

disquisitions. But religion is the basis of moral obligation—of the essence of all government; the only ground of confidence between man and man, and the foundation of all society. Without it the world would be an universal and perpetual war of artifice, intrigue, fraud, stratagem and violence, of all men against all men. This at least is my opinion, though I shall not persecute those who differ from me.

When religious liberty has been asserted by invincible arguments of the soundest divines, as well as the philosophers of this century and the last; when every engine of wit, satire, humour and ridicule, have been employed to discountenance intolerance, is the whole to terminate in a cruel and sanguinary persecution of all religion? In the annihilation of all the sacred foundations of morality, government and society? America will not, I trust, be willing to be converted into a perfect bedlam, whatever other parts of the world may wish it.

At the time when, under every discouragement, I was called by the suffrages of very little more than half of the nation to the presidency of the general government, I was fully aware of the dangers that surrounded us, and of the perplexities that awaited my administration. A responsibility which might be determined, as my election had been, by two or three votes, presented itself before me, enough to have appalled a heart possessed of more fortitude than mine. But as the course of my life had led me for twenty years through scenes which afforded me, perhaps more than any other American, opportunities of weighing the probable effects of the spasms, convulsions and agonies, of a great nation, broke loose from all restraint, in the centre of Europe, I thought it might be as difficult for me as for any other to excuse myself from the trial. The affectionate and ardent support which I have received from my fellow-citizens, has appeared much earlier, and more unanimous, than my most sanguine hopes had ever anticipated. In the generous and general declarations of satisfaction and approbation of my fellow-citizens, in all parts of the union, I have received a reward which I esteem above all other personal consideration in this life. Nothing of the kind has excited my gratitude more sincerely than this magnanimous address from the general assembly of Maryland. Most cordially I wish you all health and happiness.

JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, December 23, 1798.

Which was read, and sent to the house of delegates by the clerk:

The senate again resumed the second reading of the bill, entitled, An act for the relief of sundry insolvent debtors, and, on motion, the question was put, That the following be proposed as an amendment to the said bill? At the end of the 6th line of the 18th page insert, "Provided nevertheless, That as to all and every person or persons included in this act, who have been engaged in trade or merchandise, it shall not be necessary for them, or either of them, to procure the assent of their creditors, or any part of them, as aforesaid, but if so many of his or their creditors as have due them the amount of one fourth of the debts due by him or them at the time of passing this act, shall not lodge with the chancellor their dissent in writing to such debtor or debtors being admitted to the benefit of this act, on or before the expiration of six months after the said notice shall be given or published as aforesaid, such debtor or debtors shall be entitled to all and every benefit of this act, in as full and ample manner as if such debtor or debtors had procured the assent of two thirds of his or their creditors as aforesaid." The yeas and nays being required, appeared as follow:

A F F I R M A T I V E.

Mr. Perry, president, Mr. Dennis, Mr. Grahame, Mr. Ridgely, Mr. Forrest, Mr. Chesley, Mr. M^cMechen and Mr. Milligan. 8.

N E G A T I V E.

Mr. Carroll, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Purnell, Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Thomas. 5.

So it was determined in the affirmative.

The said bill was then read throughout, and passed with the proposed amendments. Amendments proposed. In the 14th line of the 1st page, after the word "Russell" insert "Benjamin Marshall." In the 1st line of the 2d page, after the word "Preston" insert "John Lee Gibson." In the 5th line of the same page, after the word "Belt" insert "William Loving, William Prentiss." In the 8th line of the same page, after the word "Needham" insert "Lloyd Beall, John Beck, Thomas Gerard Slye." At the end of the 2d page, after the word "county" insert the words "by their petitions to this general assembly have set forth, that by reason of many misfortunes they are unable wholly to satisfy their creditors, and have prayed that they may be discharged upon their delivering up all their property for the use of their creditors; and the prayer of the said petitioners being found reasonable, therefore." In the 10th line of the 3d page strike out the words "and also" and insert "or." In the 4th line of the 10th page, after the word "fide" insert the word "laid." In the 8th line of the 11th page, after the word "give" strike out "a" and insert the words "an undue and improper." In the 12th line of the same page, after the word "debtor" insert the word "and." In the 1st line of the 12th page strike out the second word "the" and insert "an." In the 1st and 2d lines of the 18th page strike out the words "security require" and insert "require security." At the end of the 6th line of the same page insert the words "provided nevertheless, that as to all and every person or persons included in this act, who have been engaged in trade or merchandise, it shall not be necessary for them, or either of them, to procure the assent of their creditors, or any part of them, as aforesaid, but if so many of his or their creditors as have due them the amount of one fourth of the debts due by him or them at the time of passing this act, shall not lodge with the chancellor their dissent in writing to such debtor or debtors being admitted to the benefit of this act, on or before the