



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > Religion and Ratification > Divine Intervention in the Ratification Process > Documents

Philadelphiensis I

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 7 November 1787

(excerpt)

. . . The gentlemen who are friends to the new constitution had better not blab so freely; especially in regard to the freedom of the press; they ought to wait until this government of governments is once established; and then instead of a coat and jacket of *indignation and contempt*, they may speak boldly about a gallows, a gibbet, or at least a dungeon, for such writers as the *Old Whig*, or *Centinel*, who have dared to speak like freemen. I wonder that our *well born* should allow such mean fellows to write against this their government; such base wretches ought not to live in the same country with *gentlemen*; and as soon as our new government is confirmed, these vile enemies to its *splendor and dignity*, shall quit their capring, I'll warrant them; a federal soldier with a fixed bayonet will soon give such daring dogs their quietis. Ah! what glorious days are coming; how I anticipate the brilliancy of the American court! Behold that gilded chariot, set with diamonds, and drawn by eight Arabian horses; off with your hats you paltrons, here is the president going in state to the senate house to confirm the law for the abolition of the liberty of the press. Men and brethren will not these things be so? Yes most assuredly if we adopt the new constitution in its present form, these things will be so. Rouse then; rouse my fellow-citizens, and show yourselves to be freemen: This is the most important object that ever presented itself to your understanding: The independence of America, which God himself vouched safe through his infinite mercy to confer upon us, must end in a curse, if this tyrannical government be suffered to be established. But forbid it Heaven!

I was told, last Saturday evening [3 November], by a gentleman of veracity whom I met at the meeting at the state-house, that several persons had waited that day on Mrs. Oswald,^(a) for the purpose of requesting her not to publish any pieces against the new constitution, at the same time intimating, that if she persisted, she would forfeit their interests; and that in consequence of her spirited reply, several had that very day withdrawn their subscriptions for the paper.¹ This is truly an alarming circumstance. Where is the freeman in America that this is not sufficient to rouse from a state of supineness? My brethren, be circumspect on this momentous occasion, — “And, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” *Amen.*

(a) *Col. Oswald being abroad.*

1. Mrs. Elizabeth Oswald was the daughter of John Holt, printer of the *New York Journal* before the Revolution.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [1] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1981), 574–78.