

**Richard Price to William Bingham, Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 20 June 1787**

At a time when democratical principles have laid the foundation of some of the weakest and most inefficient governments in the American States, that ever nations were affected with, and, when Mr. Adams, a firm friend to liberty and the rights of mankind, has combated these prejudices with acknowledged success, it may perhaps be pleasing to discover how such sentiments have affected the great and good Dr. Price, who had formerly been led away by the airy phantom of a pure democracy, and who candidly confesses the error of his opinions in a letter of a late date, to Mr. Bingham, from which the following are extracts:

“I am sorry the Constitution of your government in Pennsylvania is so imperfect as it is;—Mr. Adams has just published a book, which contains much reading and information—he has entitled it, ‘A Defence of the American Constitutions,’ but the chief design of it is to shew that the powers of legislation ought to be lodged in more than one Assembly, and he has convinced me so entirely of this, that I wish I had inserted a note on the passage in Mons. Turgot’s letter to me, which has occasioned Mr. Adams’s book, to express my disapprobation of it.”

“Having taken the liberty to address to the United States, my sentiments of the importance of the revolution in their favor, and, during the late war, interested myself warmly in their cause, I cannot but anxiously wish to hear they are prosperous and happy: And notwithstanding many appearances which are very discouraging, I must believe they will prove at last, such an example and benefit to mankind, as I have expected.”

“But, before this can happen, they have much to do—the Federal Government, in particular, is unsettled, and, I suppose, will continue so, ’till insignificance and discredit amongst foreign powers, and internal distresses of wars oblige them to give it *due strength and energy*.”

“Some of the States have been led to a very improper emission of paper—this, in the best circumstances of States, is a dangerous expedient; but when the paper is not well secured on productive funds, and there is no sufficient basis of coin for circulating it, and it is at the same time made a legal tender, the emission of it becomes much worse than *dangerous*. I have, indeed, been shocked to hear, what has been done in this way by one or two of the American Legislatures; such facts throw a cloud over our American prospects.”

“I doubt not, however, but that what you say of the body of the people is true—there is an ardor for improvement amongst them, an industry and an acquaintance with the true principles of civil government, which, united to the great advantages of their situation, must produce great effects.”

Cite as: The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-03-13-02-0041> [accessed 26 Nov 2012]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, No. 1