

CHAPTER CCCLI.

A SUPPLEMENT TO AN ACT OF ASSEMBLY OF THIS PROVINCE, ENTITLED
‘AN ACT PRESCRIBING THE FORMS OF DECLARATIONS OF FIDELITY,
ABJURATION AND AFFIRMATION, INSTEAD OF THE FORMS HERETO-
FORE REQUIRED IN SUCH CASES.’¹

Whereas the liberty of conscience freely enjoyed by the inhabitants of this province ever since its first settlement hath encouraged great numbers of Protestants of different persuasions to remove themselves and families hither, where they have generally behaved themselves soberly and given testimony of their fidelity and affection to his present Majesty and his royal predecessors, Kings and Queens of Great Britain; yet notwithstanding many of them have labored under difficulties frequently happening relating to the forms of taking the oaths, declarations and abjurations prescribed by the laws of that part of Great Britain called England. And whereas by the aforesaid act of assembly, which afterwards received his late Majesty’s royal approbation, great ease and relief was granted to the people called Quakers, who conscientiously scruple the taking an oath. And whereas many other Protestant dissenters inhabiting this province, who (notwithstanding they are willing to take an oath) are under the like conscientious scruple as to the form of administering and taking the same, especially those of the Presbyterian persuasion [as] established in that part of the Kingdom of Great Britain called Scotland, who in taking an oath do scruple kissing the Bible, and yet are obliged to bear their share of the burden of the government and to serve their country in common with the rest of the inhabitants. It is therefore judged reasonable to relieve them from the difficulties aforesaid and give them ease in that behalf.

May it therefore please the governor that it may be enacted:
[Section I.] And be it enacted by George Thomas, Esquire,

¹ Passed May 9, 1724, Chapter 281.

with the King's [royal] approbation Lieutenant-Governor under the Honorable John Penn, Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, Esquires, true and absolute Proprietaries of the Province of Pennsylvania and the counties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, by and with the advice and consent of the representatives of the freemen of the said Province in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That in all cases where an oath by law is required or enjoined to be taken by any person or persons conscientiously scrupling to take the same in the usual form, yet [who] voluntarily offers to take an oath by repeating the same, the ceremony of the book excepted, or shall take the oath commonly administered and taken in Scotland, such oath or oaths shall be accepted of, judged and allowed to be of the same force and effect to all intents and purposes in all courts of justice and elsewhere within this province as if such persons had taken the oath in the usual form, anything in the before-recited act of assembly or any law, custom or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

[Section II.] And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons shall take such oath or oaths in the manner allowed of by this act, and shall be lawfully convicted of willful, false and corrupt swearing in any matter or thing whatsoever which if sworn in the usual form of taking an oath in the Kingdom of England would have amounted to willful and corrupt perjury, every such person so offending shall suffer and incur such pains, penalties and forfeitures as are inflicted on persons convict of willful and corrupt perjury by the statute laws of that part of Great Britain called England.

Passed May 19, 1739. See Appendix XIV, Section I. Repealed by the King in Council, May 12, 1740.