

Federalist, *Massachusetts Centinel*, 17 November 1787

...It ought to be held constantly in view, that there is nothing perfect that proceeds from imperfect beings; that the most faultless system of morality, religion and government among mankind, have had their adversaries; that men of ingenuity and cunning, who understand human nature, and know how to play with the passions, can easily raise objections, and plausible ones too; yea, render ridiculous those institutions from which society derives its highest enjoyments.—Systems of government are of all others the most liable to exceptions, and the nearer they approach to perfection, the more strenuously will they be opposed by the worst of mankind.

These considerations should induce a very cautious credence to the suggestions against the proposed constitution—for the probability of its originating in the purest principles of patriotism is certainly very great, when it is reflected what CHARACTERS were employed in its construction, and finally sanctioned it by their signatures and recommendation.

AMERICA can scarcely hope ever to see so respectable a body of her citizens convened on a similar occasion—so great an unanimity we cannot expect again—the spirit of jealousy and discord, which the enemies of our national honour and glory, have excited, leaves no chance of a future coalescence in a Continental Convention—It therefore remains with the people at large, to adopt the proposed Constitution, and thereby avail themselves of the last opportunity they will probably enjoy, of establishing in peace, an efficient and permanent government; or by rejecting it, to precipitate themselves into the most abject state of servitude—for that anarchy and confusion that must ensue, upon the last alternative, will most assuredly issue in despotism and slavery.

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