

**Benjamin Gale to William Samuel Johnson, Killingworth, 13 November 1787
(excerpt)**

When I had the pleasure of seeing you after your return from Convention, I congratulated you on the wisdom and prudence you discovered in accepting the presidency of your university, and assigned my reasons to you. The *last* and principal one was that I thought you had wisely and judiciously stepped out of the *Political Circle* at a time when a scene of blood and carnage was approaching, and I conceived advancing by rapid strides, which I told you I thought I could make very evident to you, being a gentleman of good sense and a Revelationist, in which I also most firmly believe. And, if I am able only to render my opinion in this matter highly probable, you certainly will not again mingle with the politicians of this world, whereby you probably may endanger your own neck. This, sir, is my main design by this epistle, and I wish you to accept of it as an evidence of my sincere friendship and attachment to your interest.

Now dear doctor, viewing the prophecies and the period we are now under as I do, did I not do well to advise you as I did, and now do, to keep out of the political circle, if you intend to save your neck? We yesterday met to choose delegates. There was about 150 voters present, and we chose 2 delegates to meet in Convention. One was chose by 14 votes and the other had 13. All the others would not vote at all and are really against it, but you gentlemen of the [Constitutional] Convention and Congress have *fobbed off* our Assembly and the people nicely. You referred your doings to Congress—Congress referred the matter to the Assembly—but our Assembly had nothing to do but to order the towns to meet, which they did in less than a fortnight from the rising of the Assembly—and, when they came to read the act of Assembly, they thought something was referred to them to accept or reject it. But they found they had no right to determine anything. Their business was only to choose delegates to say w[hethe]r we shall or shall not submit to it; and so in choosing our *King President*, our Assembly have No voice in the matter, only to choose 7 Electors, to choose a *King President* for four years, and then to have another *squabble* again. No *Elective King*—an *Hereditary King* is preferable and if we have not *Lords*, we have a plenty of *Lordly Fellows*; and we can furnish Congress as many *Queer Dukes* as they want. To be short, it is an artful, dark, mysterious, complex, expensive form of government. However, I conjecture it will pass, and, if it doth, any power ceded into the hands of the civil magistrate never was given back, nor were they ever recovered without shedding of *Blood*, which I fear will not be long—for *Military Civil Rulers* are apt to ride hard. As to this, I have now said all I have to say. Another thing I told you, I was glad you had accepted of the presidency. I was in hopes you would have both leisure and inclination to correct and amend the blunders in my dissertations on the Prophetick Writings and my *Dissertation on the End of the World*, and that you would do me the favor to introduce my grandson into one of the academies, if he should be found capable of the business, as it will doubtless be in your power to do much for him in that way, when he shall have accomplished his studies, if found deserving. A clergyman I am unwilling he should be, as they are a cruel, hardhearted set of gentlemen, take them collectively, for they think our Savior died only for the *Elect*, who, as near as I can compute, is not more than 1 in 10,000. All the rest, they are not willing should, in any

future state of existence under some future dispensation not yet revealed, but as St. Peter tells us, is *Ready to be Revealed in the Last Times*, have any chance to become willing subjects in some moral way, and *Bow the Knee* to the Messiah's scepter, although He has sworn by Himself that *Every Knee Shall Bow, and Every Tongue Shall Confess*—but all these they are quite willing should be damned *Eternally*. I can't but think these governing principles makes so many of them willing to adopt the new Constitution, which restrains Congress from *Regulating Trade* by the prohibition of African slaves for 21 years to come, that they, not being of the *Elect*, might begin their *State of Punishment* early in the day before they pass into the other world.

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