

# Common Sense

By Thomas Paine

*Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Austin Benson*

# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....

COMMON SENSE.....

- [TP] -

COMMON SENSE:  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA;

On the following interesting  
SUBJECTS,

- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general,  
with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
- II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.
- III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.  
Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous  
Reflections.

Written by an ENGLISHMAN

Man, <sup>epigraph</sup> knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,  
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.

THOMSON

PHILADELPHIA, Printed.

and Sold by R. BELL, <sup>bell</sup> in Third Street, 1776

## INTRODUCTION

PERHAPS, <sup>intro</sup> the Sentiments contained in the following Pages, are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor; a long habit of not thinking a Thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defence of Custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than Reason.

As a long and violent abuse of Power, is generally the means of calling the right of it in question (and in matters too which might never have been thought of, had not the Sufferers been aggravated into the enquiry) and as the King of England hath undertaken in his own right, to support the Parliament in what he calls theirs, and as the good People of this Country are grievously oppressed by the combination, they have an undoubted privilege to enquire into the pretensions of both, and equally to reject the usurpation of either.

--

IN the following Sheets, the Author hath studiously avoided every thing which is personal among ourselves. Compliments as well as Censure to individuals make no part thereof. The wise and the worthy, need not the triumph of a pamphlet; and those whose sentiments are injudicious, or unfriendly, will cease of themselves, unless too much pains are bestowed upon their conversion.

The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal, and through which the principles of all lovers of mankind are affected, and in the event of which, their affections are interested. The laying a country desolate with fire and sword, declaring war against the natural rights of all mankind, and extirpating the defenders thereof from the face of the earth, is the concern of every man to whom nature hath given the power of feeling; of which class, regardless of party censure, is the

AUTHOR

## COMMON SENSE.

### Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

SOME Writers have so confounded Society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas, they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.

Society in every state is a blessing, but Government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one: for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries by a Government, which we might expect in a country without Government, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government like dress is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him, out of two evils to choose the least. Wherefore, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows, that whatever form thereof appears

most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expence and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.

In order to gain a clear and just idea of the design and end of government, let us suppose a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth unconnected with the rest; they will then represent the first peopling of any country, or of the world. In this state of natural liberty, society will be their first thought. A thousand motives will excite them thereto, the strength of one man is so unequal to his wants and his mind so unfitted for perpetual solitude, that he is soon obliged to seek assistance and relief of another, who in his turn requires the same. Four or five united would be able to raise a tolerable dwelling in the midst of a wilderness, but one man might labour out the common period of life without accomplishing any thing; when he had felled his timber he could not remove it, nor erect it after it was removed; hunger in the mean time would urge him from his work, and every different want call him a different way. Disease, nay even misfortune would be death; for tho' neither might be mortal, yet either would disable him from living, and reduce him to a state in which he might rather be said to perish, than to die.

Thus necessity like a gravitating power would soon form our newly arrived emigrants into society, the reciprocal blessings of which would supersede, and render the obligations of law and government unnecessary, while they remained perfectly just to each other: but as nothing but Heaven is impregnable to vice it will unavoidable happen that in proportion as they surmount the first difficulties of emigration, which bound them together in a common cause, they will begin to relax in their duty and attachment to each

other: and this remissness will point out the necessity of establishing some form of government to supply the defect of moral virtue.

Some convenient Tree will afford them a State-House, under the branches of which, the whole Colony may

- 3 -

assemble to deliberate on public matters. It is more than probable that their first laws will have the title only of REGULATIONS, and to be enforced by no other penalty than public disesteem. In this first parliament every man by natural right will have a seat.

But as the colony encreases, the public concerns will encrease likewise, and the distance at which the members may be separated, will render it too inconvenient for all of them to meet on every occasion as at first, when their number was small, their habitations near, and the public concerns few and trifling. This will point out the convenience of their consenting to leave the legislative part to be managed by a select number chosen from the whole body, who are supposed to have the same concerns at stake which those have who appointed them, and will act in the same manner as the whole body would act were they present. If the colony continues encreasing, it will become necessary to augment the number of the representatives, and that the interest of every part of the colony may be attended to, it will be found best to divide the whole into convenient parts, each part sending its proper number: and that the elected might never form to themselves an interest separte from the electors, prudence will point out the propriety of having elections often: because as the elected might by that means return and mix again with the general body of the electors in a few months, their fidelity to the public will be secured by the prudent reflexion of not making a rod for themselves. And as this frequent interchange will establish a common interest with every part of the community, they will mutually and naturally support each other, and on this (not on the unmeaning name of king) depends the strength of Government; and the happiness of the governed.

Here then is the origin and rise of government; namely, a mode rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world; here too is the design and end of government, viz. freedom and security. And however

- 4 -

our eyes may be dazzled with show, or our ears deceived by sound; however prejudice may warp our wills, or interest darken our understanding, the simple voice of nature and of reason will say, 'tis right.

I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature which no art can overturn, viz. that the more simple any thing is the less liable is it to be disordered; and with this maxim in view I offer a few remarks on the so much boasted constitution of England,<sup>constitution</sup> That it was noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was erected, is granted. When the world was over-run with tyranny the least remove therefrom was a glorious rescue: But that it is imperfect, subject to convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seemed to promise is easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments, (tho' the disgrace of human natute) have this advantage with them, that they are simple; if the people suffer, they know the head from which their suffering springs; know likewise the remedy; and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and cures. But the constitution of England is so exceedingly complex, that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which

part the fault lies, some will say in one and some in another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine.

I know it is difficult to get over local or long standing prejudices, yet if we will suffer ourselves to examine the component parts of the English constitution, we shall find them to be the base remains of two ancient tyrannies, compounded with some new Republican materials.

First.—The remains of Monarchical tyranny in the person of the King.

Secondly.—The remains of Aristocratical tyranny in the persons of the Peers,<sup>peers</sup>

Thirdly.—The new republican materials, in the persons of the Commons,<sup>commons</sup> on whose virtue depends the freedom of England.

- 5 -

The two first by being hereditary are independent of the People; wherefore in a constitutional sense they contribute nothing towards the freedom of the State.

To say that the constitution of England is an union of three powers reciprocally checking each other, is farcical, either the words have no meaning or they are flat contradictions.

To say that the Commons are a check upon the King, presupposes two things.

First.—That the King is not to be trusted without being looked after; or in other words, that a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of Monarchy.

Secondly.—That the Commons by being appointed for that purpose, are either wiser or more worthy of confidence than the Crown.

But as the same constitution which gives the Commons a power to check the King by with-holding the supplies, gives afterwards the King a power to check the Commons by empowering him to reject their other bills; it again supposes that the King is wiser than those, whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity!

There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of Monarchy, it first excludes a man from the means of information yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgment is required.—The state of a King shuts him from the World; yet the business of a King requires him to know it thoroughly: wherefore, the different parts by unnaturally opposing and destroying each other, prove the whole character to be absurd and useless.

Some writers have explained the English constitution thus; the King say they is one, the People another; the Peers are an house in behalf of the King; the Commons in behalf of the People; But this hath all the distinctions of an house divided against itself; and tho' the expressions be pleasantly arranged, yet when examined they appear idle and ambiguous: and it will always happen, that the nicest construction that words are capable of, when applied to the

- 6 -

description of some thing which either cannot exist, or is too incomprehensible to be within the compass of description, will be words of sound only, and tho' they may amuse the ear, they cannot inform the mind: for this explanation includes a previous question, viz. how came the King by a power which the People are afraid to trust and always obliged to check? Such a power could not be the gift of a wise People, neither can any Power which needs checking be from God: yet the provision which the constitution makes, supposes such a power to exist.

But the provision is unequal to the task, the means either cannot, or will not accomplish the end, and the whole affair is a *Felo de se*: for as the greater weight will always carry up the less, and as all the wheels of a machine are put in motion by one, it only remains to know which power in the constitution has the most weight, for that will govern: and tho' the others, or a part of them, may clog, or check the rapidity of its motion, yet so long as they cannot stop it, their endeavours will be ineffectual: the first moving power will at last have its way, and what it wants in speed will be supplied by time.

That the crown is this overbearing part in the English constitution needs not be mentioned, and that it derives its whole consequence merely from being the giver of places and pensions is self-evident, wherefore, tho' we have been wise enough to lock the door against absolute Monarchy, we at the same time have been foolish enough to put the Crown in possession of the key.

The prejudice of Englishmen in favour of their own government by King, Lords and Commons, arises as much or more from national pride than reason. Individuals are undoubtedly safer in England than in some other Countries: but the will of the King is as much the law of the land in Britain as in France, with this difference, that instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is handed to the People under the more formidable shape of an act of Parliament. For the fare of Charles the first hath only made Kings more subtle—not more just.

- 7 -

Wherefore laying aside all national pride and prejudice in favour of modes and forms, the plain truth is, that it is wholly owing to the constitution of the People, and not to the constitution of the Government that the Crown is not as oppressive in England as in Turkey.

An enquiry into the constitutional errors in the English form of government, is at this time highly necessary; for as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others, while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any obstinate prejudice. And as a man who is attached to a prostitute is unfitted to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession in favour of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one.



## Of MONARCHY and hereditary succession

MANKIND being originally equals in the order of creation,<sup>locke</sup> the equality could only be destroyed by some subsequent circumstance: the distinctions of rich and poor may in a great measure be accounted for, and that without having recourse to the harsh ill-sounding names of oppression and avarice. Oppression is often the consequence, but seldom or never the means of riches: and tho' avarice will preserve a man from being necessitously poor, it generally makes him too timorous to be wealthy.

But there is another and greater distinction for which no truly natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is, the distinction of Men into **KINGS** and **SUBJECTS**. Male and female are the distinctions of nature, good and bad the distinctions of Heaven; but how a race of Men came into the World so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth enquiring into, and whether they are the means of happiness or of misery to mankind.

In the early ages of the World according to the Scripture chronology there were no Kings; the consequence

- 8 -

of which was there were no wars; it is the pride of Kings which throws mankind into confusion. Holland without a King,<sup>holland</sup> hath enjoyed more peace for this last century, than any of the Monarchical governments in Europe. Antiquity favours the remark; for the quiet and rural lives of the first Patriarchs hath a happy something in them, which vanishes away when we come to the history of Jewish royalty.

Government by Kings was first introduced into the World by the Heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The Heathens paid divine honors to their deceased Kings, and the Christian World hath improved on the plan by doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the title of sacred Majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust!

As the exalting one man so greatly above the rest cannot be justified on the equal right of nature, so neither can it be defended on the authority of scripture; for the will of the Almighty, as declared by Gideon and the prophet Samuel,<sup>gideon</sup> expressly disapproves of Government by Kings. All anti-monarchical parts of scripture have been very smoothly glossed over in monarchical governments, but they undoubtedly merit the attention of Countries which have their governments yet to form. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's,"<sup>render</sup> is the scripture doctrine of Courts, yet it is no support of monarchical government, for the Jews at that time were without a King and in a state of vassalage to the Romans.

Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaic account of the creation, till the Jews under a national delusion requested a king. Till then, their form of government (except in extraordinary cases where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic administered by a judge and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any Being

- 9 -

under that title but the Lord of Hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the idolatrous homage which is paid to the persons of kings, he need not wonder that the Almighty, ever jealous of his honour, should disapprove of a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of Heaven.

Monarchy is ranked in scripture as one of the sins of the Jews, for which a curse in reserve is denounced against them. The history of that transaction is worth attending to.

The children of Israel being oppressed by the Midianites, Gideon marched against them with a small army, and victory thro' the Divine interposition decided in his favour. The Jews elate with success, and attributing it to the generalship of Gideon, proposed making him a king; saying, Rule thou over us, thou and thy son and thy son's son. Here was temptation in its fullest extent; not a kingdom only, but an hereditary one, but Gideon in the piety of his soul replied, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The LORD SHALL RULE OVER YOU. Words need not be more explicit; Gideon doth not decline the honour, but denieth their right to give it; neither doth he compliment them with invented declarations of his thanks, but in the positive stile of a prophet charges them with disaffection to their proper Sovereign, the King of Heaven.

About one hundred and thirty years after this, they fell again into the same error. The hankering which the Jews had for the idolatrous customs of the Heathens, is something exceedingly unaccountable; but so it was, that laying hold of the misconduct of Samuel's two sons, who were entrusted with some secular concerns, they came in an abrupt and clamorous manner to Samuel, saying, behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways, now make us a king to judge us like all the other nations. And here we cannot but observe that their motives were bad, viz. that they might be like unto other nations, i. e. the Heathens, whereas their true glory lay in being as much unlike them as possible. But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, give us a

- 10 -

King to judge us: and Samuel prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, THAT I SHOULD NOT REIGN OVER THEM. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me and served other Gods: so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice, howbeit, protest solemnly unto them and shew them the manner of the King that shall reign over them, i. e. not of any particular King, but of the general manner of the Kings of the Earth whom Israel was so eargerly copying after. And notwithstanding the great distance of time and difference of manners, the character is still in fashion. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the People, that asked of him a King. And he said this shall be the manner of the King that shall reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots and to be his horse-men, and some shall run before his chariots. (This description agrees with the present mode of impressing men) And he will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fisties, will set them to ear his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries and to be cooks, and to be bakers. (This describes the expence and luxury as well as the oppression of Kings) And he will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give them to his officers and to his servants. (By which we see that bribery, corruption, and favouritism, are the standing vices of Kings) And he will take the tenth of your men servants, and your maid servants, and your goodliest young men and your asses, and put them to his work; and he will take the tenth of your sheep, and ye shall be his servants, and ye shall cry out in that day

- 11 -

because of your King which ye shall have chosen, AND THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR YOU IN THAT DAY. This accounts for the continuation of Monarchy; neither do the characters of the few good Kings which have lived since, either sanctify the title, or blot out the sinfulness of the origin; the high encomium given of David takes no notice of him officially as a King, but only as a Man after God's own heart,<sup>David</sup> Nevertheless the People refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said nay but we will have a King over us, that we may be like all the nations, and that our King may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles. Samuel continued to reason with them but to no purpose, he set before them their ingratitude, but all would not avail, and seeing them fully bent on their folly, he cried out, I will call unto the Lord and he shall send thunder and rain (which then was a punishment, being in the time of wheat harvest) that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, IN ASKING YOU A KING. So Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not, for WE HAVE ADDED UNTO OUR SINS THIS EVIL, TO ASK A KING. These portions of scripture are direct and positive. They admit of no equivocal construction. That the Almighty hath here entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the scripture is false. And a man hath good reason to believe that there is as much of king-craft as priest-craft, in with-holding the scripture from the public in popish countries. For monarchy in every instance is the popery of government.

To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of right, is an insult and an imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could

- 12 -

have a right to set up his own family in preference to all others for ever, and tho' himself might deserve some decent degree of honours of his cotemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them. One of the strongest natural proofs of the folly of hereditary right in kings, is, that nature disapproves it, otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an ass for a lion.

