

Federalist No.1

I. The Subject: The UNION – empire.

The subject speaks its own importance; comprehending in its consequences, nothing less than the existence of the **UNION**, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an **empire**, in many respects, the most interesting in the world.

II. Reflection and Choice or Accident and Force.

It has been frequently remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country to decide, by their conduct and example, the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not, of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force.

III. Public Good: True Interest vs. Particular Interest.

Happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our **true interests**, uninfluenced by considerations foreign to the **public good**. But this is more ardently to be wished for, than seriously to be expected. The plan offered to our deliberations, affects too many **particular interests**, innovates upon too many local institutions, not to involve in its discussion a variety of objects extraneous to its merits, and of views, passions and prejudices little favourable to the discovery of truth.

III.A. Obstacles: Power and Ambition Even Men Actuated by Upright Intentions.

Among the most formidable of the **obstacles** which the new constitution will have to encounter, may readily be distinguished the obvious interest of a certain class of men in every state to resist all changes which may hazard a diminution of the **power**, emolument and consequence of the offices they hold under the state establishments . . . and the perverted **ambition** of another class of men...

Candour will oblige us to admit, that **even such men may be actuated by upright intentions**; and it cannot be doubted...

III.B. Ambition etc., Operates on Both Supporters and Opponents.

Ambition, avarice, personal animosity, party opposition, and many other motives, not more laudable than these, **are apt to operate as well upon those who support, as upon those who oppose,** the right side of a question.

A torrent of angry and malignant passions will be let loose.

IV. Energy and Efficiency Stigmatized.

An enlightened zeal for the energy and efficiency of government, will be stigmatized as the offspring of a temper fond of power, and hostile to the principles of liberty. An over scrupulous jealousy of danger to the rights of the people, which is more commonly the fault of the head than of the heart, will be represented as mere pretence and artifice . . . the stale bait for popularity at the expense of public good...

IV.A. Vigour and the Security of Liberty; The Rights of the People.

The vigour of government is essential to the security of liberty; that, in the contemplation of a sound and well informed judgment, their interests can never be separated; and that a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people, than under the forbidding appearances of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government.

IV.B. Demagogues and Tyrants.

History will teach us...those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career, by paying an obsequious court to the people . . .

commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants.

V. The Constitution or Dismemberment of the Union.

For nothing can be more evident, to those who are able to take an enlarged view of the subject, than **the alternative of an adoption of the constitution, or a dismemberment of the Union.**

It may, therefore, be essential to examine particularly the advantages of that Union, the certain evils, and the probable dangers, to which every state will be exposed from its dissolution.