

SAMPLES OF STATEMENTS BY THE FRAMERS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF RELIGION IN THE CONSTITUTION

*“As to the subject of religion ... No power is given to the general government to interfere with it at all. Any act of Congress on this subject would be a usurpation.”*¹

– Richard Dobbs Spaight

*“If any future Congress should pass an act concerning the religion of the country, it would be an act which they are not authorized to pass, by the Constitution.”*²

– James Iredell

*The President “has no particle of spiritual jurisdiction”*³

– Alexander Hamilton

*“[T]here is not a shadow of right in the general government to intermeddle with religion. Its least interference with it would be a most flagrant usurpation.”*⁴

– James Madison

*“[The document lacks any indication of] a belief of the existence of a Deity, and of a state of future rewards and punishments.”*⁵

– Luther Martin

*“Many pious people wish the name of the Supreme Being had been introduced somewhere in the new Constitution. Perhaps an acknowledgement may be made of his goodness or of his providence in the proposed amendments.”*⁶

– Dr. Benjamin Rush

¹ Elliot, Jonathan, ed. *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution as Recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1787*. . . . 5 vols. 2d ed. 1888.

² *Id.*

³ Federalist #69, accessed at http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_69.html on April 15, 2006.

⁴ Elliot's *Debates*, Vol. 3 at 330.

⁵ Elliot's *Debates*, Vol. 1 at 385-86.

⁶ 1 Letters of Benjamin Rush 517, 517 (L.H. Butterfield ed., 1951).