, that although in partnership and alone Reading used for thirteen years the press which Bladen had set up in Annapolis, yet the ownership of it remained with Bladen throughout the entire period.

It was nearly four years after Bladen had been given permission to bring in a printing press that, in the month of May 1700, he announced himself to the Assembly as ready for business. On May 4th, the Council sent down to the Lower House the following recommendation:

“The peticon of Wm. Bladen haveing been here read and considered this Board findeing that the Petr has been at great charge and trouble in procureing the Press, Letters, Papers, Ink and Printer Etc. wee doe recommend the same to the house for their consideration and encouragement and that for Promotion thereof an Ordinance pass that after the 10th day of September next noe other writts be made use of but such as shalbe printed (Save only Speciall Writts wherein are varyous recitalls) and All Bayle bonds, Letters Testamenry, Letters of Admistracon Citacons summonses &ca be printed and none other made use of they being allways to be had vizt

The Writts Citations and Summons's at one penny or one li Tobo per peece

And the Lres Testamenry Admon Bayle bonds &ca at Two pence or two pounds of tobbo per peece.”<sup>1</sup>

This recommendation of the Council was assented to by the House, and it was

“. . . ordered accordingly provided the Petr give sufficient Caution to his Excy not to printe any other matter or thing but what Shalbe first lycensed by his Excy the Govr or some other p'son that shalbe by him appointed.”<sup>2</sup>

### BRAY'S "NECESSITY OF AN EARLY RELIGION" ANNAPOLIS, 1700

That it was not the intention of the Assembly to permit the usefulness of Bladen's press to be limited to such humble service as the printing of blank forms and legal papers appears from further reference to it during the remaining days of the session. On May 5th, the Rev. Thomas Bray, D.D., the Bishop of London's commissary for Maryland, preached before the Assembly a sermon which so pleased the delegates that a few days later it was ordered in the House “that Doctor Bray be returned thanks from this

<sup>1</sup>L. H. J., May 6, 1700, *Archives of Maryland*, 24: 60.

<sup>2</sup>L. H. J., May 6, 1700, *Archives of Maryland*, 24: 60.