Secondly, as no man at first could possess any other public honours than were bestowed upon him, so the givers of those honours could have no power to give away the right of posterity, and though they might say, "we choose you for our head," they could not without manifest injustice to their children say "that your children and your children's children shall reign over our's forever." Because such an unwise, unjust, unnatural compact might (perhaps) in the next succession put them under the government of a rogue or a fool. Most wise men in their private sentiments have ever treated hereditary right with contempt; yet it is one of those evils, which when once established is not easily removed: many submit from fear, others from superstition, and the more powerful part shares with the king the plunder of the rest.

This is supposing the present race of kings in the world to have had an honourable origin: whereas it is more than probable, that could we take off the dark covering of antiquity and trace them to their first rise, that we should find the first, of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners or pre-eminence in subtilty obtained him the title of chief among plunderers; and who by increasing in power and extending his depredations, over-awed the quiet and defenceless to purchase their safety by frequent contributions. Yet his electors could have no idea of giving hereditary right to his descendants, because such a perpetual exclusion of themselves was incompatible with the free and unrestrained principles they professed to live by. Wherefore hereditary

succession in the early ages of monarchy could not take place as a matter of claim, but as something casual or complimentary; but as few or no records were extant in those days, and traditionary history stuff'd with fables, it was very easy after the lapse of a few generations, to trump up some superstitious tale conveniently timed, Mahomet, <sup>muhammad</sup> like, to cram hereditary right down the throats of the vulgar. Perhaps the disorders which threaten'd, or seemed to threaten, on the decease of a leader and the choice of a new one (for elections among ruffians could not be very orderly) induced many at first to favor hereditary pretensions; by which means it happened, as it hath happened since, that what at first was submitted to as a convenience was afterwards claimed as a right.

England since the conquest, <sup>conquest</sup> hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones: yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honourable one. A French Bastard landing with an armed Banditti, <sup>banditti</sup> and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry, rascally original.— It certainly hath no divinity in it. However it is needless to expend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right, if there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the Ass and Lion, <sup>ass</sup> and welcome. I shall neither copy their humility nor disturb their devotion.

Yet I should be glad to ask how they suppose Kings came at first? the question admits but of three answers, viz. either by lot, by election, or by usurpation. If the first king was taken by lot, it establishes a precedent for the next, which excludes hereditary succession. Saul was by lot, yet the succession was not hereditary, neither does it appear from that transaction there was any intention it ever should. If the first king of any country was by election that likewise establishes a precedent for the next; for to say that the right of all future generations is taken

away by the act of the first electors in their choice not only of a king, but of a family of kings for ever, hath no parallel in or out of scripture but the doctrine of original sin, which supposes the free will of all men lost in Adam: and from such comparison, and it will admit of no other, hereditary right can derive no glory. For as in Adam all sinned, and as in the first electors all men obeyed; as in the one all mankind were subjected to Satan, and in the other to sovereignty; as our innocence was lost in the first, and our authority in the last; and as both disable us from reassuming some former state and privilege, it unanswerably follows that original sin and hereditary succession are parallels. Dishonourable rank! inglorious connection! yet the most subtle sophist cannot produce a juster simile.

As to usurpation no man will be so hardy as to defend it; and that William the conqueror was an usurper is a fact not to be contradicted. The plain truth is, that the antiquity of English monarchy will not bear looking into.

But it is not so much the absurdity as the evil of hereditary succession which concerns mankind. Did it ensure a race of good and wise men it would have the seal of divine authority, but as it opens a door to the foolish, the wicked and the improper, it hath in it the nature of oppression. Men who look upon themselves born to reign, and others to obey, soon grow insolent—selected from the rest of mankind their minds are easily poisoned by importance; and the world they act in differs so very materially from the world at large,

that they have but little opportunity of knowing its true interests, and when they succeed to the government are frequently the most ignorant and unfit of any throughout the dominions.

Another evil which attends hereditary succession, is, that the throne is subject to be possessed by a minor at any age; all which time the regency acting under the cover of a king have every opportunity and inducement to betray their trust. The same national misfortune happens when a king worn out with age and infirmity enters the last stage of human

- 15 -

weakness. In both these cases the public becomes a prey to every miscreant who can tamper successfully with the follies either of age or infancy.

The most plausible plea which hath ever been offered in favour of hereditary succession, is, that it preserves a Nation from civil wars; and were this true it would be weighty; whereas it is the most barefaced falsity ever imposed upon mankind. The whole history of England disowns the fact. Thirty kings and two minors have reigned in that distracted kingdom since the conquest, in which time there has been (including the Revolution, <sup>glorious</sup>) no less than eight civil wars and nineteen Rebellions, <sup>rebellion</sup> Wherefore instead of making for peace, it makes against it, and destroys the very foundation it seems to stand on.

The contest for monarchy and succession between the houses of York and Lancaster, <sup>roses</sup> laid England in a scene of blood for many years. Twelve pitched battles besides skirmishes and sieges were fought between Henry and Edward. Twice was Henry prisoner to Edward, who in his turn was prisoner to Henry. And so uncertain is the fate of war and the temper of a Nation, when nothing but personal matters are the ground of a quarrel, that Henry was taken in triumph from a prison to a palace, and Edward obliged to fly from a palace to a foreign land. Yet as sudden transitions of temper are seldom lasting, Henry in his turn was driven from the throne and Edward recalled to succeed him. The parliament always following the strongest side.

This contest began in the reign of Henry the 6th, and was not entirely extinguished till Henry the 7th, in whom the families were united. Including a period of 67 years, viz. from 1422 to 1489.

In short, monarchy and succession have laid (not this or that kingdom only) but the world in blood and ashes. 'Tis a form of government which the word of God bears testimony against, and blood will attend it.

- 16 -

If we enquire into the business of a King we shall find that in some countries they have none; and after sauntering away their lives without pleasure to themselves or advantage to the nation, withdraw from the scene and leave their successors to tread the same idle round. In absolute monarchies the whole weight of business civil and military lies on the King; the children of Israel in their request for a King urged this plea "that he may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles.", <sup>samuel</sup> But in countries where he is neither a judge nor a general, as in England, a man would be puzzled to know what is his business.

The nearer any government approaches to a republic the less business there is for a King. It is somewhat difficult to find a proper name for the government of England. Sir William Meredith, <sup>meredith</sup> calls it a Republic; but in its present state it is unworthy of the name, because the corrupt influence of the Crown by having all the places in its disposal, hath so effectually swallowed up the power and eaten out the virtue of the House of Commons (the Republican part of the constitution) that the government of England is nearly

as monarchical as that of France or Spain. Men fall out with names without understanding them. For 'tis the republican and not the monarchical part of the constitution of England which Englishmen glory in, viz. the liberty of choosing an house of commons from out of their own body—and it is easy to see that when republican virtue fails, slavery ensues. Why is the constitution of England sickly? but because monarchy hath poisoned the republic; the crown hath engrossed the commons.

In England a King hath little more to do than to make war and have away places; which in plain terms, is to impoverish the nation and set it together by the ears. A pretty business indeed for a man to be allowed eight hundred thousand sterling a year for, and worshipped into the bargain! Of more worth is one honest man to society and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived.

## THOUGHTS on the present STATE of AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

IN the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense: and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves: that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual and the period of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King, and the continent has accepted the challenge.

It hath been reported of the late Mr. Pelham, <sup>pelham</sup> (who tho' an able minister was not without his faults) that on his being attacked in the House of Commons on the score that his measures were only of a temporary kind, replied, "they will last my time." Should a thought so fatal and unmanly possess the Colonies in the present contest, the name of Ancestors will be remembered by future generations with detestation.

The Sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a City, a County, a Province or a Kingdom; but of a Continent—of at least one eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time by the proceedings now. Now is the seed time of continental union, faith and honor. The least fracture now, will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender find of a young oak; the wound will enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new aera for politics is struck—a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, etc. prior to the 19th of April, <sup>lexington</sup> i. e. to the commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacks of the last year; which tho' proper then, are superceded and useless now. Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then, terminated in one and the same point, viz. a union with Great Britain; the only difference between the parties, was the method of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it hath so far happened that the first hath failed, and the second hath withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right, that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and enquire into some of the many material injuries which these Colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with and dependant on Great Britain. To examine that connection and dependance on the principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to if separated, and what we are to expect if dependant.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection it necessary towards her future happiness and will always have the same effect—Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument:— we may as well assert that because

a child hath thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer, roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

- 19 -

But she hath protected us, say some. That she has engrossed us is true, and defended the Continent at our expence as well as her own is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz. the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering, that her motive was interest not attachment; that she did not protect us from our enemies on our account, but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any other account, and who will always be our enemies on the same account. Let Britain wave her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependance, and we should be at peace with France and Spain were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover last war ought to warn us against connections.

It hath lately been asserted in Parliament, that the colonies have no relation to each other but through the parent country, i. e. that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys and so on for the rest, are sister colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very round about way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enemyship, if I may so call it. France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be our enemies as Americans, but as our being the subjects of Great Britain.

But Britain is the parent country say some. Then the more the shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase, parent or mother-country, hath been jesuitically adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe and not England is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious

- 20 -

liberty from every part of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we surmount the force of local prejudice as we enlarge our acquaintance with the world. A man born in any town in England divided into parishes, will naturally associate most with his fellow parishioners (because their interests in many cases will be common) and distinguish him by the name of neighbour: if he meet him but a few miles from home, he drops the narrow idea of a street, and salutes him by the name of townsman: if he travel out of the county and meet him in any other, he forgets the minor divisions of street and town, and calls him country-man. i. e. county-man:



but if in their foreign excursions they should associate in France, or any other part of Europe, their local remembrance would be enlarged into that of Englishmen. And by a just parity of reasoning, all Europeans meeting in America, or any other quarter of the Globe, are countrymen; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden, when compared with the whole, stand in the same places on the larger scale, which the divisions of street, town, and county do on the smaller one; Distinctions too limited for Continental minds. Not one third of the inhabitants, even of this province, are of English descent. Wherefore, I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous.

But admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain being now an open

- 21 -

enemy, extinguishes every other name and title: and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first king of England, of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the Peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the Colonies, that in conjunction, they might bid defiance to the world: But this is mere presumption, the fate of war is uncertain, neither do the expressions mean any thing, for this Continent would never suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British Arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance. Our plan is commerce, and that well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of Europe, because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a free port. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver will secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to shew a single advantage that this Continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge, not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will.

But the injuries and disadvantages we sustain by that connection, are without number, and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instruct us to renounce the alliance: Because any submission to, or dependance on Great Britain, tends directly to involve this Continent in European wars and quarrels. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no political connections with any part of it. 'Tis the true interest of America, to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do, while by her dependance on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics.

- 22 -

Europe is too thickly planted with Kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, because of her connection with Britain. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now, will be wishing for separation then, because neutrality in that case, would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one over the other, was never the design of

Heaven. The time likewise at which the Continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled encreases the force of it.—The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America; as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this Continent is a form of government which sooner or later must have an end. And a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under the painful and positive conviction, that what he calls "the present constitution," is merely temporary. As parents, we can have no joy, knowing that this government is not sufficiently lasting to ensure any thing which we may bequeath to posterity: And by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect, which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight.

- 23 -

Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offence, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation, may be included within the following descriptions. Interested men who are not to be trusted, weak men who cannot see, prejudiced men who will not see, and a certain set of moderate men who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent, than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of present sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to their doors to make them feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us for a few moments to Boston; <sup>boston</sup> that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us for ever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust. The inhabitants of that unfortunate city who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city, and plundered by government if they leave it. In their present condition they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief, they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Britain, and still hoping for the best, are apt to call out. Come, come, we shall be friends again for all this. But examine the passions and feelings of mankind; Bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honour, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then are you only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity. Your future connection with Britain whom you can neither love nor honor, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time, fall into a relapse more

- 24 -

wretched than the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and still can shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or

lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections which nature justifies, and without which, we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object. 'Tis not in the power of England or of Europe to conquer America, if she doth not conquer herself by delay and timidity. The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected, the whole continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man doth not deserve, be he who, or what or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

'Tis repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things; to all examples from former ages, to suppose, that this continent can long remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain doth not think so. The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan, short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year's security. Reconciliation is now a fallacious dream. Nature hath deserted the connection, and art cannot supply her place. For as Milton wisely expresses "never can true reconcilment grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."

- 25 -

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and hath tended to convince us that nothing flatters vanity or confirms obstinacy in Kings more than repeated petitioning—and nothing hath contributed more, than that very measure, to make the Kings of Europe absolute. Witness Denmark and Sweden,<sup>denmark</sup> Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats, under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child.

To say they will never attempt it again, is idle and visionary, we thought so at the repeal of the stamp-act, yet a year or two undeceived us; as well may we suppose that nations which have been once defeated will never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, 'tis not in the power of Britain to do the Continent justice: The business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which when obtained requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness— There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for government to take under their care: but there is something very absurd in supposing a Continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet, and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident they belong to different systems. England to Europe: America to itself.

- 26 -

I am not induced by motives of pride, party or resentment to espouse the doctrine of separation and independance; I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded that 'tis the true interest of this continent to be so; that every thing short of that is mere patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity—that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time, when a little more, a little farther, would have rendered this continent the glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination towards a compromise, we may be assured that no terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expence of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

The object contended for, ought always to bear some just proportion to the expence. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, <sup>junto</sup> is a matter unworthy of the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience, which would have sufficiently ballanced she repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained; but if the whole Continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, 'tis scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for in a just estimation, 'tis as great a folly to pay a bunker-hill price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independancy of this Continent as an event which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the Continent to maturity, the event could not be sar off. Wherefore on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter, which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest: otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant, whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself, before the fatal 19th of April 1755 but the moment the event of that day was made known

- 27 -

I rejected the hardened, sullen tempered Pharaoh of England forever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his foul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the the event? I answer, the ruin of the Continent. And that for several reasons.

First. The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of this Continent: And as he hath shewn himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper man to say to these Colonies, You shall make no laws but what I please. And is there any inhabitant in America so ignorant, as not to know that according to what is called the present constitution, that this Continent can make no laws but what the king gives leave to; and is there any man so unwise, as not to see, that (considering what has happened) he will suffer no laws to be made here, but such as suit his purpose. We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up, (as it is called) can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the crown will be exerted to keep this Continent as low and humble as possible? Instead of going forward, we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarrelling or ridiculously petitioning.— We are already greater than the King wishes us to be, and will he not hereafter endeavour to make us less. To bring the matter to one point, is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says No to this question is an Independant, for independency means no more than whether we shall make our own laws, or, whether the King, the greatest enemy this Continent hath, or can have, shall tell us

there shall be no laws but such as I like.

