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Samuel Holden Parsons to William Cushing Middletown, Conn., 11 January 1788 (excerpt)

. . . In the new Constitution, all contracts are left as they were in the old. This appears to me proper, as we cannot, if we were desirous, destroy all the debt of the United States. We have other powers to consult on this subject. Nor would it have been well to have any new engagements on the subject. The want of power to establish religious tests is a grievance in the minds of some. In addition to the very many and conclusive arguments against religious tests, I am fully convinced of the expediency of inserting the exclusive clause, lest in future time by construction such right may be supposed to exist, and, under the influence of the enthusiasm which has impelled men to the greatest absurdities, we may in future *hang witches* or establish such tests as would disgrace human nature. But what will become of the states who refuse their assent and are in the present Confederation? I answer, we have all broken that covenant; and it is now prostrate in the dust and no state can charge another with breaking these covenants as they have by common consent dissolved it. I have to apologize for troubling you; but, can any the least benefit be derived by new arguments or old ones placed in different lights, I have a consciousness you will pardon me.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. III: Delaware, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1978), 569–73.