

This was the age in which lived George Calvert, First Lord Baltimore, Founder of Maryland.

Calvert has been uniformly hailed as a man of great political insight, patient understanding and moral fibre. Distinguished historians of the United States have reserved their highest praise for the self-made statesman-philosopher. One ranked him among the wisest and most benevolent statesmen of all ages, saying that Calvert:

“was the first in the history of the Christian world to seek for religious security and peace by the practise of justice and not by the exercise of power; to plan the establishment of popular institutions with the environment of liberty and conscience The asylum of Papists was the spot where in a remote corner of the world, on the banks of rivers which as yet had hardly been explored, the mild forbearance of a proprietary, adopted religious freedom as the basis of the state.”¹²

Calvert was chosen Secretary of State of England by King James I, who knew of his tolerant views on religion and recognized him as “a man of great sense, but not obstinate in his sentiments, taking as great pleasure in hearing others’ opinions as in delivering his own.”¹³

Shortly after the death of his first wife, George Calvert converted to Catholicism and, true to character, publicly announced his change of religion.¹⁴ When British persecution of Catholics became severe, the first Lord Baltimore

bowed out of office. Again he affirmed his faith and claimed that the duties of office were no longer compatible with his religion. Historians frequently praise Calvert’s loyalty to his faith, but seldom note the significance which his conversion to Catholicism may have had upon his philosophy of government. Although retired from public office, he was nevertheless still a King’s man. He had not changed his political party, yet church and state were still clearly separated in his mind.¹⁵

Calvert’s ill-fated attempts to colonize in Newfoundland¹⁶ seemed to do little more than increase his fervent desire to establish a haven for the persecuted. He was liked and respected by the King, and his request for a charter to set up a colony on the shores of the Chesapeake was granted, without too much difficulty, in 1632.¹⁷ However, before the charter received its seal, the first Lord Baltimore died, never to set foot upon his promised land.

**THE ARK AND THE DOVE TO THE
ACT OF TOLERATION
1634-1650**

Maryland was born as the “Free State,” but it did not earn that title, unless it be true that nothing is earned except that which is suffered for. To be

¹² Johnson, *The Maryland Act of Religious Toleration* 5 (1949).

¹³ Ives, *supra* note 7, 45-46.

¹⁴ Some writers have suggested that Calvert’s first consideration in asking for the new charter was to offset the financial loss occasioned by the failure of colonization in Newfoundland, and that the wish to establish a refuge for Catholics was but secondary. See P. SKIRVEN, *THE FIRST PARISHES OF THE PROVINCE OF MARYLAND* 3 (1923); and E. ALLEN, *MARYLAND TOLERATION* 18 (1855). But this theory has not been popular among other historians.

¹² 1 G. BANCROFT, *HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES* 244 (many editions).

¹³ Ives, *supra* note 7 at 31-32.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 36.