- 28 -

But the King you'll say hath a negative in England; the people there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, there is something very ridiculous, that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to six millions of people older and wiser than himself, "I forbid this or that act of yours to be law." But in this place I decline this sort of reply, tho' I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it, and only answer, that England being the King's residence, and America not so, makes quite another case. The King's negative here is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England, for there he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defence as possible, and here he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics, England consults the good of this country, no farther than it answers her own purpose. Wherefore her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of ours in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it. A pretty state we should soon be in, under such a second-hand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name: And in order to shew that reconciliation now is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, that it would be policy in the King at this time, to repeal the acts for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces; in order that **HE MAY ACCOMPLISH BY CRAFT AND SUBTILTY, IN THE LONG RUN, WHAT HE CANNOT DO BY FORCE AND VIOLENCE IN THE SHORT ONE.** Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

Secondly.—That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain, can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the Colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things in the interim will be

- 29 -

unsettled and unpromising: Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance: And numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects; and quit the continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments is, that nothing but independance, i. e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable, that it will be followed by a revolt some where or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity; (thousands more will probably suffer the same fate;) Those men have other feelings than us who have nothing suffered. All they now possess is liberty, what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service and having nothing more to lose, they disdain submission. Besides, the general temper of the colonies towards a British government, will be like that of a youth, who is nearly out of his time; they will care very little about her: And a government which cannot preserve the peace, is no government at all, and in that case we pay our money for nothing; and pray what is it that Britain can do, whose power will be wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very day after reconciliation? I have heard some men say, many of whom I believe spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an independance, fearing that it would produce civil wars: It is but seldom that our first thoughts are

truly correct, and that is the case here; for there are ten times more to dread from a patched up connection, than from independance. I make the sufferers case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby.

- 30 -

The colonies have manifested such a spirit of good order and obedience to continental government, as is sufficient to make every reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can assign the least pretence for his fears, on any other grounds, than such as are truly childish and ridiculous, viz. that one colony will be striving for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions, there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation. The republics of Europe are all, (and we may say always) in peace. Holland and Swisserland,<sup>switzerland</sup> are without wars foreign or domestic: Monarchical governments, it is true, are never long at rest; the crown itself is a temptation to enterprising ruffians at home; and that degree of pride and insolence ever attendant on regal authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers in instances, where a republican government by being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake.

If there is any true cause for fear respecting independance, it is because no plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their way out—Wherefore, as an opening into that business I offer the following hints; at the same time modestly affirming, that I have no other opinion of them myself, than that they may be the means of giving rise to something better. Could the stragglings thoughts of individuals be collected, they would frequently form materials for wise and able men to improve into useful matter.

LET the assemblies be annual with a president only. The representation more equal. Their business wholly domestic, and subject to the authority of a Continental Congress.

Let each Colony be divided into six, eight, or ten convenient districts, each district to send a proper number of Delegates to Congress, so that each Colony send at least thirty. The whole number in Congress will be at least 390. Each Congress to sit and to choose a president by the following method. When the Delegates

- 31 -

are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen Colonies by lot, after which let the whole Congress choose (by ballot) a president from our of the Delegates of that province. In the next Congress let a Colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that Colony from which the president was taken in the former Congress, and so proceeding on till the whole threen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three fifths of the Congress to be called a majority.—He that will promote discord under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt.

But as there is a peculiar delicacy from whom, or in what manner, this business must first arise, and as it seems most agreeable and consistent, that it should come from some intermediate body between the governed and the governors, that is between the Congress and the People. Let a CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE be held in the following manner, and for the following purpose.

A Committee of twenty six members of Congress, viz. Two for each Colony. Two members from each house of Assembly, or Provincial convention; and six Representatives of the people at large, to be chosen in the capital city or town of each Province, for, and in behalf of the whole Province, by as many qualified voters as shall think proper to attend from all parts of the Province for that purpose; or if more convenient, the Representatives may be chosen in two or three of the most populous parts thereof. In this CONFERENCE thus assembled, will be united the two grand principles of business, knowledge and power. The members of Congress, Assemblies, or Conventions, by having had experience in national concerns, will be able and useful counsellors, and the whole, by being empowered by the people, will have a truly legal authority.

The conferring Members being met, let their business be to frame a CONTINENTAL CHARTER, or Charter of the United Colonies; (answering, to what is called the Magna

- 32 -

Charta of England, <sup>magnacarta</sup>) fixing the number and manner of choosing members of Congress, members of Assembly, with their date of sitting, and drawing the line of business and jurisdiction between them: Always remembering, that our strength and happiness, is continental not provincial. Securing freedom and property to all men, and above all things, the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; with such other matters as is necessary for a charter to contain. Immediately after which, the said conference to dissolve, and the bodies which shall be chosen conformable to the said charter, to be the Legislators and Governors of this Continent, for the time being: Whose peace and happiness may God preserve. AMEN.

Should any body of men be hereafter delegated for this or some similar purpose, I offer them the following extracts from that wise observer on governments DRAGONETTI, <sup>dragonetti</sup> "The science" says he

of the Politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expence.

DRAGONETTI on Rewards and Virtue, <sup>rewards</sup>,

But where, say some, is the King of America? I'll tell you Friend, he reigns above; and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honours, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the Charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a Crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the law ought to be King, and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the Crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the People whose right it is.

- 33 -

A government of our own is our natural right: and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own, in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our own power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some\* Massanello, <sup>massanello</sup> may hereafter arise, who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to

themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the Continent like a deluge. Should the government of America return again into the hands of Britain, the tottering situation of things will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britons under the oppression of the Conqueror. Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government. There are thousands, and tens of thousands, who would think it glorious to expel from the Continent that barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians and the Negroes to destroy us; the cruelty hath a double guilt, it is dealing brutally by us and treacherously by them.

To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections wounded thro' a thousand pores instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between us and them, and can there be any reason to hope, that as the relationship expires, the affection will increase, or that we shall agree better, when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

- 34 -

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord is now broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the Continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated the earth, or have only a casual existence, were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is over-run with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her.—Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.



## Of the PRESENT ABILITY of AMERICA, with some MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS.

I Have never met with a man either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries would take place, one time or other: And there is no instance, in which we have shewn less judgment; than in endeavouring to describe what we call the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for independance.

As all men allow the measure, and vary only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavour if possible,

- 35 -

to find out the very time. But I need not go far, the enquiry ceases at once, for the time hath found us. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things, prove the fact.

'Tis not in the numbers but in unity that our great strength lies: yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The Continent hath at this time the largest disciplined army of any power under Heaven: and is just arrived at that pitch of strength, in which no single Colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, is able to do any thing. Our land force is more than sufficient, and as to navy affairs, we cannot be insensible that Britain would never suffer an American man of war to be built, while the Continent remained in her hands. Wherefore, we should be no forwarder an hundred years hence, in that branch than we are now; but the truth is, we should be less so, because the timber of the country is every day diminishing.

Were the Continent crowded with inhabitants, her sufferings under the present circumstances would be intolerable. The more sea-port towns we had, the more should we have both to defend and to lose. Our present numbers are so happily proportioned to our wants, that no man need be idle. The diminution of trade affords an army, and the necessities of an army create a new trade.

Debts we have none: and whatever we may contract on this account will serve as a glorious memento of our virtue. Can we but leave posterity with a settled form of government, an independant constitution of its own, the purchase at any price will be cheap. But to expend millions for the sake of getting a few vile acts repealed, and routing the present ministry only, is unworthy of the charge, and is using posterity with the utmost cruelty; because it is leaving them the great work to do, and a debt upon their backs from which they derive no advantage. Such a thought is unworthy a man of honour, and is the true characteristic of a narrow heart and a piddling politician.

- 36 -

The debt we may contract doth not deserve our regard if the work be but accomplished. No nation ought to be without a debt. A national debt is a national bond; and when it bears no interest, is in no case a grievance. Britain is oppressed with a debt of upwards of one hundred and forty millions sterling, for which she pays upwards of four millions interest. And as a compensation for her debt; she has a large navy: America is without a debt, and without a navy; but for the twentieth part of the English national debt, could have a navy as large again. The navy of England is not worth at this time more than three millions and an half sterling.

No country on the globe is so happily situated, or so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce. We need go abroad for nothing. Whereas the Dutch, who make large profits by hiring out their ships of war to the Spaniards and Portuguese, are obliged to import most of the materials they use. We ought to view the building a fleet as an article of commerce, it being the natural manufactory of this country. 'Tis the best money we can lay out. A navy when finished is worth more than it cost: And is that nice point in national policy, in which commerce and protection are united. Let us build; if we want them not, we can sell, and by that means re-place our paper currency with ready gold and silver.

In point of manning a fleet, people in general run into great errors; it is not necessary that one fourth part should be sailors. The Terrible privateer, Capt. Death,<sup>capdeath</sup> stood the hottest engagement of any ship last war, yet had not twenty sailors on board, though her complement of men was upwards of two hundred. A few able and social sailors will soon instruct a sufficient number of active landmen in the common work of a ship. Wherefore we never can be more capable to begin on maritime matters than now, while our timber is standing, our fisheries blocked up, and our sailors and shipwrights out of employ. Men of war

- 37 -

of seventy and eighty guns were built forty years ago in New England, and why not the same now? Ship building is America's greatest pride, and in which, she will in time excel the whole world. The great empires of the East are mostly inland and consequently excluded from the possibility of rivalling her. Africa is in a state of Barbarism; and no power in Europe, hath either such an extent of coast, or such an internal supply of materials. Where nature hath given the one she has with-held the other; to America only hath she been liberal of both. The vast empire of Russia is almost shut out from the sea; wherefore, her boundless forrests, her tar, iron, and cordage are only articles of commerce.

In point of safety, ought we to be without a fleet? We are not the little people now, which we were sixty years ago, at that time we might have trusted our property in the streets, or fields rather, and slept securely without locks or bolts to our doors and windows. The case now is altered, and our methods of defence, ought to improve with our increase of property. A common pirate twelve months ago might have come up the Delaware, and laid the city of Philadelphia under instant-contribution for what sum he pleased; and the same might have happened to other places. Nay, any daring fellow in a brig of 14 or 16 guns might have robbed the whole continent, and carried off half a million of money. These are circumstances which demand our attention and point out the necessity of naval protection.

Some perhaps will say, that after we have made it up with Britain that she will protect us. Can we be so unwise as to mean that she shall keep a navy in our harbours for that purpose? Common sense will tell us, that the power which hath endeavoured to subdue us, is of all others, the most improper to defend us. Conquest may be effected under the pretence of friendship; and ourselves after a long and brave resistance, be at last cheated into slavery. And if her ships are not to be admitted into our harbours, I would

- 38 -

ask, how is she to protect us? A navy three or four thousand miles off can be of little use, and on sudden emergencies, none at all. Wherefore if we must hereafter protect ourselves, why not do it for ourselves? why do it for another?

The English list of ships of war, is long and formidable, but not a tenth part of them are at any one time fit for service, numbers of them not in being; yet their names are pompously continued in the list if only a plank is left of the ship: and not a fifth part of such as are fit for service, can be spared on any one station at one time. The East and West Indies, Mediterranean, Africa, and other parts over which Britain extends her claim, make large demands upon her navy. From a mixture of prejudice and inattention, we have contracted a false notion respecting the navy of England, and have talked as if we should have the whole of it to encounter at once, and for that reason, supposed, that we must have one as large; which not being instantly practicable, hath been made use of by a set of disguised Tories to discourage our beginning thereon. Nothing can be farther from truth than this, for if America had only a twentieth part of the naval force of Britain, she would be by far an over match for her; because as we neither have, nor claim any foreign dominion, our whole force would be employed on our own coast, where we should, in the long run, have two to one the advantage of those who had three or four thousand miles to sail over, before they could attack us, and the same distance to return in order to refit and recruit. And although Britain by her fleet hath a check over our trade to Europe, we have as large a one over her trade to the West Indies, which by laying in the neighbourhood of the Continent lies entirely at its mercy.

Some method might be fallen on to keep up a naval force in time of peace, if we should not judge it necessary to support a constant navy. If premiums were to be given to merchants to build and employ in their service, ships mounted with 20, 30, 40 or 50 guns (the premiums to be in proportion

- 39 -

to the loss of bulk to the merchant) fifty or sixty of those ships, with a few guard ships on constant duty would keep up a sufficient navy, and that without burdening ourselves with the evil so loudly complained of in England, of suffering their fleets in time of peace to lie rotting in the docks. To unite the sinews of commerce and defence is sound policy; for when our strength and our riches play into each other's hand we need fear no external enemy.

In almost every article of defence we abound. Hemp flourishes even to rankness, so that we need not want cordage. Our iron is superior to that of other countries. Our small arms equal to any in the world. Cannon we can cast at pleasure. Salt-petre and gun-powder we are every day producing. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Resolution is our inherent character, and courage hath never yet forsaken us. Wherefore what is it that we want? Why is it that we hesitate? From Britain we can expect nothing but ruin. If she is once admitted to the government of America again, this Continent will not be worth living in. Jealousies will be always arising; insurrections will be constantly happening; and who will go forth to quell them? who will venture his life to reduce his own countrymen to a foreign obedience; the difference between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, respecting some unlocated lands, shews the insignificance of a British government, and fully proves, that nothing but Continental authority can regulate Continental matters.

Another reason why the present time is preferable to all others, is, that the fewer our numbers are, the more land there is yet unoccupied, which instead of being lavished by the king on his worthless dependants, may be hereafter applied, not only to the discharge of the present debt, but to the constant support of government. No nation under Heaven hath such an advantage as this.

- 40 -

The infant state of the Colonies, as it is called, so far from being against is an argument in favour of independance. We are sufficiently numerous, and were we more so we might be less united. 'Tis a matter

worthy of observation, that the more a country is peopled, the smaller their armies are. In military numbers the ancients far exceeded the moderns: and the reason is evident, for trade being the consequence of population, men become too much absorbed thereby to attend to any thing else. Commerce diminishes the spirit both of Patriotism and of military defence. And history sufficiently informs us that the bravest achievements were always accomplished in the non-age of a nation. With the encrease of commerce England hath lost its spirit. The more men have to lose, the less willing are they to venture. The rich are in general slaves to fear, and submit to courtly power with the trembling duplicity of a spaniel.

Youth is the seed time of good habits as well in nations as in individuals. It might be difficult, if not impossible to form the Continent into one Government half a century hence. The vast variety of interests occasioned by an increase of trade and population, would create confusion. Colony would be against Colony. Each being able would scorn each others assistance: and while the proud and foolish gloried in their little distinctions, the wise would lament that the union had not been formed before. Wherefore, the present time is the true time for establishing it. The intimacy which is contracted in infancy, and the friendship which is formed in misfortune, are of all others, the most lasting and unalterable. Our present union is marked with both these characters: we are young, and we have been distressed; but our concord hath withstood our troubles, and fixes a memorable Aera for posterity to glory in.

The present time likewise, is that peculiar time, which never happens to a nation but once, viz. the time of forming itself into a government. Most nations have let

- 41 -

slip the opportunity, and by that means have been compelled to receive laws from their conquerors, instead of making laws for themselves. First they had a king, and then a form of government; whereas the articles or charter of government should be formed first, and men delegated to execute them afterward; but from the errors of other nations let us learn wisdom, and lay hold of the present opportunity—To begin Government at the right end.

When William the Conqueror subdued England, he gave them law at the point of the sword; and until we consent that the seat of government in America be legally and authoritatively filled, we shall be in danger of having it filled by some fortunate ruffian, who may treat us in the same manner, and then, where will be our freedom? where our property?

