

Baltimore *Maryland Journal*, 1 January 1788

Extract of a Letter, of a late Date, from the illustrious President of the late Federal Convention, to his Friend in Fredericksburg, Virginia—extracted from Mr. Green’s Virginia Herald.

“I thank you for your kind Congratulation on my safe Return from the Convention, and am pleased that the Proceedings of it have met your Approbation.—My *decided* Opinion of the Matter is, that there is *no Alternative* between the *Adoption* of it and *Anarchy*. If one State (however important it may conceive itself to be) or a Minority of them, should suppose that they can dictate a Constitution to the Union (unless they have the Power of applying the *ultima Ratio* to good Effect) they will find themselves deceived. All the Opposition to it that I have yet seen, is, I must confess, addressed more to the Passions than to the Reason; and *clear I am*, if another Federal Convention is attempted, that the Sentiments of the Members will be *more discordant* or *less accommodating* than the last. In fine, that they will agree upon no general Plan. General Government is now *suspended by a Thread*, I might go further, and say it is *really at an End*, and what will be the Consequence of a fruitless Attempt to amend the one which is offered, before it is tried, or of the Delay from the Attempt, does not in my Judgment need the *Gift of Prophecy to predict*.

“I am not a blind Admirer (for I saw the Imperfections) of the Constitution I aided in the Birth of, before it was handed to the Public; but I am fully persuaded it is the *best that can be obtained at this Time*, that it is free from many of the Imperfections with which it is charged, and that *it or Disunion* is before us to choose from. If the first is our Election, when the Defects of it are experienced, a constitutional Door is opened for Amendments, and may be adopted in a peaceable Manner, without Tumult or Disorder.”

Cite as: *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-03-15-02-0036-0002> [accessed 12 Jan 2012]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XV: Commentaries on the Constitution, No. 3