

***American Herald*, 14 January 1788**

To the CONVENTION *of* MASSACHUSETTS.

...In short, it does not appear that *great* characters or *small* characters have any thing to do with this matter, the constitution should be brought to the great criterion, the FITNESS OF THINGS:—If it is found consistent therewith, for Heaven's sake, let us adopt it; if it is found to be *mene tekel*, it would be worse than *insanity* to neglect refusing it.

The proposing the present plan if it is rejected will not be without its advantages, for the investigation of the objections against it will furnish ample ideas how a constitution must be modified to comport not only with the bias, but also with the interest of the people whose welfare is the *sole end of government*. When the inconveniencies of the proposed constitution are fully pointed out and understood, another convention may in a short time, fabricate a constitution which would secure every advantage of civil government, without any of the disadvantages which are contained in that which is so eagerly strove to be cram'd down us, and we may soon be the most happy people in the world; but if we inconsiderately adopt the present proposed system we shall find it nearly as hard to effect any reform therein, as it was to remove the ark from the mountain of Ararat, where it first lodged after the deluge; for the least attempt or proposal for that purpose, may be construed into treasonable practices, and attended with all the dreadful consequences that an indignant authority is capable of producing, when my fellow citizens though too late, will discover the dire effects of their ill-judged credulity, and will be sensible of the worth, and put a just estimate on the advice of a RANDOLPH, MASON, NELSON and GERRY, and other illustrious Patriots, whose virtue like that of Aristides the just, denied their assent to the measures incompatible with their country's welfare. These, my fellow citizens, are men who may survive to receive the *melancholy glory* of their ruined country, which will then acknowledge that had their advice been adhered to, it would have saved it from the black gulph of infamy, horror & slavery into which it no less needlessly than precipitately, will plunge itself, if you are so infatuated as to adopt the proposed constitution. These things are at present in your power to *adopt* [or] *reject*, they art; wholly at your election, and you must be answerable to yourselves, to your fellow citizens, to unborn posterity, and to your God (who made you free, and who earnestly desires you to retain your freedom) for the consequences which may flow from the choice you may make.

January 9, 1788.

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-02-05-02-0002-0146>
[accessed 04 Aug 2011]

Original source: Ratification by the States, Volume V: Massachusetts, No. 2