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Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

To the President of the United States. : The address of the religious society called Quakers, from their yearly meeting for Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Delaware, and the western parts of Virginia and Maryland. -- [Philadelphia] : Printed by Daniel Humphreys, Front-Street, near the drawbridge, Philadelphia., [1789] -- 1 sheet ([1] p.) ; 34 x 21 cm.

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To the PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES.

THE ADDRESS of the Religious Society called Quakers, from their Yearly Meeting for Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Delaware, and the western parts of Virginia and Maryland.

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 favoured with the counsel of God, the only sure means of enabling them to fulfil the important trust committed to their charge, and in an especial manner that Divine wisdom and grace vouchsafed 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 affections of people of all denominations, over whom thou presideth; 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 opposition 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 public worship of the Almighty, agreeable to the dictates of their consciences, we esteem among the choicest 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 contrary 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 earnest, 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 terrestrial 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.

Signed in and on behalf of our said meeting held in Philadelphia, by adjournments, from the 28th of the 9th mo. to the 3d day of the 10th mo. inclusive, 1789.

NICHOLAS WALN, Clerk of the meeting this year.

THE ANSWER of the President of the United States to the Address of the Religious Society called Quakers, from their Yearly Meeting for Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Delaware, and the western parts of Maryland and Virginia.

GENTLEMEN,

I RECEIVE with pleasure your affectionate address, and thank you for the friendly sentiments and 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 councils, 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 agreeable 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 mode of faith, which they may prefer or profess.

Your principles and 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 conscientious scruples of all men should be treated with great delicacy and tenderness; and it is my wish and desire, that the laws may always be as extensively accommodated to them, as a due regard to the protection and essential interests of the nation may justify and permit.

GEO. WASHINGTON.