Letters to and from George Washington following his Inauguration representing Various Congregations*

Methodist Episcopal Church

The address of the bishops, signed on behalf of the church by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, reads in part: "We the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, humbly beg leave in the name of our Society collectively in these United States, to express to you the warm feelings of our hearts, and our sincere congratulations on your appointment to the Presidentship of these States. We are conscious from the signal proofs you have already given that you are a friend of mankind; and under this established idea, place as full a confidence in your wisdom and integrity, for the preservation of those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of GOD and the glorious revolution, as we believe ought to be reposed in man.

"We have received the most grateful satisfaction from the humble and entire dependence on the great Governor of the Universe which you have repeatedly expressed, acknowledging him the source of every blessing, and particularly of the most excellent constitution of these States, which is at present the admiration of the world, and may in future become it's great exemplar for imitation: and hence we enjoy a holy expectation that you always will prove a faithful and impartial Patron of genuine, vital religion—the grand end of our creation and present probationary existence. And we promise you our fervent prayers to the Throne of Grace that GOD almighty may endue you with all the graces and gifts of his holy spirit, that may enable you to fill up your important station to his glory, the good of his Church, the happiness and prosperity of the United States, and the welfare of mankind."

To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 29 May 1789

Gentlemen.

I return to you individually, and (through you) to your Society collectively in the United States my thanks for the demonstrations of affections, and the expressions of joy, offered in their behalf, on my late appointment. It shall still be my endeavor to manifest, by overt acts, the purity of my inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desires to contribute whatever may be in my power towards the preservation of the civil and religious liberties of the American People. In pursuing this line of conduct, I hope, by the assistance of divine providence, not altogether to disappoint the confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me.

It always affords me satisfaction, when I find a concurrence in sentiment and practice between all conscientious men in acknowledgements of homage to the great Governor of the Universe, and in professions of support to a just civil government. After mentioning that I trust the people of every denomination, who demean themselves as good citizens, will have occasion to be convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial Patron of genuine, vital religion: I must assure you in particular that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the Throne of Grace for me, and that I likewise implore the divine benedictions on yourselves and your religious community.

*For letters and more explore https://founders.archives.gov

German Lutherans

The address of the German Lutherans, dated 27 April 1789, reads: "It is with inexpressible satisfaction that we the Ministers, Church wardens, and Vestrymen of the German Lutheran Congregation in and near the City of Philadelphia address Your Excellency on the present great occasion. The entire esteem, the exalted consideration with which we view your character delightfully combine with the duty which we owe to this our country, and the love we bear to every fellow-citizen throughout these States in exciting to announce the joy we entertain in your appointment to the station of President in chief.

"The affairs of America in which Your Excellency bore so illustrious a part from the very beginning of a most arduous Contest, all along exhibited more than the symptoms of a great and general prosperity to be at length completed. The most clouded portions of our time were not without some rays of hope, and numerous occurrences, through the blessings of divine providence, were brilliant and eminently fortunate—The present happy crisis sheds a lustre on the past events of our union, and it seems to be the presage of every thing desireable to come.

"Pleasingly do we anticipate the blessings of a wise and efficient government—equal freedom—perfect safety—a sweet contentment spreading through the whole land—irreproachable manners with pure religion, and *that* righteousness which exalteth a Nation.

"Though as Individuals we can be but little known to you, yet as Representatives in some respect of a numerous people in this city; and being so situated as to know well the minds of our German Brethren nearly thro' this State, we can with some propriety come forward in this manner. It is therefore with assurance and pleasure we affirm, that there is no body of People whatsoever than can or ever shall exceed those with whom we are connected, in affection for your Person, and confidence in your abilities, patriotism, and distinguished goodness.

"You are the Man of their bosom and veneration. On this ground may we be entitled to some excuse for what might seem to be an intrusion in the midst of your numerous weighty engagements" (DLC:GW). The address is signed by Justus Henry Christian Helmuth and John Frederick Schmidt, ministers, and Frederick Kuhl, president of the corporation.

To the German Lutherans of Philadelphia, New York, April-May, 1789

Gentlemen,

While I request you to accept my thanks for your kind address,[1] I must profess myself highly gratified by the sentiments of esteem and consideration contained in it. The approbation my past conduct has received from so worthy a body of citizens as that whose joy for my appointment you announce, is a proof of the indulgence with which my future transactions will be judged by them.

I could not however avoid apprehending that the partiality of my Countrymen in favor of the measures now pursued has led them to expect too much from the present Government; did not the same Providence which has been visible in every stage of our progress to this interesting crisis, from a combination of circumstances, give us cause to hope for the accomplishment of all our reasonable desires.

Thus partaking with you in the pleasing anticipation of the blessings of a wise and efficient government; I flatter myself that opportunities will not be wanting for me to shew my disposition to encourage the domestic and public virtues of Industry, Œconomy, Patriotism, Philanthropy, and that Righteousness which exalteth a Nation.

I rejoice in having so suitable an occasion to testify the reciprocity of my esteem for the numerous People whom you represent. From the excellent character for diligence, sobriety and virtue, which the Germans in general, who are settled in America, have ever maintained; I cannot forbear felicitating myself on receiving from so respectable a number of them such strong assurances of their affection for my person, confidence in my integrity, and zeal to support me in my endeavours for promoting the welfare of our common Country.

So long as my Conduct shall merit the approbation of the *Wise* and the *Good*, I hope to hold the same place in your affections, which your friendly declarations induce me to believe I possess at present: and, amidst all the vicisitudes that may await me in this mutable existance, I shall earnestly desire the continuation of an interest in your intercessions at the *Throne of Grace*.

