

Massachusetts Centinel, 10 November 1787

Says a correspondent—

No *religious* test is ever to be required of any officer or servant of the United States. The people may employ *any wise and good citizen* in the execution of the various duties of the government. In Italy, Spain and Portugal, *no protestant* can hold a publick trust. In England *every presbyterian, and other person not of their established church*, is incapable of holding an office. No such *impious* deprivation of the rights of men can take place under the new federal constitution. The convention has the honour of proposing *the first publick act*, by which any nation has ever *divested itself* of a power, every exercise of which is *a trespass on the Majesty of Heaven*.

The old federal constitution contained many of *the same things*, which from error or disingenuousness are urged against the new one. *Neither* of them have a bill of rights, *nor does either* notice the liberty of the press, because they are already provided for *by the state constitutions*; and relating only to *personal* rights, they could not be mentioned *in a contract among sovereign states*.

The people will remain, under the proposed constitution, *the fountain of power and publick honour*. The President, the Senate, and House of Representatives, will be *the channels* through which the stream will flow—but it will flow *from the people*, and from them *only*. *Every office*, religious, civil and military, will be either their *immediate gift*, or it will come *from them* through the hands of *their servants*. And this, will be firmly guaranteed to them under the state constitutions which they respectively approve; for *THEY cannot* be royal forms, *cannot* be aristocratical, but *must* be republican.

Nothing can be more plain to the eye of reason—or more true, than that the SAFETY of the people is amply provided for in the Federal Constitution, from the restraints imposed on the President—those imposed on the Senate—and from the nature of the House of Representatives—and that of the *security* for national safety and happiness, from every part of the Federal Government.

There is no spirit of arrogance in the New Federal Constitution. It addresses us with becoming modesty, admitting that it *may* contain errors. Let us, fellow citizens, give it a trial: and when *experience* has taught its mistakes, THE PEOPLE, WHOM IT PRESERVES ABSOLUTELY ALL-POWERFUL, can reform them.

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