As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of government to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government hath to do therewith: let a man throw aside that narrowness of soul, that selfishness of principle, which the niggards of all professions are so unwilling to part with, and he will be delivered from his fears on that head. Suspicion is the companion of mean souls and the bane of all good society. For my self, I fully and conscientiously believe, that it is the will of the Almighty, that there should be diversity of religious opinions among us. It affords a large field for our christian kindness; were we all of one way of thinking, our religious dispositions would want matter for probation: and on this liberal principle I look on the various denominations among us, to be like children of the same family, differing only in what is called their christian names.

In page 30 and 31 I threw out a few thoughts on the propriety of a continental charter, (for I only presume to offer hints, not plans,) and in this place I take the liberty of re-mentioning the subject, by observing, that a charter is to be understood as a bond of solemn obligation, which

the whole enters into, to support the right of every separate part, whether of religion, personal freedom, or property. A right reckoning makes long friends.

In a former page I likewise mentioned the necessity of a large and equal representation; and there is no political matter which more deserves our attention. A small number of electors, or a small number of representatives are equally dangerous. But if the number of the representatives be not only small, but unequal, the danger is increased. As an instance of this I mention the following; when the associators petition was before the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania,<sup>pennhouse</sup> twenty eight members only were present. All the Bucks county members, being eight, voted against it, and had seven of the Chester members done the same, this whole Province had been governed by two counties only, and this danger it is always exposed to. The unwarrantable stretch likewise, which that house made in their last sitting, to gain an undue authority over the Delegates of that Province, ought to warn the people at large, how they trust power out of their own hands. A set of instructions for the Delegates were put together, which in point of sense and business would have dishonour'd a school-boy, and after being approved by a few, a very few without doors, were carried into the house, and there passed in behalf of the whole Colony: whereas did the whole Colony know, with what ill-will that house had entered on some necessary public measures, they would not hesitate a moment to think them unworthy of such a trust.

Immediate necessity makes many things convenient, which if continued would grow into oppressions. Expedience and right, are different things. When the calamities of America require a consultation, there was no method so ready, or at that time so proper, as to appoint persons from the several houses of Assembly for that purpose; and the wisdom with which they have proceeded hath preserved this Continent from ruin. But as it is more than probable

that we shall never be without a CONGRESS, every well wisher to good order, must own, that the mode for choosing members of that body, deserves consideration. And I put it as a question to those, who make a study of mankind, whether representation and election is not too great a power for one and the same body of men to possess? When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember, that virtue is not hereditary.

It is from our enemies that we often gain excellent maxims, and are frequently surprised into reason by their mistakes. Mr. Cornwall,<sup>cornwall</sup> (one of the Lords of the Treasury) treated the petition of the New-York Assembly with contempt, because that house, he said, consisted but of twenty six members, which trifling number, he argued, could not with decency be put for the whole. We thank him for his involuntary honesty.\*

TO CONCLUDE, however strange it may appear to some, or however unwilling they may be to think so, matters not, but many strong and striking reasons may be given to shew, that nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration for independance. Some of which are,

First.—It is the custom of Nations, when any two are at war, for some other powers not engaged in the quarrel, to step in as Mediators and bring about the Preliminaries of a Peace: but while America calls herself the Subject of Great Britain, no power, however well disposed she may be, can offer her Mediation. Wherefore in our present state we may quarrel on for ever.

Secondly.—It is unreasonable to suppose, that France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, if we mean only to make use of that assistance, for the purpose of repairing the

- 44 -

breach, and strengthening the connection between Britain and America; because, those powers would be sufferers by the consequences.

Thirdly.—While we profess ourselves the Subjects of Britain, we must in the eye of foreign nations be considered as Rebels. The precedent is somewhat dangerous to their peace, for men to be in arms under the name of Subjects: we on the spot can solve the paradox; but to unite resistance and subjection, requires an idea much too refined for common understanding.

Fourthly—Were a manifesto to be published and dispatched to foreign Courts, setting forth the miseries we have endured, and the peaceable methods we have ineffectually used for redress, declaring at the same time, that not being able any longer to live happily or safely, under the cruel disposition of the British Court, we had been driven to the necessity of breaking off all connections with her: at the same time, assuring all such Courts of our peaceable disposition towards them, and of our desire of entering into trade with them: such a memorial would produce more good effects to this Continent, than if a ship were freighted with petitions to Britain.

Under our present denomination of British Subjects, we can neither be received nor heard abroad; the custom of all Courts is against us, and will be so, until by an Independance we take rank with other Nations.

These proceedings may at first appear strange and difficult, but, like all other steps which we have already passed over, will in a little time become familiar and agreeable: and until an Independance is declared, the Continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity.

LARGE  
ADDITIONS  
TO

COMMON SENSE;

Addressed to the Inhabitants of AMERICA,  
On the following interesting Subjects.

- I. The American Patriot's Prayer.
- II. American Independency defended, by Candidus.
- III. The Propriety of Independency, by Demophilus.  
The dread of Tyrants, and the sole resource  
Of those that under grim Oppression groan.

THOMPSON.

- IV. A Review of the American Contest, with some  
Strictures on the King's Speech. Addressed to all  
Parents in the Thirteen United Colonies, by a  
Friend to Posterity and Mankind.
- V. Letter to Lord Dartmouth, by an English American.
- VI. Observations on Lord North's Conciliatory Plan.  
by Sincerus.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Appendix to Common Sense:

Together with an Address to the People called Quakers,  
on their Testimony concerning Kings and Government,  
and the present Comotions in AMERICA.

## The AMERICAN PATRIOT'S Prayer.

PARENT, <sup>prayer</sup> of all, omnipotent  
In heav'n, and earth below,  
Thro' all creation's bounds unspent,  
Whose streams of goodness flow.

Teach me to know from whence I rose,  
And unto what design'd;  
No private aims let me propose,  
Since link'd with human kind.

But chief to hear my country's voice,  
May all my thoughts incline,  
'Tis reason's law, 'tis virtue's choice,  
'Tis nature's call and thine.

Me from fair freedom's sacred cause,  
Let nothing e'er divide;  
Grandeur, nor gold, nor vain applause,  
Nor friendship false misguide.

Let me not faction's partial hate  
Pursue to this land's woe;  
Nor grasp the thunder of the state,  
To wound a private foe.

If, for the right, to wish the wrong,  
My country shall combine,  
Single to serve th' erroneous throng,  
Spight of themselves, be mine.



## ADDITIONS to COMMON SENSE.

### AMERICAN INDEPENDANCY defended.

WHEN the little pamphlet intituled COMMON SENSE first made its appearance in favor of that so often abjured idea of independance upon upon Great-Britain, I was informed that no less than three gentlemen of respectable abilities were engaged to answer it. As yet I have seen nothing which directly pretends to dispute a single position of the author. The oblique essay in Humphreys's paper,<sup>humphreys</sup> and solemn Testimony of the Quakers,<sup>quakertestimony</sup> however intended, having offered nothing to the purpose, I shall take leave to examine this important question, with all candor and attention, and submit the result to my much interested country.

Dependance of one man, or state, upon another, is either absolute, or limited by some certain terms of agreement. The dependance of these colonies which Great-Britain calls constitutional, as declared by act of parliament, is absolute. If the contrary of this be the bugbear so many have been declaiming against, I could wish my countrymen would consider the consequences of so stupid a profession. If a limited dependance is intended. I would be much obliged to any one who will shew me the Britanno American Magna Charta wherein the terms of our limited dependance are precisely stated. If no such thing can be found, and absolute dependance be accounted inadmissible, the sound we are squabbling about has certainly no determinate meaning. If any say we mean that kind of dependance we acknowledged at and before the year 1763,<sup>treatyofparis</sup> I answer, vague and uncertain laws, and more especially CONSTITUTIONS, are the very instruments of slavery. The Magna Charta of England was very explicit, considering the time it was formed, and yet much blood was spilt in disputes concerning its meaning.

Besides the danger of an indefinite dependance upon an undetermined power, it might be worth while to consider what the characters are on whom we are so ready to acknowledge ourselves dependant. The votaries for this idol tell us, upon the good people of our Mother Country, whom they represent as the most just, humane, and affectionate friends we can have in the world. Were this true, it were some encouragement; but who can pretend ignorance that these just and humane friends are as much under the tyranny of men of a reverse character as we should be, could those miscreants gain their ends? I disclaim any more than a mutual dependance on any man, or number of men upon earth; but an indefinite dependance upon a combination of men, who have, in the face of the sun, broken thro' the most solemn covenants, debauched the hereditary, and corrupted the elective guardians of the people's rights, who have, in fact, established an absolute tyranny in Great-Britain and Ireland, and openly declared themselves competent to bind the Colonists in all cases whatsoever: I say indefinite dependance on such a combination of usurping innovators is evidently as dangerous to liberty, as fatal to civil and social happiness, as any one step that could be proposed, even by the destroyer of men. The utmost that the honest party in Great-Britain can do, is to warn us to avoid this dependance at all hazards? Does not even a Duke of Grafton,<sup>grafon</sup> declare the ministerial measures illegal and dangerous? And shall America, no way connected with this administration, press our submission to such measures, and reconciliation to the authors of them? Would not such pigeon-hearted wretches equally forward the recal of the Stuart family,<sup>stuart</sup> and the establishment

of Popery, <sup>popery</sup> throughout Christendom, did they conceive the party in favor of those loyal measures the strongest? Shame on the men who can court exemption from present trouble and expence, at the price of their own and posterity's liberty! The

- 49 -

honest party in England cannot wish for the reconciliation proposed. It is as unsafe to them as to us, and they thoroughly apprehend it. What check have they now upon the crown, and what shadow of control can they pretend, when the crown can command fifteen or twenty millions a year, which they have nothing to say to? A proper proportion of our commerce is all that can benefit any good man in Britain or Ireland, and God forbid we should be so cruel as to furnish bad men with power to enslave both Britain and America. Administration has now fairly dissevered the dangerous tie: Execrated will he be by the latest posterity who again joins the fatal cord! But say the puling pusillanimous cowards, we shall be subject to a long and bloody war, if we declare independance. On the contrary, I affirm it the only step that can bring the contest to a speedy and happy issue. By declaring independance we place ourselves on a footing for an equal negociation: Now we are called a pack of villainous rebels, who, like the St. Vincent Indians,<sup>vincent</sup> can expect nothing more than a pardon for our lives, and the sovereign favor, respecting freedom and property, to be at the King's will. Grant Almighty God that I may be numbered with the dead before that sable day dawn on North-America!

All Europe knows the illegal and inhuman treatment we have received from Britons. All Europe wishes the haughty empress of the main reduced to a more humble deportment. After herself has thrust her Colonies from her, the maritime powers cannot be such idiots as to suffer her to reduce them to a more absolute obedience of her dictates than they were heretofore obliged to yield. Does not the most superficial politician know, that while we profess ourselves the subjects of Great-Britain, and yet hold arms against her, they have a right to treat us as rebels, and that according to the laws of nature and nations no other state has a right to interfere in the dispute? But on the other hand, on our declaration of independance, the maritime states at least will find it their interest, which

- 50 -

always secures the question of inclination, to protect a people who can be so advantageous to them. So that those short-sighted politicians, who conclude that this step will involve us in slaughter and devastation, may plainly perceive that no measure in our power will so naturally and effectually work our deliverance. The motion of a finger of the Grand Monarch would procure as gentle a temper in the omnipotent British Minister, as appeared in the Manilla ransom and Falkland islands affairs. From without certainly we have every thing to hope, nothing to fear; from within, some tell us the Presbyterians, if freed from the restraining power of Great-Britain, would over-run the peaceable Quakers in this government. For my own part. I despise the bickerings of sectaries, and am apprehensive of no trouble from that quarter, especially while no peculiar honors nor emoluments are annexed to either. I heartily wish too many of the Quakers did not give cause of complaint, by endeavoring to counteract the measures of their fellow citizens for the common safety. If they profess themselves only pilgrims here, let them walk through the men of this world without interfering with their actions on either side. If they would not pull down Kings, let them not support tyrants; for whether they understand it or not, there is, and ever has been, an essential difference in the characters.

Finally, with M. De Vattel,<sup>devatell</sup> I account a state a moral person, having an interest and will of its own, and I think that state a monster, whose prime mover has an interest and will, in direct opposition to its

prosperity and security. This position has been so clearly demonstrated in the pamphlet first mentioned in this essay, that I shall only add, if there are any arguments in favor of returning to a state of dependance on Great-Britain, that is, on the present Administration of Great-Britain, I could wish they were timely offered, that they may be soberly considered, before the cunning proposals of the cabinet set all the timid, lazy and irresolute members of the community into a clamor for peace at any rate.

CANDIDUS,

## The Propriety of INDEPENDANCY.

TO acknowledge that the Creator formed Man for society, and that society cannot subsist without regulations, laws, and government; and at the same time to assert, that in spite of all human care to prevent it, every government will degenerate into a tyranny, is such a daring blasphemy of the divine attributes, that had I not heard it asserted, and acquiesced in as a truth. I could not have believed such a position could have obtained in a civilized country! This monstrous hypothesis concludes that notwithstanding the Deity had power enough to form such admirable creatures as men and women, and fit them for enjoying of each other a thousand ways, and tho' by means of the most exquisite of those enjoyments a race should arise from them over which every power of rightful government must of necessity be exercised, yet just and rightful government is in reality utopian, imaginary, and impracticable! Did not God cloath the grass, direct the wild Goat, and provide for the Sparrow, I might more easily be persuaded to suspect his care of Man.

I readily grant that the delegates of governmental power are too apt to consider themselves the possessors of it in their own right, and that they therefore take every means in their power to become the masters in the place of servanis to their constituents; and that the people in all civilized countries have been too inattentive to the usurpations of their rulers: But I conceive of no cause in the nature of things which so absolutely counteracts the power of a wise, learned, and free community as to render it impossible for them to preserve their liberty. The arguments bro't from the condition of other states, are by no means conclusive with respect to the North American colonies. I am bold to assert, that such a favorable combination of circumstances as they are blessed with at this important conjuncture, never did take place among any people with whom history has made us acquainted. The most just and solid foundation of social happiness was laid in the first settlement of the Continent, the cultivation of the earth for the subsistance of its proprietor. Here was no feudal tenure from some military Lord; every cultivator being the lord of his own soil, and content with its produce, had no thoughts of encroaching upon and subjecting his neighbour to his absolute dominion. Hence' a handsome competency has enabled the bulk of the people to give their children such an education as enables them to read, and become acquainted with the usurpations of the deepest plotters of their ruin. The spirit of

the people for obtaining this necessary information, is evident from the incredible number of news-papers and other periodical publications which they encourage, and the effect of such institutions never have been so great in any community, yet known, as in these pantaplebean (altogether Commons) colonies. How quickly the most important revolution of the fundamentals of our policy can pervade a continent, may be guessed at by the progress of the idea of Colonial Independency in three weeks or a month at farthest! Surely thousands and ten thousands of common farmers and tradesmen must be better reasoners than some of our trammelled juris consultors, who to this hour feel a reluctance to part with the abominable chain, which remaining, in any shape whatever, tho' modified by all the wisdom and caution of the greatest men now living, must in a very little time drag the colonies into the most abject slavery. Many profess themselves zealous for the liberties of America, yet declare an abhorrence of the idea of independancy on Great-Britain. If this be not a solecism, as absurd and irreconcilable as ever was obruded on mankind, I know not the meaning of the term! Civil Liberty never was defined in stricter terms than an EXEMPTION from all controul, WITHOUT THE COMMUNITY, in which every qualified member has an equal voice. No American, as such, has the shadow of incorporation with the government of Great-Britain; and in

consequence, if he receives the least syllable of law from that quarter, he gives up his claim to the definitive exemption. If the sticklers for dependance do not mean dependance for some certain laws, in the forming of which the Colonists have no voice at all, I do not yet understand them; and if they do mean that we should admit the claim of any state, or any part of the power of any state, with which the democratic power of this state is not incorporated, to give us law in any case whatever, they admit a fibre, which I must make free to tell them, will speedily grow into an iron sinew which neither themselves nor posterity will be able to endure or burst asunder. And further, it is not only the admission of some possible law from a foreign power, that hurries a people into slavery; a meer negative power on acts for the repeal of grievous laws will more slowly, but as certainly subvert liberty,

Again, Mr. Hume's, <sup>hume</sup> observation, [Perfect Common-wealth, <sup>commonwealth</sup> p. 301.] that "the sword being in the hands of a single person who will always neglect to discipline the militia, in order to have the pretext to keep: up a standing army;" and the succeeding one, "that

- 53 -

this is a mortal distemper in the British government of which it must, at last inevitably perish," now so fatally confirmed, may be a sufficient warning to the Colonies to beware of being again entangled with the yoke of bondage.