Go: Washington

United Baptist Churches of Virginia and New York

The "Address of the *General Committee* representing the United Baptist Churches in Virginia, assembled in the City of Richmond, May 8th, 9th, 10th 1789," reads in part:
"Amongst the many shouts of congratulation that you receive from Cities, Societies, States, and the whole world, we wish to take an active part in the universal chorus, in expressing our great satisfaction in your appointment to the first office in the nation.

"When America on a former occasion was reduced to the necessity of appealing to arms, to maintain her natural and civil rights, a Washington was found full adequate to the exigencies of the dangerous attempt, who, by the philanthropy of his heart, and prudence of his head led forth her untutored Troops into the field of battle, and by the skillfulness of his hands baffled all the projects of the insulting foe, and paved the rugged road to independence even at a time when the energy of the Cabinet was not sufficient to bring into action the natural aid of the confederation from its respective sources.

"The grand object being obtained; the Independence of the States acknowledged; free from ambition and a sanguine thirst for blood, our Hero returned with those whom he commanded, and yielded up his sword to those who gave it him.

"Such an example to the world is new,
"Who can such wondrous proofs of virtue shew.

"Like other nations we experience that it requires as great wisdom and valor to make an advantage of a conquest as to gain one. The want of efficacy in the confederation; the redundancy of laws in the States and their partial administration, with other evils, called aloud for a new arrangement of our political system.

"The wisdom of the States for that purpose was collected in a grand Convention, over which you, Sir, had the deserved honor to preside. . . . When the constitution first made its appearance in Virginia, we, as a Society, had unusual strugglings of mind; fearing that *the liberty of conscience,* dearer to us than property or life, was not sufficiently secured. Perhaps our jealousies were heightened on account of the usage that we received under the royal government, when Mobs, Bonds, Fines, and Prisons were our frequent attendants. Convinced on one hand that

without an effective national government we should fall into disunion and all the consequent evils; and on the other fearing that we should be accessary to some religious oppression, should any one Society in the union preponderate over all the rest: But amidst all the inquietudes of mind, our consolation arose from this consideration 'The plan must be good for it bears the signature of a tried, trusty friend'—and if religious liberty is rather insecure, 'The administration will certainly prevent all oppression for a Washington will preside'—According to our wishes the unanimous voice of the Union has called you, Sir, from your beloved retreat, to launch forth again into the faithless seas of human affairs to guide the helm of the States. . . .

"And while we speak freely the language of our own hearts, we are satisfied that we express the sentiments of all our Brethren in the State that we represent—The very name of Washington is music in all our ears: and although the great evil in the State is the want of mutual confidence between the Rulers and the People, yet we all have the utmost confidence in the President of the States.

"And it is our fervent prayer to Almighty God that the federal government, and the governments of the States, without rivalship may so co-operate together as to make the numerous people, over whom you preside, the happiest nation on earth, and you, Sir, the happiest man, in seeing the People, whom you saved from vassalage by your martial valor, and made wise by your maxims sitting securely under their vines and fig-trees, enjoying the perfection of human felicity . . ." (DLC:GW).

To the United Baptist Churches of Virginia, New York, May, 1789

Gentlemen,

I request that you will accept my best acknowledgments for your congratulation on my appointment to the first office in the nation. The kind manner in which you mention my past conduct equally claims the expression of my gratitude.1

After we had, by the smiles of Heaven on our exertions, obtained the object for which we contended, I retired at the conclusion of the war, with an idea that my country could have no farther occasion for my services, and with the intention of never entering again into public life: But when the exigence of my country seemed to require me once more to engage in public affairs, an honest conviction of duty superseded my former resolution, and became my apology for deviating from the happy plan which I had adopted.

If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension that the Constitution framed in the Convention, where I had the honor to preside, might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical Society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it; and if I could now conceive that the general Government might ever be so administered as to render the liberty of conscience insecure, I beg you will be persuaded that no one would be more zealous than myself to establish effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny, and every species of religious persecution—For you, doubtless, remember that I have often expressed my sentiment, that every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience.

While I recollect with satisfaction that the religious Society of which you are Members, have been, throughout America, uniformly, and almost unanimously, the firm friends to civil liberty, and the persevering Promoters of our glorious revolution; I cannot hesitate to believe that they

will be the faithful Supporters of a free, yet efficient general Government. Under this pleasing expectation I rejoice to assure them that they may rely on my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity.

In the meantime be assured, Gentlemen, that I entertain a proper sense of your fervent supplications to God for my temporal and eternal happiness.

G. Washington

Presbyterian Church

"Copy of an address from the Genl Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, their highest Ecclesiastical Judicatory, in this United States, at their late Meeting in Philadelphia—with a Request to know when They may have the honor of presenting it.

"I beg Leave to add that three of the Gentlemen of the Committee appointed for this Purpose, live in the Country—but if notified by Monday's Post may attend by Thursday or Friday of the next Week, if either of those Days will be convenient—or Such other as You shall please to fix on, the Week following." The docket on that letter reads in part "answerd—May 30th—address to be recd on the 5th of June (DLC:GW). The committee, consisting of Rodgers, the Rev. Alexander MacWhorter, the Rev. Mr. Roe, John Bayard, and John Broome, presented the address to GW on the indicated date (*New-York Journal, and Weekly Register,* 4 and 11 June 1789). **The address, dated 26 May and signed by Rodgers as moderator, reads in part: "**The general assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America embrace the earliest opportunity in their power, to testify the lively and unfeigned pleasure which they with the rest of their fellow citizens feel on your appointment to the first office in the nation.

