

Helvidius Priscus II, *Independent Chronicle*, 10 January 1788

To the PUBLIC.

The three pillars lately erected at the southward, are like the hanging towers of Pisa, to be propped up and cemented by the blood of posterity, if ever they stand at all; for the present generation have too strong a sense of the rights of nature, of the sufferings experienced for their re-establishment, to set down passively under a tottering pile, erected on pillars of porcelain—and if half a dozen others should yet be added to the gilded dome, it will still be astonishingly defective; as the artificers have hurried it through for their own present accommodation, without one solid heart of oak to support an edifice, whose wings extend to embrace the territory from the Mississippi, to the chain of lakes, and from the inland seas to the eastern shore.—An ancient historian has left it on record, that the first monarch after the Achæan league, who gained an entire influence over their councils, was possessed of all the virtues that endear a king—“A lively genius, an uncommon understanding, an happy memory, an agreeable utterance, an unaffected grace in all his actions—He possessed a beautiful aspect, heightened by a majestic air, which bespoke the greatness of his mind, but his brightest virtues were the sweetness of his temper, his affability and great desire to please and content all who were under his government.”—But alas! he was a man—he was a king—and let America be admonished, that in the plentitude of uncontroled power, the same historian adds, that he forfeited this great character, and from a glorious king became an inhuman tyrant. Mankind have always been lulled by sounds into a fatal security, without giving themselves the trouble of investigation. Yet it is not probable the metaphysical disquisitions of a *southern doctor*, will persuade the world that the majority of the late CONVENTION were so much the peculiar favourites of heaven as to receive an immediate inspiration for the model of a government, that should subjugate a country which appears to those who are really religious, and who believe in a providential direction, to have been remarkably under divine protection in the various steps that led to its independence. But why was the small minority (who could not in conscience accede) denied their share in this heavenly illumination?—and why was the aged *Dr. Franklin*, so darkened in his councils, as to make a motion that the President should have no salary? and to oppose almost every article in the system till the last, when he lent his signature in tears? or were those tears the result of a late revelation, that the system was fairly deduced from heaven; though it might involve America, first in anarchy, and then in despotism. But the men who have denied the authenticity of the decalogue, and perhaps the divine origin of the gospel, may sport with the credulity of mankind—and droll on the miraculous interpositions of heaven, under an appearance of an enthusiasm for truth, if it will operate to the completion of a favourite system, while yet the honour of the gentleman is secure from falshood, when he asserts that he believes “the finger of God was as much employed in fabricating the fœderal republic as in dictating the ten commandments; and that the divine origin of the new system is as much the object of his faith, as the division of the red sea, or the

fulmination of the law from Mount Sina”...

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