Many object to a Republican Government as impracticable in a large state. "The contrary of this [says Hume, Per. Com. 302.] seems evident. Tho' 'tis more difficult to form a Republican Government in an extensive country than in a city; there is more facility, when once it is formed, of preserving it steady and uniform, without tumult or faction, in the former than the latter. (Per. Com. 303.) In a large government which is modelled with masterly skill, there is compass and room enough to refine the democracy from the lower people, who may be admitted into the first elections, or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates who direct all the motions. At the same time the parts are so distant and remote that 'tis very difficult either by intrigue, prejudice, or passion, to hurry them into measures against the public interest." Thus far Mr. Hume, whose plan for a perfect commonwealth, will speedily be submitted to public consideration.

DEMOPHILUS, <sup>demophilus</sup>

A Review of the American Contest, with some Strictures on the King's Speech, and its consequences. Addressed to all Parents, in the Thirteen United Colonies. By a Friend to Posterity and Mankind.

NATURE instructs the brute creation to provide for, guard and protect their offspring until they are able to do for themselves. The dam is never known to forsake her young while her care is necessary for their safety, nor to do any thing which would involve them in distress and difficulty. Man, who has this principle in common with brutes, is endowed with others yet more valuable, but which to him are absolutely necessary, whereby he is taught to provide for the future welfare of his descendants and to guard them from the encroachments of that power which civil society constitutes for its own safety; but which, through the depravity of human nature is often turned against it. There are few parents who do not make it their

- 54 -

constant study and earnest endeavour to leave some valuable inheritance to their children: few who have been so lost to the feelings of nature and calls of parental affection, as to entail difficulty and distress on their children, when it was in their power to leave them a fair and easy inheritance. And yet it has so happened, that by an ill timed attachment to the present, without paying proper attention to the future, they have entailed misery upon them by the very means which were designed to preserve them from it.

It is now in your power to bequeath to your children the one or the other, and it becomes you to have an eye to them in all your proceedings. It is sufficiently known to you, that riches in arbitrary states are often the ruin of their possessors, and that security to property is absolutely necessary to stamp their true value on wealth and possessions, He therefore, who wishes to leave his children in flourishing circumstances ought to be a zealous friend to those measures, and that plan of government which gives the greatest security to property, and an active warm opposer of those which leave it to the arbitrary disposal of men, who find a greater advantage in making free with what does not belong to them, than in frugally using what is justly their own. Whig and Tory should be out of the question. Private pique, party faction and animosity ought to subside. He who thinks should think for posterity, and he who acts should act for his children.

It is a great weakness to suffer our passions to take place of our reason and blindly to follow their dictates, though to our manifest hurt, rather than subject them to our better sense. A false pride, which will not acknowledge an error though ever so evident, an obstinate perseverance in our own opinion without deigning to hear advice or instruction, and an unreasonable attachment to party, have done much mischief to mankind, and may yet do more if not carefully avoided. I have directed this paper to you in preference to others, because your parental affection should form more than a counter poise to every false principle, which can influence the human mind where the interest of your offspring is at stake.

Our present contest is immensely great, and every man must see that it will affect posterity. Its consequences cannot end with itself; but the latest generations must feel its effects. The great Ruler of the universe has permitted it for wise purposes, and has called every one of us to act our part in it. It becomes

- 55 -

us, therefore, laying aside all former prejudices, partiality and party attachments, to act upon principles which will justify us to him who has assigned us our stations, and cause posterity to bless the memory

of their forefathers. We all agree in this, that Great-Britain is unjust and arbitrary, and we have hitherto principally differed in the mode of opposition, which ought to have been pursued. I speak not to those who think one way and talk another. They act upon such base principles, that it is in vain to attempt to rouse in them any just or generous sentiments. We have no instances of the conversion of avaricious or ambitious hypocrites, and it would be wasting time to use arguments to convince them. I direct myself to you who have sincerity sufficient to examine the principles on which you proceed, and honesty enough to pursue that course of conduct which appears to be right, and so much affection for your children as to prefer their interest and happiness to every other consideration. For you I mean to throw together a few hints which may assist you in finally fixing a right choice.

The British administration began its attacks on our liberties with a stamp act, <sup>stamp</sup> but meeting with strong opposition they thought fit to repeal it. This act threw the colonies into strong convulsions, and we rejoiced exceedingly on its repeal, and fondly hoped that we would enjoy future tranquility. But we were mistaken. They never intended to relinquish the design, but only to change their ground, that which they first pitched upon not seeming tenable. An American revenue granted by a British Parliament was the object, and they never lost sight of it; for they soon renewed their attacks upon principles which they thought more favourable to their intentions; but meeting with as little success in that, as in the preceding attempt, they suspended their measures for a time, in hopes of lulling us into a careless security. They accordingly once more returned to the charge, and endeavoured to effect by cunning and arrifice what they had heretofore attempted in vain on every other peaceable plan. This not succeeding, they were reduced to their last shift of bullying and force. They levied armies, appointed generals of reputation to command, and sent them amongst us, we may know their commission by their conduct; for after abusing, brow-beating and insulting, after starving and tarring and feathering, after offering every possible injury which a free people could bear, without obtaining their ends, and every other measure failing, they drew the sword, and at once reduced us to the

- 56 -

dire alternative of submitting to their illegal claims of jurisdiction, or entering into the bloody contest. Like men determined to be free we chose the latter. It now rests on the last argument, an argument which finally settles all controversies of a like nature. The plan of operation is now opened, and they who stand to it with the most steady perseverance must finally succeed. This is the decree of providence in all cases,

he that persevereth unto the end shall be saved., <sup>matthew24</sup>

We have, by the blessing of God, effectually baffled all their former attempts; but if we fail in this, all our former victories will only serve to make our fall the more conspicuous and terrible.

I will not enquire what would have been the efficacy of any heretofore recommended, but untried means. The worst that can have happened, and it is with it we have now to deal; to relinquish it on our part, would be to give up the matter, for however any means might once have done, cowardice alone would now desert the field, and slavery must be the inevitable consequence.

I do not wonder that war sits heavy on us, and that we are somewhat restless and uneasy; but I shall be surprized, if we, who have so long and so successfully opposed tyranny and oppression, should all on a sudden lose every desire of retaining our liberties. I am forced into this remark by the artful, cunning and designing manner in which some men talk of a reconciliation with Great-Britain; and the bug-bears they conjure up to frighten the timid, irresolute and ignorant, from a steady prosecution of those means, which

alone can help us in our present circumstances. Facts bear evidence from the beginning of the contest that every scheme they ever recommended has, upon trial, proved inadequate to the end for which it was intended; yet they proceed. Beware of such men, they love neither their country, nor their liberties, so much as something else.

There are many I doubt not who are denominated Tories, <sup>tories</sup> by the more zealous Whigs, <sup>whigs</sup> who in their hearts wish success to our measures, tho' they may be chagrined because those they proposed did not go down with the people; these are uniform and not very dangerous; but there are others, who under the cloke of friendship for the cause, harbour the bitterest rancour and malice in their hearts. These talk favourably in general, though their discourses mostly terminate with a doubt, suspicion, or but, which give those with whom they converse, reason to

- 57 -

dread some hidden design, or approaching evil, which most men have not properly attended to. They artfully recal your attention to a certain period, when all was peace and quietness, and by pathetically lamenting the unhappy alteration, endeavour to impress your minds with an opinion that all our troubles arose from ourselves. They carefully avoid mentioning the iniquitous measures of the British government which produced them, and by keeping those out of sight, they gradually lead the unwary into the belief, that the men who have been most active on the present occasion in opposing the tyrannical proceedings of Great-Britain, and who have hazarded their all in defence of their country, have been actuated by sinister motives in all they have done. If every man who hears such insinuations were to ask those who cast them out, what measures have not the men they condemn tried at one time or another to avoid the present contest, and save our liberties? What advantages can they reap by a successful end of it, which every freeman on the continent will not reap equally with them? And in an unsuccessful close of it, all will allow they must be the greatest sufferers. Their lives must go, let who will else escape. These questions might recal them to facts, and these facts would enable men ### judge aright.

Honesty could not stand the force of a few pertinent questions, but these men have taken their leave of it, and like Manasseh of old, <sup>manasseh</sup> have sold themselves to do wickedly. Were it not so, could it be possible for them in the face of the sun, to charge all our troubles on the New-England Presbyterians, troubles which originally began, and have all along been kept up by a wicked administration and a venal parliament. To make them the hatchers of mischiefs occasioned by unconstitutional acts of parliament, and the only fomenters of our just opposition with a Pennsylvanian Quaker, a Maryland and a Virginian Churchman, <sup>usualsuspects</sup> did more to effect than all the other men on the continent put together, is cruelty in the extreme. My heart bleeds when I think of such men; who would sell the whole continent and all the blood on it for private advantage, and with whom a few thousand guineas with a title would be esteemed an equivalent for the lives, liberty and property of the freemen of a colony. May that God who sees how little they can gain, if successful, open their eyes and turn their hearts, e'er they be convinced by fatal experience, that he who purchases the whole world at the price of his soul, is a very unwise dealer,

- 58 -

and makes but a poor bargain in the end. If the calls of virtue, the precepts of religion, and dictates of patriotism cannot awaken them to a sense of their duty, yet Norfolk might open their eyes. But let them do as they please, we ought to act wisely. If we do not make such a settlement now as will secure the privileges we contend for to posterity, we entail either slavery or a civil war on our children. This is certain, let what



will be doubtful. Look round you then, view your offspring, and tell me, are you willing to leave them such a legacy? Do not trifle on this occasion, all your other legacies must derive their true value from the part you now take in this contest. Think not that the God who charges him with worse than infidelity who provides not for his own, and those of his household, will justify you in returning to the state you were in when our troubles began, and thereby delivering over your offspring to the mischievous machinations of a power that from the beginning has set right, justice, and mercy at defiance, and in all her deliberations considered nothing but her ability to execute.

Look to the year 1763, that happy period, as many so fondly call it, and see what safety there is to America in such a situation. Lord North, <sup>north</sup> has said, "If that is all they want, we are agreed;" and the saying pleases many of you. His Lordship, like others, who have learned wisdom by experience, wishes to have all to begin again believing that he could more easily effect his purpose by other means than those he is at present pursuing. Swallow the bait and you are undone forever.

Can any man in his senses believe, that he who has so long, and so invariably pursued his point against the sense of the best men in the nation, will finally desert his master's most favourite scheme so easily? Has he uttered a single syllable that can make the most credulous believe that he is convinced of the injustice of his conduct? He confesses he was deceived; but wherein lay the deception? In believing that fewer troops would effect a submission than he is now convinced must be employed. Here lay the deception he complains of, and he is therefore determined to send his terms with such an armed force, as he expects will frighten you into a compliance. Does this look like the conduct of one who designs to relinquish his claims? Were he or his master sensible of the injustice of their proceedings and the wrongs they have done us, they would both speak a very different language. Why does he call you rebels? Why call in foreign troops to his aid? Why does his master lament so

- 59 -

pathetically, that the extensive operations of the war he means to carry on against you, will exhaust his funds and increase the public debts, while he has not a single tear to shed, not a groan, nor as much as a sigh for all the blood he has already spilt, and yet means to spill, if he wishes to allow you security to your privileges? Oh! George! The day thou utterdst that sentiment in the face of the sun, thou gavest up all title to humanity.

Among the many unavoidable ill consequences of this rebellion, none affects me more sensibly, says the King, than the extraordinary burthen it must create to my faithful subjects.

"Most humane Prince! most pious Sovereign! most affectionate father of thy people! an addition to thy British subjects burthens to obtain a most unrighteous purpose of thy own, affects thee in order to reconcile them to the bearing of it; but to spill the blood of thy oppressed American subjects disturbs not thy guiltless conscience! Let me tell thee, O King, that there is a God who sees through the veil that covers thy deceit, and who hears the cry of the needy, and regards the prayer of the distressed, who will recompence vengeance on the wicked, though supported by the power of Great Britain. Our weakness is sufficient in his hands for the purpose, If thine and thy ministers are not evil against us, why didst thou not hearken to the repeated prayers of thy distressed subjects in America? Why dost thou not recal thy troops, repeal the acts, indemnify us for what we have suffered, and offer any further security to our rights, which we may think necessary? Thou beganst the attack, and this is thy duty; besides, thou hast an obedient parliament, which disputes not thy will, and all this is in thy power, and in no one's else."

Had the King made a speech to the house recommending these things, he would have given unequivocal proof of his honest intentions, and it might justly be termed gracious. But who can trust a Prince, who while he speaks the language of peace and humanity with his lips, has nothing but cruelty and war in his conduct. The man who does, may have the innocence of the dove, but he cannot be possessed of the wisdom of the serpent. I conclude by entreating you, that as you love your children, and their happiness, you never desert your present opposition, until you obtain such a plan of constitutional vigour, as shall put it at all times in your power to secure yourselves and your descendants from tyrannical encroachments. This you never had, nor never can have, on the plan of your

- 60 -

former dependance. Remember, I call the Deity to witness, that I have warned you against destroying your offspring, and prayed you to be on your guard against the snares of the insidious. May he who acts from a principle of humanity and benevolence to mankind finally meet with success, and may the schemes of hypocrites be blasted.

A Friend to Posterity and Mankind.

To the Right Honourable Lord DARTMOUTH, Secretary  
of State for AMERICA.  
Philadelphia, Jan. 1. 1776.