"We adore Almighty GOD the Author of every perfect gift who hath endued you with such a rare and happy assemblage of Talents as hath rendered you equally necessary to your country in war and in peace. Your military achievements ensured safety and glory to America, in the late arduous conflict for freedom, while your disinterested conduct, and uniformly just discernment of the public Interest, gained you the entire confidence of the People and in the present interesting period of public affairs, the influence of your personal character moderates the divisions of political parties, and promises a permanent establishment of the civil Government.

"From a retirement more glorious to you than thrones and sceptres, you have been called to your present elevated station by the voice of a great and free people, and with an unanimity of suffrage that has few if any examples in history—A Man more ambitious of fame, or less devoted to his country, would have refused an office in which his honors could not be augmented, and where they might possibly be subject to a reverse.

"We are happy that God hath inclined your heart to give yourself once more to the Public. and we derive a favorable presage of the event from the zeal of all classes of the people, and their confidence in your virtues; as well as from the knowledge and dignity with which the federal councils are filled: But we derive a presage even more flattering from the piety of your character. Public virtue is the most certain mean of public felicity, and religion is the surest basis of virtue. We therefore esteem it a peculiar happiness to behold in our chief Magistrate, a steady, uniform, avowed friend of the Christian religion, who has commenced his administration in rational and exalted sentiments of Piety, and who in his private conduct adorns the doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, and on the most public and solemn occasions devoutly acknowledges the government of divine Providence.

"The examples of distinguished Characters will ever possess a powerful and extensive influence on the public mind, and when we see in such a conspicuous station the amiable example of piety to God, of benevolence to men, and of a pure and virtuous patriotism, we naturally hope that it will diffuse its influence, and that eventually the most happy consequences will result from it" (DLC:GW).

To the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, New York, May 5-June, 1789

Gentlemen,

I receive with great sensibility the testimonial, given by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, of the live and unfeigned pleasure experienced by them on my appointment to the first office in the nation.

Although it will be my endeavor to avoid being elated by the too favorable opinion which your kindness for me may have induced you to express of the importance of my former conduct, and the effect of my future services: yet, conscious of the disinterestedness of my motive it is not necessary for me to conceal the satisfaction I have felt upon finding, that my compliance with the call of my country, and my dependence on the assistance of Heaven to support me in my arduous undertakings, have, so far as I can learn, met the universal approbation of my countrymen.

While I reiterate the possession of my dependence upon Heaven as the source of all public and private blessings; I will observe that the general prevalence of piety, philanthropy, honesty, industry and œconomy seems, in the ordinary course of human affairs are particularly necessary for advancing and confirming the happiness of our country. While all men within our territories are protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of their consciences; it is rationally to be expected from them in return, that they will be emulous of evincing the sincerity of their profession by the innocence of their lives, and the beneficence of their actions: For no man, who is profligate in his morals, or a bad member of the civil community, can possibly be a true Christian, or a credit to his own religious society.

I desire you to accept my acknowledgements for your laudable endeavors to render men sober, honest, and good Citizens, and the obedient subjects of a lawful government; as well as for your prayers to Almighty God for his blessing on our common country and the humble instrument, which he has been pleased to make use of in the administration of its government.

G. Washington

German Reformed

Washington was replying to **the "address of the Ministers and Elders of the German reformed Congregations in the United States at their General Meeting held at Philadelphia" on 10 June 1789:** "Whilst the infinite goodness of Almighty God in his gracious Providence over the People of the United States of America, calls for our sincerest and most cordial gratitude to him that ruleth supremely and ordereth all things in Heaven and on earth in unerring wisdom and righteousness, the happy, the peaceable establishment of the new-government, over which you so deservedly preside, cannot fail, but inspire our souls with new and the most lively emotions of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving unto his holy name.

"As it is our most firm purpose to support in our Persons a government founded in justice and equity, so it shall be our constant study to impress the minds of the People entrusted to our

care with a due sense of the necessity of uniting reverence to such a government and obedience to it's laws, with the duties and exercise of Religion. Thus we hope by the blessing of God, to be in some measure instrumental of alleviating the burden of that weighty and important charge, to which you have been called by the unanimous voice of your fellow-citizens, and which your love to your country has constrained you to take upon you.

"Deeply possessed of a sense of the goodness of God in the appointment of your Person to the highest station in the national government we shall continue in our public worship and all our devotions before the throne of Grace to pray that it may please God to bless you in your person, your family, and your government, with all temporal and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus" (DLC:GW).

To the German Reformed Congregations, New York, June 1789

Gentlemen,

I am happy in concurring with you in the sentiments of gratitude and piety towards Almighty-God, which are expressed with such fervency of devotion in your address; and in believing, that I shall always find in you, and the German Reformed Congregations in the United States a conduct correspondent to such worthy and pious expressions.1

At the same time, I return you my thanks for the manifestation of your firm purpose to support in your persons a government founded in justice and equity, and for the promise that it will be your constant study to impress the minds of the People entrusted to your care with a due sense of the necessity of uniting reverence to such a government and obedience to its' laws with the duties and exercises of Religion.

Be assured, Gentlemen, it is, by such conduct, very much in the power of the virtuous Members of the community to alleviate the burden of the important office which I have accepted; and to give me Occasion to rejoice, in this world, for having followed therein the dictates of my conscience.

