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Philadelphiensis II, Philadelphia Freeman's Journal 28 November 1787 (excerpt)

. . . From the proceedings of the convention, respecting *liberty of conscience*, foreign politicians might be led to draw a strange conclusion, *viz.* that the majority of that assembly were either men of *no* religion, or all of *one* religion; such a conclusion naturally follows their silence on that subject; they must either have been indifferent about religion, or determined to compel the whole continent to conform to their own. For my own part, I really think, that their conduct in this instance is inexplicable: it is impossible to divine what might have been their intentions.

To illustrate this defect in the new constitution, by a familiar instance: we shall suppose that the negroes of Georgia, or some of the southern states, prompted by the love of *sacred liberty*, shall attempt to free themselves from cruel slavery, by a *noble appeal to arms*. In this case the Congress may order the militia of Pennsylvania to march off to quell this insurrection: now on such an occasion, what must the condition of that Pennsylvanian be, who, besides being conscientiously scrupulous against bearing arms, on any account whatever, has, over and above, made the *manumission of slavery*, a part of his religious creed? Miserable must be the state of such a man's mind indeed! More to be pitied is he, than the wretches against whom he is compelled to fight! The foregoing supposition is by no means an unnatural one; and truly, if the new constitution be adopted, I have little doubt, but the thing itself will some time or other be realized. I shall by way of digression add one sentiment, namely, that I should have no objection, that the slaves in the United States would free themselves to-morrow from their present *thralldom*, provided no lives be lost on this occasion; and with this proviso, I sincerely pray, that God may grant them success in their first attempt. Freedom is the birth-right of every man; and who is he that hath dared to rob his fellow men of this glorious privilege, with whom God will not enter into judgment?

Before I dismiss this subject, I cannot help taking notice of the inconsistency of some Pennsylvanians, in respect to this new government. The very men, who should oppose it with all their influence, seem to be the most zealous for establishing it. Strange indeed! that the professed enemies of *negro* and every other species of *slavery*, should themselves join in the adoption of a constitution whose very basis is *despotism* and *slavery*, a constitution that militates so far against freedom, that even their own religious liberty may probably be destroyed by it. Alas! what frail, what inconsistent beings we are! To the catalogue of human weaknesses and mistakes, this is one to be added. . . .

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