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Boston *Independent Chronicle*, 10 January 1788 (excerpt)

To the PUBLIC.

. . . 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*,¹ 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?² 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.” . . .

1. A reference to a speech of Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush. On 12 December Rush told the Pennsylvania Convention that “he as much believed the hand of God was employed in this work [the Constitution], as that God had divided the Red Sea to give a passage to the children of Israel, or had fulminated the ten commandments from Mount Sinai.” Rush’s speech was widely reported and denounced by many.

2. On 2 June 1787 Benjamin Franklin moved in the Constitutional Convention that the President should not receive a salary, stipend, fee, or reward, although his expenses should be paid. Franklin thought “there are two passions which have a powerful influence on the affairs of men. These are ambition and avarice; the love of power, and the love of money.”

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