Be pleased also to accept my acknowledgements for the interest you so kindly take in the prosperity of my person, family, and administration.

May your devotions before the Throne of Grace be prevalent in calling down the blessings of Heaven upon yourselves and your country.

G: Washington

Moravian Church

The address of the Moravian Church, dated 10 July 1789 from Bethlehem, Pa., and signed by John Andrew Hubner, Hans Christian Schweiniz, Frederick Peter, Charles Gotthold Reichel, Paul Minster, and David Zeisberger, Jr., **reads:** "The Directors of the Society of the United Brethren for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen do in the name of this Society, and in the name of all the Brethren's Congregations in these United States most cordially congratulate you on your being appointed President of the United States of America.

"Filled with gratitude towards God and our Saviour, unto whose goodness and kind interposition we ascribe this great and joyous event, we rely on his mercy, and on the influence of his good spirit, when we expect that your administration will prove salutary and a blessing to that Nation, whose unanimous voice has called you to preside over it.

"We embrace this opportunity to present you a small treatise which contains 'an account of the manner, in which the Protestant church of the Unitas Fratrum, or united Brethren preach the gospel and carry on their missions among the Heathen.' You will be pleased, Sir, to accept it as a token of our affection and reverence, and of the confidence we repose in you to patronize all undertakings for propagating Christianity among the Heathen.

"Permit us, at the same time to recommend in a particular manner the Brethrens mission among the Indians in the territory of the United States, which is at present at Petquotting on Lake Erie and in a very dangerous situation, to your kind notice and protection, and to lay before you the ardent wish and anxious desire of seeing the light of the glorious Gospel spread more and more over this country, and great multitudes of poor benighted Heathen brought by it to the saving knowledge of Christ our Saviour, who gave himself a ransom for all, and who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

"We fervently pray the Lord to strengthen your health, to support you daily by his divine assistance and to be himself your shield and great reward" (DLC:GW).

To the Moravian Society for Propagating the Gospel, New York, August 1789

Gentlemen,

I receive with satisfaction the congratulations of your Society and of the Brethren's Congregations in the United States of America.1 For you may be persuaded that the approbation and good wishes of such a peaceable and virtuous Community cannot be indifferent to me.

You will also be pleased to accept my thanks for the Treatise which you presented; and to be assured of my patronage in your laudable undertakings.

In proportion as the general Government of the United States shall acquire strength by duration, it is probable they may have it in their power to extend a salutary influence to the Aborigines in the extremities of their Territory. In the meantime, it will be a desirable thing for the protection of the Union to co-operate, as far as the circumstances may conveniently admit, with the disinterested endeavours of your society to civilize and Christianize the Savages of the Wilderness. Under these impressions, I pray Almighty God to have you always in his holy keeping.2

Go: Washington

Quakers of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Western Parts of Viriginia and Maryland

The address of "the Religious Society called Quakers, from their Yearly Meeting for Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, and the western Parts of Virginia and Maryland," held in Philadelphia, 28 Sept.–3 Oct. 1789, reads: "Being met in this our Annual Assembly for the well-ordering the Affairs of our Religious Society, and the Promotion of universal Righteousness, our Minds have been drawn to consider that the Almighty, who ruleth in Heaven and in the Kingdoms of Men having permitted a great Revolution to take place in the Government of this Country, we are fervently concerned that the Rulers of the People may be favored with the Counsel of God, the only sure Means of enabling them to fulfill the important Trust committed to their Charge, and in an especial manner that Divine Wisdom and Grace vouched from above, may qualify thee to fill up the Duties of the exalted Station, to which thou art appointed.

"We are sensible thou hast obtained great Place in the Esteem and Affe[c]tions of People of all Denominations, over whom thou presidest; and many eminent Talents being committed to thy Trust, we much desire they may be fully devoted to the Lord's Honour and Service, that thus thou mayest be an happy Instrument in his Hand, for the Suppression of Vice, Infidelity and Irreligion, and every Species of Oppression on the Persons and Consciences of Men, so that Righteousness and Peace, which truly exalt a Nation, may prevail throughout the Land as the only solid Foundation that can be laid for the Prosperity and Happiness of this or any Country.

"The free Toleration which the Citizens of these States enjoy in the publick Worship of the Almighty, agreable to the Dictates of their Consciences, we esteem among the holiest of Blessings; and as we desire to be filled with fervent Charity for those who differ from us in Faith and Practice, believing that the general Assembly of Saints is composed of the sincere and upright hearted of all Nations, Kingdoms and People; so we trust we may justly claim it from others, and in a full Persuasion that the Divine Principle we profess, leads into Harmony and Concord, we can take no part in carrying on War on any Occasion, or under any Power, but are bound in Conscience to lead quiet and peaceable Lives in Godliness and Honesty amongst Men, contributing freely our Proportion to the Indigences of the poor and to the necessary Support of civil Government, acknowledging those 'who rule well to be worthy of double Honour,' and if any professing with us, are, or have been ⟨of a con⟩trary Disposition and Conduct, we own them not therein, having never been chargeable from our first Establishment as a Religious Society, with fomenting or countenancing Tumults or Conspiracies or Disrespect to those who are placed in Authority over us.

