

## Benjamin Rush to Jeremy Belknap, Philadelphia, 28 February 1788

Some of the same reasons have operated upon me, that have influenced you to admire & prefer the new government. If it held forth no other advantages that a future exemption from paper money & tender laws, it would be eno' to recommend it to honest men. To look up to a government that encourages Virtue-establishes justice ensures order, secures property-and protects from every Species of Violence, affords a pleasure that can only be exceeded by looking up in all circumstances to a *general providence*. Such a pleasure I hope is before us & our posterity under the influence of the new Government.–

...But in cherishing jealousies of our rulers, we are too apt to overlook the weaknesses & vices of the people. Is not history as full of examples of both in them, as it is of the crimes of kings? What is the present moral character of the inhabitants of the united States? I need not describe it. It proves too plainly that the *people*, are as much disposed to Vice, as their rulers, and that nothing but a vigorous & efficient government can prevent their degenerating into Savages, or devouring each other like beasts of prey.–

I pant for the time when the establishment of the new government, and the Safety to individuals which shall arise from it, shall excuse men who like myself wish only to be passengers, from performing the duty of Sailors on board the political Ship in which our all is embarked.–I have yeilded to a deep Sense of the extreme danger of my Country, in quitting the [cabin?] for a Station at the pump. As soon as the storm is over, and our bark safely moored, the first wish of my heart will be to devote the whole of my time to the peaceable pursuits of Science, and to the pleasures of social and domestic life.–

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