My Lord, <sup>dartmouth</sup>

YOU are the minister of the American department. You have the character of a religious man, a rare virtue in a modern statesman. It has become my duty and interest to address you, on the present circumstances of affairs in America. I know the Americans well; their strongest and ruling passion was their affection to their mother country; the honour, the glory of Great Britain they esteemed as their greatest happiness; a large portion of the same affection remains; nothing but repeated injuries and injustice could have lessened it. My Lord, from a wanton and avaricious exercise of power, the ministry of Great Britain have heaped injuries on the heads of the Americans, that no one period of history can parallel.

The practice of the Egyptians in smothering the children of the Israelites in the birth, <sup>exodus</sup> the swords of Cortez and Pizarro, <sup>cortez</sup> who slew millions of innocent Mixicans and Peruvians, the dreadful famine, <sup>eastindia</sup> brought by the East India Company upon the poor East-Indians must all be brought into one scale, to serve as any sort of balance to the system of desolation, that you and your brother ministers, are meditating and daily practising against the unhappy people of North America.

The elements, which the providence of God hath given for all his creatures, you have the presumption to deprive them of, Fire, sword, famine, and desolation, shew the vicinity of your fleets and armies; children and servants are animated to rise and slaughter their benefactors. No species of cruelty, which the wit or malice of man or devile could advise, but are practised against the Americans.

- 61 -

Do you believe in God, my Lord, and direct these things? Do you believe that God made America as well as Great Britain? If you do, ponder, consider well; what answer you will give if you escape punishment in this world, when you come to be questioned before the Throne of God, for the destruction you have made of his creatures, the work of his hands, to whom he granted life and liberty, earth, air and water equally as to yourself: and yet presumptuous man, you have dared to counteract his providence! Have you conscience my Lord? If you have, I would not for the empire of a thousand worlds be Lord Dartmouth? But, my Lord, it is not to awaken your conscience only that I write you this letter: the flame of civil war, by your management, hath extended far and wide in America; battles have been fought, numbers have been slain, and prisoners taken on both sides; the Americans have in their possession ten for one, and among them many men of rank, Prescot, <sup>prescott</sup> Preston, <sup>preston</sup> Stopford, <sup>stopford</sup> and others; they are all treated with tenderness and regard, while the prisoners you have taken are treated with severity, carried to England in irons, there, as it is said, to be tried, and of course condemned and executed, or in other words, under form of law murdered!

My Lord, if there be any thing on earth or in heaven that you respect, avoid that rock—You have Col. Allen, <sup>allen</sup> Capt. Martindale, <sup>martindale</sup> and some other prisoners—the hour that it is known here that any of those prisoners are executed, the prisoners here will be sacrificed—nay more, every English and Scots adherent;—dread, shun, and for ever abandon such murderous intentions.—The cries and vengeance of all the relations of those whose blood shall be shed in this manner will surround you, death and horror will be your constant companions, and the torments of the damned, even on earth, will await you.

My Lord, this is but the beginning of sorrows. Take in good part what I write. It is truth, and intended for the benefit of Britain and America.

AN ENGLISH AMERICAN.

## Observations on LORD NORTH'S Conciliatory PLAN.

I CANNOT, <sup>conciliatoryplan</sup> recal an idea to my mind more amazingly absurd and stupid than the idea of Lord North's second attempt to gull the Colonists into a belief of his inclination to hold out to them terms of a safe and amicable reconciliation with Great Britain. No one is ignorant that the Americans have offered

- 62 -

every thing that can possibly be devised to bury the injurious and enslaving claims of administration, in perpetual oblivion, and leave matters on the same footing they were before the pretence was held up. Those generous proposals, however often repeated, have as often been rejected with an insolent contempt, and yet the profound politician tells his opponents in the British House of Commons, that he is heartily inclined to a reconciliation with the Colonies, and willing to put them in the situation they so passionately desire; that is, says he, to a courtier demanding explanation, in a state of absolute dependance on the British Parliament in all cases whatsoever; for, says his Lordship, they were unquestionably thus dependant in 1763. Had his Lordship entirely forgot the success of his former experiment, perhaps a trial of the same wretched trick over again, might have appeared less ridiculous. I may indeed say, less insulting to the lowest understanding. I would ask the most credulous votary for making up the dispute, what possible grounds they perceive to found their expectation of a permanent reconciliation upon? Has any thing lately turned up, which has indicated a change of disposition in the Prince or his favourites? Can a majority, which have been secured from one seven years to another, by pure force of corruption, be depended on to remain firm to a slaughtering, plundering and desolating court, and share the detestation of present and future ages, for mere nothing? Has the court resolved to cast Bernard, Hutchinson and daughter, Richardson the Murderer, crazy John Malcom, and Richardson the recent volunteer, <sup>murderers</sup> out on the common? I tell you, nay! You have a fresh instance of the firmness of the cabinet, in adding another three thousand pound pensioner to the list, in a conjuncture, when all mankind will confess there is need of saving. These burthensome pensions must come from some part of the dominions! If Great-Britain and Ireland have conceived such a mortal hatred to America, that they can hug her most inveterate enemies in their bosoms, and vote them such munificent rewards for drawher into so destructive a civil war, we cannot be safe in the power of such enemies. If they abound in resources as largely as Mr. Wedderburne, <sup>wedderburne</sup> and others boast they do, let them cease complaining of their poverty, and contentedly discharge their own national debt, rather than go on augmenting it, by their efforts to saddle it, with an unlimited pension list, on America. Does the nation bear the weight of the present unnatural quarrel with America on other terms, than a firm assurance of the Court,

- 63 -

that millions of leading men's dependants shall be provided for in America, for whom places can by no means be found at home. Is not the very genius of the people of Great-Britain and Ireland corrupted, insomuch, that the views of young fellows of education, or any connection with men of note, are altogether set on public money? Can our peaceable men indulge a gleam of hope, that this humour will alter, or that youths, bred in idleness and dissipation, will become industrious and difinterested patriots? If not they must then be so weak as to conceit, that ministers will become less fond of fingering the public money, and securing themselves in places of power and profit by means of it; indeed, that they will become more honest and saving of the national money than those the constitution has appointed as a check upon them. It is no wonder they tell of sending a formidable fleet and army to bring over terms of reconciliation, when they are in no one article different from the terms they first aimed to impose. Had the minister, or more properly

the obstinate author of all our troubles, had the remotest idea of favouring us with a government of laws, which had any respect to the security of our lives and properties, he had long since granted with a good grace, petitions, made and repeated with the most dutiful and persevering affection, which asked for nothing more! Sed aut Caesar aut nullus,<sup>caesar</sup> seems the unalterable determination of the man, who soothed our already elated expectations, by an inaugural declaration, that he gloried in the name of Briton, at that time, a distinctive characteristic of the patrons of universal liberty. If therefore the whole body of the governing, and influential part of the governed in Great Britain, be unalterably set upon extorting tribute from the Colonies; and the better to secure the laws, and executors of those laws, dependant only on themselves for appointment, continuance and support; and all these to be extended at their sole pleasure, it may readily be determined in what condition, the absolutely passive subjects of such an unnatural usurpation would quickly be. It is evident they have concluded on two things, viz. to make a bold push for our entire subjection, as their ends would be thereby more readily answered; but that being found impracticable, we are to be tried with negociation, in which all the craft, duplicity and punic faith of administration is to be expected. Pray God it may be wisely and firmly guarded against! The worthy and honourable John Collins, Esq;<sup>collins</sup> of New-Port, Rhode Island, on the arrival of Lord North's last conciliatory plan, observed, that notwithstanding the exposure of his large estate, to whatever depredations the enemy saw fit

- 64 -

to make upon it, he was more concerned for the probable success of their arts than arms. Had the Americans in general the wisdom and firmness of that gentleman, matters would not have come to the present melancholy lengths we find them. However, in the great and general plan of him who putteth down and setteth up states, this is doubtless an indispensable part, and therefore not to be complained of; but it has amazed me to contemplate the numerous instances of disappointment our enemies have met with, in every plot they have laid for our destruction. How did Bernard and Hutchinson flatter themselves with the number of friends they had in the several towns of the Massachusetts, and thought that a very trifling force, from the other side of the water, added to their minions, dependants and expectants, would crush a little turbulent faction, who disturbed their darling measures? Certainly men intoxicated with a lust of absolute power found something in the appearance of things to tole them on to an object so grateful to their fondest wishes; otherwise they would have been contented to augment and confirm their power by such unperceived degrees that the happy days many tell us we have enjoyed under a continual invading usurpation, would not yet have been so sensibly interrupted. No less has the so often extolled Gov. Tryon been disappointed in his benevolent intentions respecting New-York. His band on Long-Island, and the east side of Hudson's river, with Sir John Johnson among his vassals, gave great hopes of having matters in a fine train before the invincible armada arrived in the spring; instead of which, it is probable the active General Lee will so sortify that place, that all the force they can send against it, will be insufficient to reduce it. Dunmore, with all his wanton ravage, has done little more than exasperate the Virginians, and convinced that brave colony, that they can be formidable to savages on the east, as well as west side of their dominion. Carleton's Canadians make no such figure in the harrangues of the pensioner as they did last year; and in case foreigners are to be procured to be poured in upon us, the greatest opposers of our total seperation from Britain acknowledge, they would then no longer defer a declaration of independancy, and application to other powers for their protection. To this the whole scene appears rapidly advancing, in my view, as hastily as infinite wisdom thinks proper to conduct it; and if this be his most gracious design, he will work, and none shall hinder. Amen, Beneficent Jehovah! Amen. Sic sperat,<sup>sperat</sup>

SINCERUS,<sup>sincerus</sup>

## APPENDIX to COMMON SENSE.

### The Necessity of INDEPENDANCY.

SINCE the publication of the first edition of this pamphlet, or rather on the same day on which it came out, the King's Speech made its appearance in this city. Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of this production, it could not have brought it forth at a more seasonable juncture, or a more necessary time. The bloody mindedness of the one, shews the necessity of pursuing the doctrine of the other. Men read by way of revenge. And the Speech, instead of terrifying, prepared a way for the manly principles of Independance.

Ceremony, and even silence, from whatever motive they may arise, have a hurtful tendency, when they give the least degree of countenance to base and wicked performances! wherefore if this maxim be admitted, it naturally follows, that the King's Speech, as being a piece of finished villainy, deserved, and still deserves, a general execration, both by the Congress and the people. Yet, as the domestic tranquility of a nation depends greatly on the chastity of what may properly be called NATIONAL MANNERS, it is often better, to pass some things over in silent disdain, than to make use of such new methods of dislike, as might introduce the least innovation on that guardian of our peace and safety. And perhaps, it is chiefly owing to this prudent delicacy, that the King's Speech hath not, before now, suffered a public execution. The speech, if it may be called one, is nothing better than a wilful audacious libel against the truth, the common good, and the existence of mankind; and is a formal and pompous method of offering up human sacrifices to the pride of tyrants. But this general massacre of mankind, is one of the privileges, and the certain consequence of Kings; for as nature knows them not, they know not her, and although they are beings of our own creating, they know not us, and are become the gods of their creators. The speech hath one good quality, which is, that it is not calculated to deceive, neither can we, even if we would, be deceived by it. Brutality and tyranny appear on the face of it. It leaves us at no loss: And every line convinces, even in the moment of reading, that he, who hunts the wood for prey, the naked and untutored Indian, is less a Savage than the King of Britain.

Sir John Dalrymple,<sup>dalrymple</sup> the putative father of a whining jesuitical,<sup>jesuit</sup> piece, fallaciously called, "The address of the people of England, to the Inhabitants of America," hath, perhaps, from a vain supposition, that the people here were to be frightened at the pomp and description of a king, giving, (though very unwisely on his part) the real character of the present one: "But," says the writer, "if you are inclined to pay compliments to an administration which we do not complain of, (meaning the Marquis of Rockingham's,<sup>marquis</sup> at the repeal of the Stamp act,) it is very unfair in you to withhold them from that prince by whose NOD ALONE, they were permitted to do any thing." This is toryism with a witness! Here is idolatry even without a mask: And he who can calmly hear and digest such doctrine, hath forfeited his claim to rationality—an apostate from the order of manhood, and ought to be considered—as one, who hath not only given up the proper dignity of man, but sunk himself beneath the rank of animals, and contemptibly crawl through the world like a worm.

However, it matters very little now, what the king of England either says or does; he hath wickedly broken through every moral and human obligation, trampled nature and conscience beneath his feet; and by a steady

and constitutional spirit of insolence and cruelty, procured for himself an universal hatred. It is now the interest of America to provide for herself, She hath already a large and young family, whom it is more her duty to take care of, than to be granting away her property to support a power who is become a reproach to the names of men and christians. YE, whose office it is to watch over the morals of a nation, of whatsoever sect or denomination ye are, as well as ye, who are more immediately the guardians of the public liberty, if ye wish to preserve your native country uncontaminated by European corruption, ye must in secret wish a seperation—But leaving the moral part to private reflection, I shall chiefly confine my farther remarks to the following heads:

First, That it is the interest of America to be seperated from Britain.

Secondly, Which is the easiest and most practicable plan, reconciliation or independance? with some occasional remarks.

In support of the first, I could, if I judged it proper, produce the opinion of some of the ablest and most experienced men on this continent; and whose sentiments, on that head, are not yet publicly known. It is in reality a self-evident position: For no nation, in a state of foreign dependance, limited in its commerce, and cramped and fettered in its legislative powers, can ever

- 67 -

arrive at any material eminence. America doth not yet know what opulence is; and although the progress which she hath made, stands unparalleled in the history of other nations, it is but childhood, compared with what she would be capable of arriving at, had she, as she ought to have, the legislative powers in her own hands. England is, at this time, proudly coveting what would do her no good, were she to accomplish it; and the continent hesitating on a matter, which will be her final ruin if neglected. It is the commerce, and not the conquest of America, by which England is to be benefited, and that would in a great measure continue, were the countries as independant of each other as France and Spain; because in many articles, neither can go to a better market. But it is the independance of this country on Britain or any other, which is now the main and only object worthy of contention, and which, like all other truths discovered by necessity, will appear clearer and stronger every day.

First. Because it will come to that one time or other.

Secondly. Because the longer it is delayed, the harder it will be to accomplish.

I have frequently amused myself both in public and private companies, with silently remarking the specious errors of those who speak without reflecting. And among the many which I have heard, the following seems the most general, viz. that had this rupture happened forty or fifty years hence, instead of now, the Continent would have been more able to have shaken off the dependance. To which I reply, that our military ability at this time, arises from the experience gained in the late war, and which in forty or fifty years time, would have been totally extinct. The Continent would not, by that time, have had a General, or even a military officer left; and we, or those who may succeed us, would have been as ignorant of martial matters as the ancient Indians: And this single position, closely attended to, will unanswerably prove, that the present time is preferable to all others: The argument turns thus: At the conclusion of the last war, we had experience, but wanted numbers; and forty or fifty years hence, we should have numbers, without experience; wherefore, the proper point of time must be some particular point between the two extremes, in which a sufficiency of the former remains, and a proper encrease of the latter is obtained: And that point of time is the present time.



The reader will pardon this digression, as it does not properly come under the head I first set out with, and to which I again return by the following position, viz.