"We wish not improperly to intrude on thy Time or Patience, nor is it our Practice to offer Adulation to any; but as we are a People whose Principles and Conduct have been misrepresented and traduced, we take the Liberty to assure thee, that we feel our Hearts affectionately drawn towards thee, and those in Authority over us, with Prayers that thy Presidency may, under the Blessing of Heaven, be happy to thyself and to the People; that through the encrease of Morality and true Religion, Divine Providence may condescend to look down upon our Land with a propitious Eye and bless the Inhabitants with a Continuance of Peace, the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth, and enable us gratefully to acknowledge his manifold Mercies. And it is our earnest Concern, that he may be pleased to grant thee every necessary Qualification to fill thy weighty and important Station to his Glory; and that finally, when all terrestial Honours shall fail and pass away, thou and thy respectable Consort may be found worthy to receive a Crown of unfading Righteousness in the Mansions of Peace and Joy for ever" (NHyF). The address is signed by Nicholas Waln, clerk of the assembly.

To the Society of Quakers, October, 1789

Gentlemen,

I receive with pleasure your affectionate address, and thank you for the friendly Sentiments & good wishes which you express for the Success of my administration, and for my personal Happiness.

We have Reason to rejoice in the prospect that the present National Government, which by the favor of Divine Providence, was formed by the common Counsels, and peaceably established

with the common consent of the People, will prove a blessing to every denomination of them. To render it such, my best endeavours shall not be wanting.

Government being, among other purposes, instituted to protect the Persons and Consciences of men from oppression, it certainly is the duty of Rulers, not only to abstain from it themselves, but according to their Stations, to prevent it in others.

The liberty enjoyed by the People of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreable to their Consciences, is not only among the choicest of their *Blessings,* but also of their *Rights*— While men perform their social Duties faithfully, they do all that Society or the State can with propriety demand or expect; and remain responsible only to their Maker for the Religion or modes of faith which they may prefer or profess.

Your principles & conduct are well known to me—and it is doing the People called Quakers no more than Justice to say, that (except their declining to share with others the burthen of the common defence) there is no Denomination among us who are more exemplary and useful Citizens.

I assure you very explicitly that in my opinion the Consciencious scruples of all men should be treated with great delicacy & tenderness, and it is my wish and desire that the Laws may always be as extensively accomodated to them, as a due regard to the Protection and essential Interests of the Nation may Justify, and permit.

Go: Washington

Congregational Churches

The address from the Congregational ministers, 17 Oct. 1789, was signed by Stiles, James Dana, Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Wales, and Samuel Austin, Jr.:

"We presume that we join with the whole collective Body of the Congregational Pastors and Presbyterian Ministers throughout these States in the most heartfelt joy, and the most cordial congratulations of themselves, of their Country, and of Mankind, on your elevation to the head of the combined American Republic. As Ministers of the blessed Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we rejoice and have inexpressible pleasure in the demonstrations you have given of your sincere affection towards that holy religion, which is the glory of Christian States, and will become the glory of the world itself, at that happy period, when Liberty, public right, and the veneration of the most High, who presides in the Universe with the most holy and benevolent sovereignty, shall triumph among all the Nations, Kingdoms, Empires, and Republics on earth.

"We most sincerely rejoice in the kind and gracious Providence of almighty God, who hath been pleased to preserve your life during your late dangerous sickness, and to restore you to such a degree of health as gives us this opportunity to express our joy, and affords us the most pleasing hopes that your health may be firmly established.

"We pray the Lord of Hosts by whose counsel and wisdom you have been carried triumphantly and gloriously thro' the late war, terminating in the establishment of American Liberty, and perhaps in the liberty of all nations, that he would be pleased ever to have you under his holy protection, continue to render you a blessing to Church and State, support you under your arduous cares, and perpetuate that estimation and honor, which you have justly acquired of your country. And may this new rising republic become under your auspices, the most glorious for Population, Perfection of policy, and happy administration that ever appeared on earth. And,

may you, Sire, having finished a course of distinguished usefulness, receive the rewards of public virtue in the Kingdom of eternal glory" (DLC:GW).

To the Congregational Ministers of New Haven, Camden, October 17, 1789

Gentlemen,

The Kind congratulations, contained in your address, claim and receive my grateful and affectionate thanks—respecting, as I do, the favorable opinions of Men distinguished for science and piety, it would be false delicacy to disavow the satisfaction, which I derive from their approbation of my public services, and private conduct.1

Regarding that deportment, which consists with true religion, as the best security of temporal peace, and the sure mean of attaining eternal felicity, it will be my earnest endeavor (as far as human frailty can resolve) to inculcate the belief and practice of opinions, which lead to the consummation of those desireable objects.

The tender interest which you have taken in my personal happiness, and the obliging manner in which you express yourselves on the restoration of my health, are so forcibly impressed on my mind as to render language inadequate to the utterance of my feelings.

If it shall please the Great Disposer of events to listen to the pious supplication, which you have preferred in my behalf, I trust that the remainder of my days will evince the gratitude of a heart devoted to the advancement of those objects, which receive the approbation of Heaven, and promote the happiness of our fellow men.

My best prayers are offered to the Throne of Grace for your happiness, and that of the Congregations committed to your care.

Go: Washington

Presbyterians of Massachusetts and New Hampshire

An address of the Presbytery of the Eastward, dated 28 Oct. 1789:

"We the Ministers and ruling Elders delegated to represent the Churches in Massachusetts and New Hampshire which compose the first Presbytery of the eastward, now holding a stated session in this Town, beg leave to approach your presence with genuine feelings of the deepest veneration and highest esteem. We ask the honor of a place among the multitudes of good citizens who are ambitious of expressing the heartfelt satisfaction, with which they bid you welcome to these eastern parts of your government.

