

Monitor, Hampshire Gazette, 24 October 1787

To the PUBLIC.

My Countrymen, That important period has now arrived in which political life and death, for the last time, is set before you. It is now in your power to chuse, whether you will be free and happy, or enslaved and miserable. Various innovations and changes have happened in your political system within the last few years—various amendments have been assayed to no purpose—all attempts hitherto made to establish you in independence and happiness, have been blasted, have proved inadequate to the great purposes for which government is instituted, and have issued in disgrace, disappointment and contempt. Government, that bulwark of common defence, has at sundry times, within a few years past, been seen tottering on its basis, being shaken to its very centre by those frequent commotions which have been produced by the hostile invasions of lawless and ambitious men, intending, no doubt, to lay it level with the dust, and introduce anarchy, confusion, and every disorder. Harrassed and worn out with tumults and distractions, and weary of so many fruitless endeavours to secure the rights and protect the citizens of the United States, from the wicked assaults and lawless ravages and depredations of unprincipled men, and finding the confederation of the thirteen States unequal to the great ends for which it was adopted; that the power delegated to that august body, the Congress, was insufficient any longer to hold you together, and that a speedy dissolution under the old administration was inevitable: therefore, that the union may be cemented with an invincible firmness; that a federal government may be formed upon a permanent foundation, endowed with energy sufficient to carry into execution every act and resolve necessary to maintain justice and equity and to support the majesty and dignity as well as the privileges of a free people; and that an effectual barrier may be set to guard your rights against every invasion, foreign and domestic, and to fix you in a lasting peace upon just and righteous principles, accompanied with its concomitants, national glory and felicity. For these invaluable purposes (after every other effort, as I before observed proved abortive) as the dernier resort, you had recourse to a Convention of delegates from the several states, in which the wisdom thereof, as you may reasonably suppose, was collected—the honourable Members were gentlemen of unexceptionable characters, well acquainted with political concerns, and fully possessed with the danger of the present deranged situation of your public affairs—endowed not only with wisdom and knowledge, but firmness and integrity, equal to the arduous task to which they were called, and their well known affection for and to the interest of your country, must heighten your esteem of their qualifications.

From an assembly of such worthy characters, with the illustrious Washington at their head, what may you not expect? yea, and what raised expectations could you have entertained that are not more than gratified in their result, which now lies before you—the result, not of an ordinary sagacity, but of uncommon wisdom—the result, not of a rash, hasty, and premature judgment, but of calm reasoning, cool deliberation, and a

fair, candid and impartial discussion, on every article proposed, together with their supposed consequents, good and ill; every objection having been thoroughly examined and weighed; those obstacles arising from the separate interests of the different states duly considered, the plan was adopted not by one or two states only, or a bare majority, but the unanimous consent of twelve. I will not suggest it to be clear of every possible defect, for that is incompatible with the mutable uncertain state of human nature; and so long as men govern, errors and mistakes will happen: But this I aver, that it exceeds your most sanguine rational expectations. Permit me then to enjoin it as an indisputable duty on you to accept it. It will be your wisdom to comply with it, your safety and interest call for it. I presume your feelings debate it, and what is more, Heaven itself demands it, for your salvation and national existence depend on it. God forbid, that you should be so lost to your duty and interest, at this late hour, as to spurn the last opportunity which an indulgent Providence, 'tis likely, will ever grant you, to save your sinking country from tumbling into ruin. Suffer me to urge it upon you—not to be dictated by sinister motives—renounce all selfish, mean-spirited and contracted views, and fix your eyes upon the general good, and let those generous and liberal sentiments possess your minds, as shall animate you cheerfully to lay aside some advantages that respect you individually, when they stand in the way to the common interest, for yourselves are sharers in public benefits: and should you discover some inconveniences that will accrue to you from your local situation (as undoubtedly you will, the local interests of the different parts of this extended country being necessarily different) you will by no means suffer that consideration to gain the ascendancy over your reason, so far as to influence you to reject the proposed plan of government; or, mark it, the moment you reject it, you involve yourselves and posterity in ruin. Should you now refuse to embrace this golden opportunity to establish your independency upon such a permanent and unshaken foundation (as it is now in your power to do) as shall preserve inviolable your dear bought privileges, bought at the expence of many invaluable lives and much precious treasure. You may with propriety apply to yourselves an observation of one of the wisest of men, viz. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" which respects nations as well as individuals, that have been repeatedly reprov'd by such disastrous events and threatening commotions, and dangerous violences as have again and again distracted your country, greatly tending to the dissolution of your government; yea, you in vain, when too late, will see your folly, when a melancholy gloom hath overwhelmed you, and your remediless distresses have overtaken you. But should you be so happy as to adopt the proposed plan of government, as I presume you will, (for I am persuaded there is virtue yet remaining among you, and some vestiges of that zeal for liberty which glowed in every American in times past, which on a fresh occasion like this, will revive and manifest itself) you may with pleasure anticipate those agreeable prospects that are opening upon you—the congratulations of your benevolent allies, which will soon reach your ears—the satisfaction it will yield to the friends of your independence throughout the world, and the joy that will leap in the breast of every well-wisher to your national interest in the union. Your fame shall outlive you—your memory will be sweet to your progeny, and generations yet unborn will feel their souls inspired with gratitude to you

for that firmness, integrity and resolution, which has marked your way in obtaining, preserving, and handing down unsull[i]ed to them, those inestimable blessings which they shall hold in quiet possession. Let such motives stimulate you to embrace that which alone will disappoint and chagrin your malevolent enemies, rear the hopes of your timerous and chear the drooping spirits of your despairing friends, and then will you amply compensate the pains taken by the MONITOR.

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