- 68 -

Should affairs be patched up with Britain, and she to remain the governing and sovereign power of America, (which as matters are now circumstanced, is giving up the point entirely) we shall deprive ourselves of the very means of sinking the debt we have, or may contract. The value of the back lands, which some of the provinces are clandestinely deprived of, by the unjust extention of the limits of Canada, valued only at five pounds sterling per hundred acres, amount to upwards of twenty five millions, Pennsylvania currency; and the quit-rents at one penny sterling per acre, to two millions yearly.

It is by the sale of those lands, that the debt may be sunk, without burthen to any, and the quit rent reserved thereon, will always lessen, and in time will wholly support the yearly expence of government. It matters not how long the debt is in paying, so that the lands when sold, be applied to the discharge of it, and for the execution of which, the Congress for the time being, will be the continental trustees.

I proceed now to the second head, viz. Which is the easiest and most practicable plan, Reconciliation or Independance; with some occasional remarks.

He who takes nature for his guide, is not easily beaten out of his argument, and on that ground, I answer generally, That Independance being a single simple line, contained within ourselves; and reconciliation, a matter exceedingly perplexed and complicated, and in which, a treacherous capricious court is to interfere, gives the answer without a doubt.

The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of reflection. Without law, without government, without any other mode of power than what is founded on, and granted by courtesy. Held together by an unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which, is nevertheless subject to change, and which, every secret enemy is endeavouring to dissolve. Our present condition, is, Legislation without law, wisdom without a plan; a constitution without a name; and, what is strangely astonishing, perfect Independance contending for dependance. The instance is without a precedent; the case never existed before; and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced system of things. The mind of the multitude is left at random, and seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion starts. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason; wherefore, every one thinks himself at liberty to act [as he pleases. The Tories would not have dared to

- 69 -

assemble offensively, had they known that their lives, by that act, were forfeited to the laws of the state. A line of distinction should be drawn, between English soldiers taken in battle, and inhabitants of America taken in arms. The first are prisoners, but the latter traitors. The one forfeits his liberty, the other his head.

Notwithstanding our wisdom, there is a visible feebleness in some of our proceedings, which gives encouragement to dissentions. The Continental Belt is too loosely buckled. And if something is not done in time, it will be too late to do any thing, and we shall fall into a state in which, neither Reconciliation nor Independance will be practicable. The king and his worthless adherents are got at the old game of dividing the Continent, and there are not wanting among us, Printers, who will be busy in spreading specious falsehoods. The artful and hypocritical letter, which appeared a few months ago, in two of the New-York papers, and likewise in two others, is an evidence, that there are men who want either judgment or honesty.

It is easy getting into holes and corners, and talking of reconciliation: But do such men seriously consider; how difficult the task is, and how dangerous it may prove, should the Continent divide thereon. Do they take within their view, all the various orders of men, whose situation and circumstances, as well as their own, are to be considered therein. Do they put themselves in the place of the sufferer, whose all is already gone, and of the soldier, who hath quitted all for the defence of his country. If their ill-judged moderation be suited to their own private situations only, regardless of others, the event will convince them, that "they are reckoning without their host."

Put us, say some, upon the footing we were on in sixty-three: To which I answer, the request is not now in the power of Britain to comply with, neither will she propose it; but if it were, and even should be granted, I ask, as a reasonable question, By what means is such a corrupt and faithless court to be kept to its engagements? Another parliament, nay, even the present, may hereafter repeal the obligation, on the pretence of its being violently obtained, or unwisely granted; and in that case, Where is our redress?—No going to law with nations; cannon are the barristers of crowns; and the sword, not of justice, but of war decides the suit. To be on the footing of sixty-three, it is not sufficient, that the laws only be put on the same state; but that our circumstances, likewise be put on the same state; our burnt and destroyed towns repaired or built up, our private losses made good, our public debts (contracted for defence) discharged;

- 70 -

otherwise we shall be millions worse than we were at that enviable period. Such a request, had it been complied with a year ago, would have won the heart and soul of the Continent, but now it is too late. "The Rubicon is passed."

Besides, the taking up arms, merely to enforce the repeal of a pecuniary law, seems as unwarrantable by the divine law, and as repugnant to human feelings, as the taking up arms to enforce the obedience thereto. The object, on either side, doth not justify the means; for the lives of men are too valuable, to be cast away on such trifles. It is the violence which is done and threatened to our persons; the destruction of our property by an armed force; the invasion of our country by fire and sword, which conscientiously qualifies the use of arms: And the instant, in which such a mode of defence became necessary, all subjection to Britain ought to have ceased; and the independancy of America, should have been considered, as dating its aera from, and published by, the first musket that was fired against her. This line is a line of consistency; neither drawn by caprice, nor extended by ambition; but produced by a chain of events, of which the colonies were not the authors.

I shall conclude these remarks, with the following timely and well intended hint. We ought to reflect, that there are three different ways, by which an independancy may hereafter be effected; and that one of those three, will one day or other, be the fate of America, viz. By the legal voice of the people in Congress; by a military power; or by a mob: It may not always happen that our soldiers are citizens, and the multitude a body of reasonable men; vertue, as I have already remarked, is not hereditary, neither is it perpetual. Should an independancy be brought about by the first of those means, we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birth day of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their portion of freedom from the event of a few months. The reflection is awful and in this point of view, how trifling, how ridiculous, do the little paltry cavillings, of a few weak or interested men appear, when weighed against the business of a world.

Should we neglect the present favourable and inviting period, and an independance be hereafter effected by other means, we must charge the consequence to ourselves, or to those rather,

- 71 -

whose narrow and perjudiced souls, are habitually opposing the sures, without either inquiring or reflecting. There are reasons to be given in support of independance, which men should rather privately think of, than be publickly told of. We ought not now to be debating whether we shall be independant or not, but, anxious to accomplish it on a firm secure, and honorable basis, and uneasy rather that it is not yet began upon. Every day convinces us of its necessity. Even the Tories (if such beings yet remain among us) should, of all men, be the most solicitous to promote it; for as the appointment of committees at first, protected them from popular rage, so, a wise and well established form of government, will be the only certain means of continuing it securely to them. Wherefore, if they have not virtue enough to be WHIGS, they ought to have prudence enough to wish for Independance.

In short, Independance is the only BOND that can tye and keep us together. We shall then see our object, and our ears will be legally shut against the schemes of an intriguing, as well as a cruel enemy. We shall then too be on a proper footing to treat with Britain; for there is reason to conclude, that the pride of that court will be less hurt by treating with the American states for terms of peace, than with those she denominates "rebellious subjects," for terms of accommodation. It is our delaying it that encourages her to hope for conquest, and our backwardness tends only to prolong the war. As we have, without any good effect therefrom, withheld our trade to obtain a redress of our grievances, let us now try the alternative, by independantly redressing them ourselves, and then offering to open the trade. The mercantile and reasonable part in England will be still with us; because, peace with trade, is preferable to war without it. And if this offer is not accepted, other courts may be applied to. On these grounds I rest the matter. And as no offer hath yet been made to refute the doctrine contained in the former editions of this pamphlet, it is a negative proof, that either the doctrine cannot be refuted, or, that the party in favour of it are too numerous to be opposed. Wherefore, instead of gazing at each other with suspicious or doubtful curiosity, let each of us hold out to his neighbour the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing, a line, which, like an act of oblivion, shall bury in forgetfulness every former dissention. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be beard among us, than those of a good citizen, an open and resolute friend, and a virtuous supporter of the rights of mankind and of the free and independant states of America.

To the Representatives of the Religious Society of the People called Quakers, or to so many of them as were concerned in publishing a late piece, entitled The ANCIENT TESTIMONY and PRINCIPLES of the People called QUAKERS renewed, with Respect to the KING and GOVERNMENT, and touching the COMMOTIONS now prevailing in these and other parts of AMERICA, addressed to the People in General.

THE Writer of this, is one of those few, who never dishonors religion either by ridiculing, or cavilling at any denomination whatsoever. To God and not to man, are all men accountable on the score of religion. Wherefore, this epistle is not so properly addressed to you as a religious, but as a political body, dabbling in matters, which the professed Quietude of your Principles, [quakerprinciples](#) instruct you not to meddle with.

As you have, without a proper authority for so doing, put yourselves in the place of the whole body of the Quakers, so, the writer of this, in order to be on an equal rank with yourselves, is under the necessity of putting himself in the place of all those, who approve the very writings and principles, against which, your testimony is directed: And he hath chosen this singular situation, in order, that you might discover in him that presumption of character which you cannot see in yourselves. For neither he nor you can have any claim or title to Political Representation.

When men have departed from the right way, it is no wonder that they stumble and fall. And it is evident from the manner in which ye have managed your testimony, that politics, (as a religious body of men) is not your proper Walk; for however well adapted it might appear to you, it is, nevertheless, a jumble of good and bad put unwisely together, and the conclusion drawn therefrom, both unnatural and unjust.

The two first pages, (and the whole doth not make four) we give you credit for, and expect the same civility from you, because the love and desire of peace is not confined to Quakerism, it is the natural, as well as, the religious wish of all denominations of men. And on this ground, as men laboring to establish an Independant Constitution of our own, do we exceed all others in our hope, end, and aim. Our plan is peace forever. We are tired of contention with Britain, and can see no real end to it but in a final seperation. We act consistently, because for the sake of introducing an endless and uninterrupted peace, do we

- 73 -

bear the evils and burthens of the present day. We are endeavouring, and will still continue to endeavour, to seperate and dissolve a connection which hath already filled our land with blood; and which, while the name of it remains, will be the fatal cause of future mischiefs to both countries.

We fight neither for revenge nor conquest; neither from pride nor passion; we are not insulting the world with our fleets and armies, nor ravaging the globe for plunder. Beneath the shade of our own vines are we attacked; in our own houses, and on our own lands, is the violence committed against us. We view our enemies in the character of highway men and house-breakers, and having no defence for ourselves in the civil law, are obliged to punish them by the military one, and apply the sword, in the very case, where you have before now applied the halter—Perhaps we feel for the ruined and insulted sufferers in all and every part of the Continent, with a degree of tenderness which hath not yet made its way into some of your

bosoms. But be ye sure that ye mistake not the cause and ground of your testimony. Call not coldness of soul, religion; nor put the Bigot in the place of the Christian.

O ye partial ministers of your own acknowledged principles. If the bearing arms be sinful, the first going to war must be more so, by all the difference between wilful attack and unavoidable defence. Wherefore, if ye really preach from conscience, and mean not to make a political hobby-horse of your religion, convince the world thereof by proclaiming your doctrine to our enemies, for they likewise bear arms. Give us proof of your sincerity by publishing it at St. James's,<sup>stjames</sup> to the Commanders in chief at Boston, to the Admirals and Captains who are piratically ravaging our coasts, and to all the murdering miscreants who are acting in authority under Him whom ye profess to serve. Had ye the honest soul of\* BARCLAY,<sup>barclay</sup> ye would preach repentance to

- 74 -

your king: Ye would tell the Royal Wretch his sins, and warn him of eternal ruin. Ye would not spend your partial invectives against the injured and insulted only, but, like faithful ministers, would cry aloud and spare none. Say not that ye are persecuted, neither endeavour to make us the authors of that reproach which ye are bringing on yourselves; for we testify unto all men, that we do not complain against you because ye are Quakers, but because ye pretend to be and are not Quakers.

Alas! it seems by the particular tendency of some part of your testimony, and other parts of your conduct, as if, all sin was reduced to, and comprehended in, the act of bearing arms, and that by the people only. Ye appear to have mistaken party for conscience; because the general tenor of your actions wants uniformity: and it is exceedingly difficult to give credit to many of your pretended scruples; because, we see them made by the same men, who, in the very instant that they are exclaiming against the mammon of this world, are nevertheless hunting after it with a step as steady as Time, and an appetite as keen as Death.

The quotation which ye have made from Proverbs, in the third page of your testimony, that,

when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,<sup>proverbs16</sup>

is very unwisely chosen on your part; because, it amounts to a proof, that the king's ways (whom ye are so desirous of supporting) do not please the Lord, otherwise, his reign would be in peace.

I now proceed to the latter part of your testimony and that, for which all the foregoing seems only an introduction, viz.

"It hath ever been our judgment and principle, since we were called to profess the light of Christ Jesus, manifested in our consciences unto this day, that the setting up and putting down kings and governments, is God's peculiar prerogative; for causes best known to himself: And that it is not our business to have any hand or contrivance therein; nor to be busy-bodies above our station, much less to plot and contrive the ruin or overturn of any of them, but to pray for the king, and safety of our nation, and good of all men: That we may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty; under the government which God is pleased to set over us"—If these are really your principles why do you not abide by them? Why do you not leave that, which ye call God's Work, to be managed by himself? These very principles instruct you to wait with patience and humility, for the event of all public measures, and to receive that event as

- 75 -

the divine will towards you. Wherefore, what occasion is there for your political testimony, if you fully believe what it contains? And the very publishing it proves, that either; ye do not believe what ye profess, or have not virtue enough to practice what ye believe.

The principles of Quakerism have a direct tendency to make a man the quiet and inoffensive subject of any, and every government which is set over him. And if the setting up and pulling down of kings and governments is God's peculiar prerogative, he most certainly will not be robbed thereof by us; wherefore, the principle itself leads you to approve of every thing, which ever happened, or may happen to kings, as being his work. Oliver Cromwell, <sup>cromwell</sup> thanks you. Charles, then, died not by the hands of man; and should the present proud imitators of him, come to the same untimely end, the writers and publishers of the testimony, are bound by the doctrine it contains to applaud the fact. Kings are not taken away by miracles, neither are changes in governments brought about by any other means than such as are common and human; and such as we are now using. Even the dispersion of the Jews, though foretold by our Saviour, was effected by arms. Wherefore, as you refuse to be the means on one side, ye ought not to be meddlers on the other; but to wait the issue in silence? and unless ye can produce divine authority, to prove, that the Almighty who created and placed this new world at the greatest distance it could possibly stand, east and west, from every part of the old, doth, nevertheless, disapprove of its being independant of the corrupt and abandoned court of Britain, unless, I say, ye can shew this, how can ye on the ground of your principles, justify the exciting and stirring up the people

firmly to unite in the abhorrence of all such writings, and measures, as evidence a desire and design to break off the happy connexion we have hitherto enjoyed, with the kingdom of Great-Britain, and our just and necessary subordination to the king, and those who are lawfully placed in authority under him.

What a slap of the face is here! The men, who in the very paragraph before, have quietly and passively resigned up the ordering, altering, and disposal of kings and governments into the hands of God, are now recalling their principles, and putting in for a share of the business. Is it possible, that the conclusion, which is here justly quoted, can any way follow from the doctrines laid down? The inconsistency is too glaring not to be seen; the absurdity too great not to be laughed at; and such as could only have been

- 76 -

made by those, whose understandings were darkened by the narrow and crabbed spirit of a despairing political party; for ye are not to be considered as the whole body of the Quakers, but only as a factional and fractional part thereof.

Here ends the examination of your testimony; (which I call upon no man to abhor, as ye have done, but only to read and judge of fairly) to which I subjoin the following remark;

that the setting up and putting down of kings,, <sup>daniel2</sup>

most certainly mean, the making him a king, who is yet not so, and the making him no king who is already one. And pray what has this to do in the present case? We neither mean to set up nor to pull down, neither to make nor to unmake, but to have nothing to do with them. Wherefore, your testimony in whatever light it is viewed, serves only to dishonor your judgment, and for many other reasons had better been let alone than published.