"In unison with rejoicing millions, we felicitate our country, and ourselves on your unanimous election to the highest office a nation can bestow—and on your acceptance of the trust with every evidence, which a citizen can give of being actuated thereto by the purest principles of patriotism, of piety and of self-denial.

"Great was the joy of our hearts to see the late tedious and destructive war terminated in a safe and honorable peace—to see the liberty and independence of our country happily secured—to see wise constitutions of civil government peaceably established in the several States—and especially to see a confederation of them all finally agreed on by the general voice. But amid all our joy, we ever contemplated with regret the want of efficiency in the federal government—we ardently wished for a form of national union which should draw the cord of amity more closely

around the several States—which should concentrate their separate interests—and reduce the freemen of *America* to *one* great Body—ruled by *One* head, and animated by one Soul.

"And now we devoutly offer our humble tribute of praise and thanksgiving to the all-gracious *Father* of *lights* who has inspired our public Councils with a wisdom and firmness, which have effected that desireable purpose, in so great a measure by the National-Constitution, and who has fixed the eyes of all America on you as the worthiest of its Citizens to be entrusted with the execution of it.

"Whatever any may have supposed wanting in the original plan, we are happy to find so wisely providing in its amendments; and it is with peculiar satisfaction we behold how easily the entire confidence of the People, in the Man who sits at the helm of Government, has eradicated every remaining objection to its form.

"Among these we never considered the want of *a religious test,* that grand engine of persecution in every tyrant's hand: But we should not have been alone in rejoicing to have seen some Explicit acknowledgement of the *only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent* inserted some where in the *Magna Charta* of our country.

"We are happy to find, however, that this defect has been amply remedied, in the face of all the world, by the piety and devotion, in which your first public act of office was performed—by the religious observance of the Sabbath, and of the public worship of *God,* of which you have set so eminent an example—and by the warm strains of christian and devout affections, which run through your late proclamation, for a general thanksgiving.

"The catholic spirit breathed in all your public acts supports us in the pleasing assurance that no religious establishments—no exclusive privileges tending to elevate one denomination of Christians to the depression of the rest, shall ever be ratified by the signature of the *President* during your administration.

"On the contrary we bless God that your whole deportment bids all denominations confidently to expect to find in you the watchful guardian of their equal liberties—the steady Patron of genuine Christianity—and the bright Exemplar of those peculiar virtues, in which its distinguishing doctrines have their proper effect.

"Under the nurturing hand of a Ruler of such virtues, and one so deservedly revered by all ranks, we joyfully indulge the hope that virtue and religion will revive and flourish—that infidelity and the vices ever attendant in its train, will be banished [from] every polite circle; and that rational piety will soon become fashionable there; and from thence be diffused among all other ranks in the community.

"Captivated with the delightful prospect of a national reformation rising out of the influence of your authority and example; we find the fullest encouragement to cherish the hope of it, from the signal deeds of pious and patriotic heroism, which marked the steps of the Father of his country, from the memorable hour of his appearance in Congress, to declare the disinterested views, with which he accepted the command of her armies, to that hour, not less memorable, when, having gloriously acquitted himself in that important trust, and completely accomplished the design of it, he appeared in the same great Assembly again; and resigned his commission into the hands that gave it.

"But glorious as your course has been as a Soldier in arms, defending your country, and the rights of mankind; we exult in the presage that it will be far outshone by the superior lustre of a more glorious career now before you, as the Chief Magistrate of your nation—protecting, by just

and merciful laws—and by a wise, firm, and temperate execution of them, enhancing the value of those inestimable rights and privileges, which you have so worthily asserted to it by your sword.

"Permit us then, great Sir, to assure you that whilst it ever shall be our care, in our several places, to inculcate those principles, drawn from the pure fountains of light and truth, in the sacred scriptures, which can best recommend your virtues to their imitation, and which, if generally obeyed, would contribute essentially to render your people happy, and your government prosperous; Our unceasing prayers to the *great Sovereign of all* nations, shall be that your important life, and all your singular talents may be the special care of an indulgent Providence for many years to come; that your administration may be continued to your country, under the peculiar smiles of Heaven, long enough to advance the interests of learning to the zenith—to carry the arts and sciences to their destined perfection—to chase ignorance, bigotry, and immorality off the stage—to restore true virtue, and the religion of *Jesus* to their deserved throne in our land: and to found the liberties of America, both religious and civil, on a basis which no era of futurity shall ever see removed: and, finally, that, when you have thus done—free grace may confer on you, as the reward of all your great labours, the unfading laurels of an everlasting crown" (DLC:GW). The address was signed on behalf of the First Presbytery, by Joseph Prince, moderator.

To the Presbyterian Ministers of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, Portsmouth, N.H., 2 November 1789

Gentlemen,

The affectionate welcome, which you are pleased to give me to the eastern parts of the union, would leave me without excuse, did I fail to acknowledge the sensibility, which it awakens, and to express the most sincere return that a grateful sense of your goodness can suggest.

To be approved by the praise-worthy is a wish as natural to becoming ambition, as its consequence is flattering to our self-love—I am, indeed, much indebted to the favorable sentiments which you entertain towards me, and it will be my study to deserve them.1

The tribute of thanksgiving which you offer to "the gracious Father of lights" for his inspiration of our public-councils with wisdom and firmness to complete the national constitution, is worthy of men, who, devoted to the pious purposes of religion, desire their accomplishment by such means as advance the temporal happiness of their fellow-men—and, here, I am persuaded, you will permit me to observe that the path of true piety is so plain as to require but little political direction. To this consideration we ought to ascribe the absence of any regulation, respecting religion, from the Magna-Charta of our country.

