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A Friend to Rule and Order *Providence Gazette*, 15 March 1788

Friend CARTER, Since the sitting of our General Assembly, I have heard many observations respecting their resolve for submitting the plan of the late Continental Convention, as it is called, to the people at large. I have attended in silence to these observations, as many of them have been made in the spirit of contention; but as the minority-men, or foederalists (falsely so called, they not being foederalists who are for destroying the Confederation) have taken occasion to speak evil of our rulers, and to bring in a false report, as if they were opposed to rule and order (when it is well known that they rule with a steady hand) thou wilt do well to let thy customers know, that the General Assembly were consistent in their doings; for they refused to join in that Convention, which according to their prudent foresight have recommended a scheme of their own devising, artfully stiled *A Constitution*, whereby it is manifest they intended to lord it over the peaceable inhabitants, hereby depriving them of the power of discharging their debts, without making of those heathenish idols, which the men of this world worship as a god; to have appointed another Convention, therefore, would have been drinking of the same pollution which produced the first, and would have admitted an error in their former refusal: But being assured that their opposition was just, they were determined to silence gainsayers, by convincing them that the people harbour the same opinion; for they have spent both their time and money (such has been their zeal in the good cause) in convincing their harmless neighbours that mischief is intended; and that should they appoint Delegates to meet in Convention, certain learned men (called lawyers and divines) might deceive them, by sophistry and fair speeches, even to believe a lie. Moreover it is now reported (and verily the report is generally credited) that the sons of liberty (I trow sons of Belial)¹ have borne sway long enough; and it is commendable to follow the counsel of those they oppressed, because, forsooth, they would not raise carnal and deathly weapons against the King and his people; albeit these oppressed and persecuted men, having long groaned in silence, now speak with boldness; and if we remain steadfast in hearkening to the words of their mouth, we shall soon be as gold seven times refined, and again glitter in the diadem of our offended master.

1. In the Old Testament, “sons of Belial” referred to worthless and wicked men. See Judges 19:22 or I Samuel 2:12.

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