First, Because it tends to the decrease and reproach of all religion whatever, and is of the utmost danger to society, to make it a party in political disputes.

Secondly, Because it exhibits a body of men, numbers of whom disavow the publishing political testimonies, as being concerned therein and approvers thereof.

Thirdly, Because it hath a tendency to undo that Continental harmony and friendship which yourselves by your late liberal and charitable donations hath lent a hand to establish; and the preservation of which, is of the utmost consequence to us all.

And here without anger or resentment I bid you farewell. Sincerely wishing, that as men and christians, ye may alway fully and uninterruptedly enjoy every civil and religious right; and be, in your turn, the means of securing it to others; but that the example which ye have unwisely set, of mingling religion with politics, may be disavowed and reprobated by every inhabitant of America.

## From Entick's Naval History concerning Ship-building.

The charge of building a ship of each rate, and furnishing her with masts, yards, sails and rigging, together with a proportion of eight months boatswain's and carpenter's sea-stores, as calculated by Mr. Burchett, Secretary to the Navy.

And from hence it is easy to sum up the value, or cost rather, of the whole British navy, which in the year 1757, when it was at its greatest glory, consisted of the following ships and guns.





## Footnotes

epigraph The epigraph to *Common Sense* quotes *Liberty* (1734), Part IV, ll. 606-7, by the Scottish poet and playwright [James Thomson](#) (1700-1748). This poem consists of an extended monologue from the 'Goddess of Liberty' as she gives an account of her travels through the ancient world and, later, Britain.

- [AJB]

bell Robert Bell (1732-1784) was a Scottish immigrant to the American Colonies and, later, a prolific printer of revolutionary books and pamphlets in Philadelphia.

- [AJB]

intro

- [AJB]

constitution Generally, the '[Constitution](#)' of the United Kingdom, in the eighteenth century and now, refers not to a single document like the American Constitution, but a collection of statutes, treaties, and judicial decisions. Here, Paine is referring to the so-called '[Magna Carta](#),' the document most often hailed as the earliest document in the English constitutional tradition.

- [AJB]

peers Members of the House of Lords in the British Parliamentary system.

- [AJB]

commons Members of the House of Commons in the other half of the British Parliamentary system.

- [AJB]

locke An overt reference to the highly influential political tract *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), written by the English philosopher [John Locke](#) (1632-1704). Locke argued that in the 'State of Nature,' that is, before the invention of government, all human beings were inherently equal.

- [AJB]

holland The Netherlands maintained an independent republic from its achievement of independence from Spain in 1588 until the early nineteenth century. The Dutch Republic was eventually succeeded by the Kingdom of Holland, a puppet state after the region was conquered by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1806.

- [AJB]

gideon Judges 8:22-23 (KJV): "Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.

I Samuel 8:10-11, 13-18 (KJV): And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots... And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even* the best of *them*, and give *them* to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

- [AJB]

render A quotation from the synoptic Gospels. Matthew 22:15-22, Mark 12:13-17, and Luke 20:20-26.

- [AJB]

david A reference to the narrative of I Samuel, in which the prophet Samuel rebukes king Saul for his wickedness, and announces that he will be succeeded by David.

I Samuel 13:13-14 (KJV): And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou has not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

- [AJB]

muhammad An early spelling for the Prophet Muhammad.

- [AJB]

conquest [The Norman Conquest](#). This was an invasion of the British Isles by the Norman French in the eleventh century, led by William the Conqueror, duke of Normandy. This event is often considered a hallmark in the history of the British monarchy.

- [AJB]

banditti An early spelling for bandit.

- [AJB]

ass A reference to one of *Æsop's Fables*, '[The Ass in the Lion's Skin.](#)'

- [AJB]

glorious [The Glorious Revolution](#). This was a series of events in 1688-9 in which King James II of England, a Catholic, was bloodlessly deposed in favor of William of Orange and his wife Mary, who were Protestant.

- [AJB]

rebellion The precise conflicts to which Paine is alluding are unclear. Key civil conflicts in the English consciousness in this period include the [War of the Roses](#) (1455-1485) and the [English Civil War](#) (1642-16451).

- [AJB]

roses [The War of the Roses](#).

- [AJB]

samuel I Samuel 8:19-20 (KJV): Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

- [AJB]

meredith Sir William Meredith, 3rd Baronet (1725-1790) was a British member of the House of Commons from 1754 to 1780. He was a staunch Whig and prolific writer of pamphlets and political tracts.

- [AJB]

pelham Henry Pelham (1694-1754) was Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1743 to 1754.

- [AJB]

lexington The [Battles of Lexington and Concord](#), traditionally held to mark the beginning of official hostilities between Great Britain and the American Colonies, took place on April 19th, 1775.

- [AJB]

boston From April 1775 to March 1776, the city of Boston, held by the British, was under [seige](#) by the Continental Army.

- [AJB]

denmark Dano-Swedish relations in the eighteenth century were characterized by constant conflict.

- [AJB]

junto An early term for a political faction.

- [AJB]

switzerland From the fourteenth to the late-eighteenth centuries, the various cantons (regions) of Switzerland maintained a republican form of self-government, known as the Old Swiss Confederacy.

- [AJB]

magnacarta Because it was written by the barons of thirteenth-century England to place limits on royal power, the [Magna Carta](#) was often taken to represent a proto-republican tradition in Anglo-American politics.

- [AJB]

dragonetti Giacinto Dragonetti (1738-1818) was an Italian political and economic theorist, best known for his theory that a civil society ought to more readily reward virtuous behavior than punish crimes.

- [AJB]

rewards Dragonetti's 1766 *Trattato delle virtù e dei premi* (A Treatise on Virtues and Rewards) was wildly popular in continental Europe and the Americas. Here Paine is quoting the 1769 English translation.

- [AJB]

massanello [Tomasso Aniello](#) (in Italian, abbreviated as Masaniello) was a Neapolitan fisherman who led a revolt against the Spanish rulers in the Kingdom of Naples in 1647. His brief rule in the city of Naples was famously destructive, and he was eventually assassinated by a group of merchants.

- [AJB]

capdeath Captain William Death was a privateer who served with the British navy during the Seven Years' War. When his ship, the *Terrible* was eventually captured by the French in 1756, only twenty-six men were found aboard.

- [AJB]

pennhouse The Pennsylvania House of Assembly, formed in 1773, was initially controlled by a bloc of eastern counties, a coalition of '[Quaker, German, and commercial interests](#)'(426). Paine uses this to demonstrate the dangers of a republican government with a small number of unequally distributed representatives.

- [AJB]

cornwall [Charles Wolfran Cornwall](#) (1735-1789) was a British member of the House of Commons from 1768 to 1789. He was a staunch defender of royal policy on the harsh treatment of the American colonies.

- [AJB]

prayer Although printed as an addendum to *Common Sense*, Paine is not the author of this text. Furthermore, though titled 'The American Patriot's Prayer,' this text does not even originate from colonial America! [The earliest known appearance of this text](#) is in Nathaniel Whitefield's 1760 *Almanack*.

- [AJB]

humphreys A reference to Charles Inglis' 1776 [tract](#), *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated, in Certain Stictures [sic] on a Pamphlet Intitled [sic] Common Sense. By an American*, published by loyalist James Humphreys in the months following the publication of *Common Sense*.

- [AJB]

quakertown In 1775, the Quakers held a [meeting in Philadelphia](#) in which they proclaimed their neutrality and desire for peace in the rising conflicts between Great Britain and the American colonies, a position that earned them no small amount of suspicion of treason.

- [AJB]

treatyofparis 1763 saw the end of the American theater of the Seven Years War, more commonly known as the French and Indian War, with the Treaty of Paris. As a result of the treaty France ceded Canada to British rule. This, along with the crippling debt that Great Britain accrued over the course of the war, led them to take on a more direct role in the governing of its North American colonies.

- [AJB]

grafton [August Henry Fitzroy, 3rd Duke of Grafton](#) (1735-1811), was a Whig member of the House of Lords and Prime Minister from 1768 to 1770. He supported conciliation and compromise with the American colonists.

- [AJB]

stuart The House of Stuart was deposed from the English throne after a series of events following the conversion of James II to Roman Catholicism. While his daughters, Queen Mary II and Queen Anne, were Protestant, they had no living heirs; after the death of Queen Anne the crown passed to the House of Hanover. The decades following saw the rise of the Jacobites, a political faction that sought the restoration of the House of Stuart to the throne.

- [AJB]

popery An early term referring to Roman Catholicism.

- [AJB]

vincent From 1769 to 1773, the British military engaged in a series of conflicts with the indigenous Caribs on the island of St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles. The conflict ended in a stalemate, with the British military taking portions of the island, but failing to subjugate the indigenous population.

- [AJB]

devatell [Emmerich de Vattel](#) (1714-1767) was a Swiss jurist, best known for his legal treatise *Les Droit des Gens [The Law of Nations]*, a text that influenced the legal thought of many of the figures of the American Revolution.

- [AJB]

hume [David Hume](#) (1711-1776) was a Scottish philosopher whose principles of empiricism, scepticism, and naturalism proved highly influential on the political ideals of the American Revolution.

- [AJB]

commonwealth [John](#)'s essay *Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth* was a political treatise that anticipated many of the principles of the American Revolution, including the separation of powers, extended suffrage, and a decentralized federal government.

- [AJB]

demophilus [Demophilus](#) of Thespieae was a Greek commander who died at the Battle of Thermopylae against the invading Persian Empire. His name translating to 'lover of the people,' Paine's pseudonym here communicates his devotion to democratic ideals and his disdain for monarchy.

- [AJB]

stamp In an effort to recuperate its considerable debts following the French and Indian War, in 1765 the British Parliament instituted the [Stamp Act](#), a direct tax on the sale of various paper goods in the American Colonies. It was met with considerable resistance by American colonists, and was considered an important precursor to later conflicts that culminated in the Revolution.

- [AJB]

matthew<sup>24</sup> quotation of Matthew 24:13.

- [AJB]

tories The Tories were a British political faction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the precursors of modern conservative movements in contemporary British politics. 'Tory' was a common euphemism to refer to Loyalists in the American Revolution, the meaning of Paine's use of the term here.

- [AJB]

whigs The Whigs were the rival political faction to the Tories in eighteenth-century Britain, and the precursors of modern liberal movements in contemporary British politics. Like 'Tory', 'Whig' was used as a euphemism to refer to individuals sympathetic to the American Revolution, the meaning of Paine's use of the term here.

- [AJB]

manasseh Manasseh is the first king of Judah in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Old Testament, frequently condemned for restoring polytheistic worship.

II Kings 2:2-3 (KJV): And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

- [AJB]

usualsusp Quakers, Roman Catholics (primarily concentrated in the state of Maryland), and adherents of the Church of England (concentred in Virginia and the Southern colonies) were more often than not sympathetic to the British cause in the Revolutionary War. Separatist sympathies were more common in the reformed and non-conformist Protestant branches of New England.

- [AJB]

north [Frederick North](#) (1732-1792) was the Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1770 to 1782, leading the country through most of the American Revolution.

- [AJB]

dartmouth [William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth](#) (1731-1801) was the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the British Parliament from 1772 to 1775. Despite his lack of sympathy for colonial autonomy, he strove to achieve reconciliation between the colonies and Great Britain. He resigned from his office when the dispute escalated to armed conflict at the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

- [AJB]



exodus Exodus 1:15-16 (KJV): And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one *was* Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:

And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live.

- [AJB]

cortez [Hernán Cortés](#) and [Francisco Pizarro](#) were Spanish conquistadors, the former responsible for the conquest of the Aztec Empire in Mexico and the latter for the conquest of the Incan Empire in Peru.

- [AJB]

eastindia The Great Bengal Famine of 1770, in part stemming from the East India Company's monopoly and high taxes on grain exports in Bengal and Bihar, resulted in over seven million deaths between 1769 and 1770.

- [AJB]

prescott - [AJB]

preston - [AJB]

stopford - [AJB]

allen [Ethan Allen](#) (1738-1789) was a farmer, frontiersman, and officer in the Continental Army. Best known for his capture of Fort Ticonderoga in 1775, he was imprisoned by the British later that year in an ill-fated attempt to seize Montreal from the British.

- [AJB]

martindale[AJB]

conciliatory In the months leading up to the outbreak of armed conflict, the British Parliament passed, with the support of Prime Minister Frederick North, a Conciliatory Resolution, in which the British government resolved to lift several duties and taxes to any colonial government that remained loyal to the crown. The Resolution was rejected by the colonial governments and the recently formed Continental Congress.

- [AJB]

murderers [AJB]

wedderburn Alexander Wedderburn (1733-1805) was a Scottish lawyer who served in the House of Commons from 1761 to 1780. He was a vigorous opponent of colonial self-governance, and an [infamous antagonist to Benjamin Franklin](#).

- [AJB]

caesar A Latin commonplace, meaning 'but either Caesar or no one,' referring to a population's desire for empire.

- [AJB]

collins John Collins (1717-1795) was a Rhode Island politician, representing Rhode Island in the Second Continental Congress in 1778 and serving as its third governor from 1786 to 1790.

- [AJB]

sperat A Latin phrase, meaning 'thus he hopes.'

- [AJB]

sincerus Here, unlike Demophilus, Paine's pseudonym does not refer to a historical person. The Latin term 'sincerus' connotes cleanliness, purity, and truthfulness.

- [AJB]

dalrymple Sir John Dalrymple, 4th Baronet (1726-1810) was a Scottish judge and author, best known for his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*. His *Address of the People of Great-Britain to the Inhabitants of America* was one of many anti-colonial tracts to circulate in the months leading up to the American Revolution.

- [AJB]

jesuit A common term in this period that denotes equivocation, craftiness, and deceit. Literally, it refers to the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), a Catholic religious order that, on account of its missionary operations in England after the Reformation, maintained a reputation for subversion.

- [AJB]

marquis [Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham](#) was a Whig Politician and the Prime Minister of Great Britain for two terms, the first from 1765 to 1766 and the second in 1782. In his first term he was responsible for the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766.

- [AJB]

quakerprinciples In 1775, Philadelphia Quaker John Pemberton published [The Ancient Testimony and Principles of the People Called Quakers](#), a tract which forbade adherents of the religion from participating in the conflict between Great Britain and the American colonies.

- [AJB]

stjames St. James's is a central district in London.

- [AJB]

barclay David Barclay of Youngsbury (1729-1809) was an English Quaker and prominent merchant and banker. He used his financial influence to encourage peace between Great Britain and the American colonies, offering financial support to colonists protesting the harsher aspects of British rule and to curb political violence.

- [AJB]

proverbs16 quotation of Proverbs 16:7 (KJV).

- [AJB]

cromwell [Oliver Cromwell](#) (1599-1658) was an English statesman who advocated for the execution of King Charles I in 1649 and who ruled Britain as Lord Protector from 1653 until his death in 1658. He was and still is a controversial figure in English history; Paine and British Whigs tended to view him sympathetically.

- [AJB]

daniel2 Daneil 2:21 (KJV): And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.

- [AJB]