To the guidance of the ministers of the gospel this important object is, perhaps, more properly committed—It will be your care to instruct the ignorant, and to reclaim the devious—and, in the progress of morality and science, to which our government will give every furtherance, we may confidently expect the advancement of true religion, and the completion of our happiness.

I pray the munificent Rewarder of virtue that your agency in this good work may receive its compensation here and hereafter.

G: Washington

Dutch Reformed in America

The address, dated 9 Oct. and signed by eight members of the synod, reads: "The **Synod of the reformed Dutch Church in North America** embrace the occasion of their annual session, being the first since your appointment to present you their sincere congratulations, and to join in that great and general joy testified by all descriptions of Citizens on your acceptance of the highest office in the Nation.

"We cannot forbear expressing our gratitude to God for preserving your valuable life amidst so many dangers till this time; for inspiring you with a large portion of the martial spirit, and forming you also for the milder and more agreeable arts of government and peace; for endowing you with great virtues and calling them into exercise by great events; for distinguishing you with honors and giving remarkable prudence and moderation—And for making your extraordinary talents the more conspicuous, useful, and durable, by superinducing the noble ornament of humility. Your Country has with one voice attested your excellence by inviting you again to public life, and you have confirmed it's judgement by returning to fresh scenes and toils after you had retired to the shade from the burden and heat of a long day.

"Among the many signal interpositions of divine providence we remark the late important change in the general government—a change neither effected by accident, nor imposed by force, but adopted in the bosom of peace after a free and mature deliberation; and in which a people widely extended and various in their habits are united beyond the most raised expectation. In these respects the United States of America stand single among all the nations of the earth. Other revolutions may have been more dignified and splendid, but none more honorable to human nature, and none so likely to produce such happy effects. This Government being now completely organised, and all its departments filled, we trust that God will give wisdom to its councils, and justice to its administration, and that we shall at length realise those blessings, which animated our hopes through a difficult and ruinous war.

"To our constant prayers for the welfare of our country, and of the whole human race, we shall esteem it our duty and happiness to unite our most earnest endeavors to promote the pure and undented religion of Christ; for as this secures eternal felicity to men in a future State, so we are persuaded that good Christians will always be good citizens, and that where righteousness prevails among individuals the Nation will be great and happy. Thus while just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support.

"We implore the Lord God to be your Sun and Shield. May your administration be prosperous. May the blessings of millions come upon you, and your name be grateful to all Posterity. Above all, may you finish your course with joy, be numbered among the Redeemed of the Lord, and enter into everlasting rest."

To the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in North America, 19 November 1789

Gentlemen,

I receive with a grateful heart your pious and affectionate address,1 and with truth declare to you that no circumstance of my life has affected me more sensibly or produced more pleasing emotions than the friendly congratulations, and strong assurances of support which I have

received from my fellow-citizens of all descriptions upon my election to the Presidency of these United States.

I fear, Gentlemen, your goodness has led you to form too exalted an opinion of my virtues and merits—If such talents as I possess have been called into action by great events, and those events have terminated happily for our country, the glory should be ascribed to the manifest interposition of an over-ruling Providence. My military services have been abundantly recompensed by the flattering approbation of a grateful people; and, if a faithful discharge of my civil duties can ensure a like reward, I shall feel myself richly compensated for any personal sacrifice I may have made by engaging again in public life.

The Citizens of the United States of America have given as signal a proof of their wisdom and virtue in framing and adopting a constitution of government, without bloodshed or the intervention of force, as they, upon a former occasion, exhibited to the world of their valor, fortitude, and perseverance; and it must be a pleasing circumstance to every friend of good order and social happiness to find that our new government is gaining strength and respectability among the citizens of this country in proportion as it's operations are known, and its effects felt.

You, Gentlemen, act the part of pious Christians and good citizens by your prayers and exertions to preserve that harmony and good will towards men which must be the basis of every political establishment; and I readily join with you that "*while* just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support."

I am deeply impressed with your good wishes for my present and future happiness—and I beseech the Almighty to take you and yours under his special care.

G. Washington.

Roman Catholics in America

John Carroll (1735–1815) was educated at Jesuit schools in Maryland and France. He returned to America as a Roman Catholic priest shortly before the Revolution and after the war was a leader in organizing the church. He was selected on 14 Nov. 1789 to be the first American Roman Catholic bishop by a convocation of clergy meeting at Whitemarsh, Md., and consecrated in England on 15 Aug. 1790. This address to GW was one of Carroll's first official acts as leader of the church in the new nation.

The address, dated 15 Mar. and signed by John Carroll on behalf of the Roman Catholic clergy and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Daniel Carroll, Thomas FitzSimons, and Dominick Lynch on behalf of the Roman Catholic laity, reads:

"We have been long impatient to testify our joy and unbounded confidence, on your being called, by an unanimous vote, to the first station of a country, in which that unanimity could not have been obtained without the previous merit of unexampled services, of eminent wisdom, and unblemished virtue. Our congratulations have not reached you sooner, because our scattered situation prevented the communication and the collecting of those sentiments, which warmed every breast: But the delay has furnished us with the opportunity, not merely of presaging the happiness to be expected under your administration, but of bearing testimony to that which we experience already. It is your peculiar talent, in war and in peace, to afford

security to those, who commit their protection into your hands. In war, you shield them from the ravages of armed hostility: in peace you establish public tranquillity by the justice and moderation, not less than by the vigour of your government. By example as well as by vigilance, you extend the influence of laws on the manners of our fellow citizens you encourage respect for religion, and inculcate, by words and actions, that principle, on which the welfare of nations so much depends, that a superintending Providence governs the events of the world, and watches over the conduct of men. Your exalted maxims and unwearied attention to the moral and physical improvement of our country have produced already the happiest effects. Under your administration, America is animated with zeal for the attainment and encouragement of useful literature; She improves her agriculture, extends her commerce, and acquires with foreign nations a dignity, unknown to her before. From these happy events, in which none can feel a warmer interest than ourselves, we derive additional pleasure by recollecting, that you, Sir, have been the principal instrument to effect so rapid a change in our political situation. This prospect of national prosperity is peculiarly pleasing to us on another account; because whilst our country preserves her freedom and independence, we shall have a well founded title to claim from her justice equal rights of citizenship, as the price of our blood spilt under your eyes, and of our common exertions for her defense, under your auspicious conduct, rights rendered more dear to us by the remembrance of former hardships. When we pray for the preservation of them, where they have been granted; and expect the full extension of them from the justice of those States, which still restrict them; when we solicit the protection of Heaven over our common country: we neither omit nor can omit recommending your preservation to the singular care of divine providence; because we conceive that no human means are so available to promote the welfare of the united States, as the prolongation of your health and life, in which are included the energy of your example, the wisdom of your counsels, and the persuasive eloquence of your virtues."

To Roman Catholics in America, New York, 1790

Gentlemen,

While I now receive with much satisfaction your congratulations on my being called, by an unanimous vote, to the first station in my Country; I cannot but duly notice your politeness in offering an apology for the unavoidable delay. As that delay has given you an opportunity of realizing, instead of anticipating, the benefits of the general Government; you will do me the justice to believe, that your testimony of the increase of the public prosperity, enhances the pleasure which I should otherwise have experienced from your affectionate address.

I feel that my conduct, in war and in peace, has met with more general approbation than could reasonably have been expected: and I find myself disposed to consider that fortunate circumstance, in a great degree, resulting from the able support and extraordinary candour of my fellow-citizens of all denominations.

The prospect of national prosperity now before us is truly animating, and ought to excite the exertions of all good men to establish and secure the happiness of their Country, in the permanent duration of its Freedom and Independence. America, under the smiles of a Divine Providence—the protection of a good Government—and the cultivation of manners, morals and piety, cannot fail of attaining an uncommon degree of eminence, in literature, commerce, agriculture, improvements at home and respectability abroad.

As mankind become more liberal they will be more apt to allow, that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the Community are equally entitled to the protection of civil Government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume that your fellow-citizens will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their Revolution, and the establishment of their Government: or the important assistance which they received from a nation in which the Roman Catholic faith is professed.

I thank you, Gentlemen, for your kind concern for me. While my life and my health shall continue, in whatever situation I may he, it shall be my constant endeavour to justify the favourable sentiments which you are pleased to express of my conduct. And may the members of your Society in America, animated alone by the pure spirit of Christianity, and still conducting themselves as the faithful subjects of our free Government, enjoy every temporal and spiritual felicity.

G. Washington

Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island

Address was dated 17 Aug. 1790 and signed by the warden of the Congregation Yeshuat Israel of Newport, Moses Seixas (1744–1809), a leading town merchant and later cashier of the Bank of Rhode Island. Seixas probably presented it to GW on the morning of 18 Aug. 1790 when the town and Christian clergy of Newport also delivered addresses to the president (Boyd, *Jefferson Papers*, 19:610, n.8).

The address reads: "Permit the children of the Stock of Abraham to approach you with the most cordial affection and esteem for your person & merits—and to join with our fellow Citizens in welcoming you to New Port.

"With pleasure we reflect on those days—those days of difficulty, & danger when the God of Israel, who delivered David from the peril of the sword, shielded your head in the day of battle: and we rejoice to think, that the same Spirit who rested in the Bosom of the greatly beloved Daniel enabling him to preside over the Provinces of the Babylonish Empire, rests and ever will rest upon you, enabling you to discharge the arduous duties of Chief Magistrate in these States.

"Deprived as we heretofore have been of the invaluable rights of free Citizens, we now (with a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty disposer of all events) behold a Government, erected by the Majesty of the People—a Government, which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance—but generously affording to All liberty of conscience, and immunities of Citizenship: deeming every one, of whatever Nation, tongue, or language, equal parts of the great governmental Machine: This so ample and extensive Federal Union whose basis is Philanthropy, Mutual Confidence and Publick Virtue, we cannot but acknowledge to be the work of the Great God, who ruleth in the Armies Of Heaven and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, doing whatever seemeth him good.

"For all the Blessings of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy under an equal and benign administration, we desire to send up our thanks to the Antient of Days, the great preserver of Men—beseeching him, that the Angel who conducted our forefathers through the wilderness into

the promised land, may graciously conduct you through all the difficulties and dangers of this mortal life: and, when like Joshua full of days and full of honour, you are gathered to your Fathers, may you be admitted into the Heavenly Paradise to partake of the water of life, and the tree of immortality" (DLC:GW).

George Washington, To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, 18 August 1790

Gentlemen.

While I receive, with much satisfaction, your Address replete with expressions of affection and esteem; I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you, that I shall always retain a grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced in my visit to Newport, from all classes of Citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are past is rendered the more sweet, from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity and security. If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good Government, to become a great and a happy people.

The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my Administration, and fervent wishes for my felicity. May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.

Go: Washington