

# CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

# CIVIL INSTITUTIONS

OF THE

# UNITED STATES,

DEVELOPED IN THE OFFICIAL AND HISTORICAL  
ANNALS OF THE REPUBLIC.

BY

B. F. MORRIS.

- “ True religion affords to Government its surest support.”—WASHINGTON.
- “ The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”—JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.
- “ The religion of the New Testament—that religion which is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles—is as sure a guide to duty in politics and legislation as in any concern of life.”—DANIEL WEBSTER.
- “ Righteousness exalteth a nation.”—BIBLE.

PHILADELPHIA:  
GEORGE W. CHILDS, 628 & 630 CHESTNUT ST.  
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1864.



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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by

**B. F. MORRIS,**

**In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of  
Pennsylvania.**

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PHILADELPHIA.

I am inexpressibly happy that, by the smiles of Divine Providence, my weak but honest endeavors to serve my country have hitherto been crowned with so much success, and apparently given such satisfaction to those in whose cause they were exerted. The same benignant influence, together with the concurrent support of all real friends to their country, will still be necessary to enable me to be in any degree useful to this numerous and free people over whom I am called to preside.

Wherefore I return you, gentlemen, my hearty thanks for your solemn invocation of Almighty God that every temporal and spiritual blessing may be dispensed to me, and that under my administration the families of these States may enjoy peace and prosperity, with all the blessings attendant on civil and religious liberty. In the participation of which blessings may you have an ample share.

G. WASHINGTON.

Washington closed his public life, as President of the United States, on the 4th of March, 1797. The day before this event the ministers of the gospel, of all denominations, in and near Philadelphia, sent him the following paper:—

*To George Washington, President of the United States.*

SIR:—

On a day which becomes important in the annals of America, as marking the close of a splendid public life, devoted for near half a century to the service of your country, we the undersigned, clergy of different denominations in and near the city of Philadelphia, beg leave to join the voice of our fellow-citizens in expressing our deep sense of your public services in every department of trust and authority committed to you. But, in our special characters as ministers of the gospel of Christ, we are more immediately bound to acknowledge the countenance which you have universally given to his holy religion.

In your public character we have beheld the edifying example of a civil ruler always acknowledging the superintendence of Divine Providence in the affairs of men, and confirming that example by the powerful recommendation of religion and morality as the firmest basis of social happiness,—more particularly in the following language of your affectionate parting address to your fellow-citizens:—

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness,—the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.”

Should the importance of these just and pious sentiments be duly appreciated and regarded, we confidently trust that the prayers you

have offered for the prosperity of our common country will be answered. In these prayers we most fervently unite, and with equal fervor in those which the numerous public bodies that represent the citizens of these States are offering for their beloved chief. We most devoutly implore the Divine blessing to attend you in your retirement, to render it in all respects comfortable to you, to satisfy you with length of days, and finally to receive you into happiness and glory infinitely greater than this world can bestow.

PHILADELPHIA, March 3, 1797.

THOMAS USTICK,  
ANDW. HUNTER,  
JNO. DICKING,  
JOSHUA JONES,  
JOSEPH TURNER,  
EZEKIEL COOPER,  
ANDW. J. RHEES,  
JAM. ABERCROMBIE,  
WM. WHITE,  
ASHBEL GREEN,  
WILLIAM SMITH,  
JOHN EWING,

SAMUEL JONES,  
WM. FRENDEL,  
NICHOLAS COLLIN,  
ROBERT ANNAN,  
WILLIAM MARSHALL,  
JOHN MEDER,  
JOHN ANDREWS,  
F. HENRY CH. HELMITH,  
SAM. MORGAN,  
J. FREDERICK SCHMIDT,  
ROBT. BLACKWELL,  
WM. ROGERS.

ANSWER.

GENTLEMEN:—

Not to acknowledge with gratitude and sensibility the affectionate addresses and benevolent wishes of my fellow-citizens on my retirement from public life, would prove that I have been unworthy of the confidence which they have been pleased to repose in me. And among those public testimonials of attachment and approbation, none can be more grateful than that of so respectable a body as yours.

Believing as I do that religion and morality are the essential pillars of society, I view with unspeakable pleasure that harmony and brotherly love which characterizes the clergy of different denominations as well in this as in all parts of the United States, exhibiting to the world a new and interesting spectacle, at once the pride of our country and the surest basis of universal harmony. That your labors for the good of mankind may be crowned with success, that your temporal enjoyments may be commensurate with your merits, and that the future rewards of good and faithful servants may be yours, I shall not cease to supplicate the Divine Author of life and felicity.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

The following correspondence of the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts with John Adams, President of the United States, refers to a very critical era in the history of the Government, and finely illustrates the patriotism and piety of American ministers. The atheism of France in 1795 had engulfed that empire in anarchy and blood. It was the first experiment