

Gentlemen

November, 1775,

High Hills of Santee.

Permit me on this alarming occasion, to address you under the endearing character of Friends, Brethren, and Fellow Subjects. For as it concerns great numbers in the most interesting matters, their Lives, Fortunes (and what is much greater) Consciences being called in question; Suffer me, my Friends, to offer you a few thoughts, that flow from a heart, which thinks it is influenced with the most tender and impartial concern for the good of the whole. I have endeavoured since the present unhappy disputes took place between Great Britain and America, to make an impartial enquiry concerning the transactions of both parties, in order to find the truth; and as we are all liable to be imposed upon, I would willingly offer a few things to your consideration at this critical juncture. I am informed that a considerable number are now met, and encamped near Bush-River, but by what influence, and for what purpose, it is hard to determine, as the accounts

are various: but by what I can gather from the sense of the people I have been conversant with; your design is to withstand the operations of the Congress; upon supposition of their acting in rebellion against the King, and designing to enslave the People.

My business therefore, shall be to set matters in a clear light, that an impartial judgement may be passed upon them. I find myself under difficulties (it is true) to go through this work, because what is, and has been said to that end is so much called in question, by people, who have not opportunity to inform themselves, who are prejudiced by false reports, carried about by men, who wish well to neither King nor Country. If the above articles are believed by you, viz: the Congress being in rebellion against the King, and designing to ~~ruin~~ enslave and ruin the People, I shall 1st. shew that they do not appear to believe, and then the consequences, that will necessarily follow from your proceedings, if they are not.

1st. Then, I am to shew that the Congress (and with them far

the greater part of America) do not appear to be acting in rebellion against the King, nor seeking to enslave the people. This will readily appear if we consider what the Americans oppose, what means of opposition they have made use of, what they have laid themselves open to, in so doing, and how far it is consistent, with Justice and Righteousness to make such ~~opposition~~ resistance.

First then, What do the colonies oppose? I answer not the rightful power of the King, nor the lawful power of any of his officers, but such ^{things} as tend to destroy the peace, and happiness of the Nation. The sum of what they oppose, is comprised in that law, that was past some years ago by the British Legislature; That they had a right to bind the Americans in all cases whatsoever!

The taxes, that were afterward laid upon Glass Paper, Paint, Tea &c were only consequences of the above law; and therefore their enforcing, and our submitting to one of

them, would be as effectual to the enslaving of Americans,
as the whole of them would have been. For instance,
if a man tells me, that he has a right to do with me or any
thing I have got, what he pleases, and then for demands something
of me, either of labour, or part of my estate, if I give it, I then
submit to his unlimited power over me; and by my own consent, he has
a right to lay upon me, what he pleases. The Parliament therefore
by insisting on the duty of tea (tho' they did take off the other duties)
as much claim their unlimited power over America, as they did whilst
those acts were unrecalled; As is abundantly manifest, from the resolves
of both Houses of Parliament, and it being what the Minister founds
his pretensions upon, in sending an army to make us yield thereto.
Let it be considered that, for that end, they have taken away the char-
ter of Massachusetts-Bay Province, sent an army and navy to Bos-
ton their capital, who after many provocations and insults, fell
upon them in a furious manner, and killed eight men

before they were resisted. They also passed an act for bidding them
to trade to any place whatsoever, excepting Ireland, Great Bri-
tain, and the West Indian Islands, or to fish on their own coast;
And respecting trade have done the like to almost all the other pro-
vinces along the continent. They have enlarged the government
of Canada, and extended it all along the back of the other pro-
vinces, and established the Roman Catholic religion, and made
it a Military, Arbitrary and Tyrannick ~~republican~~ government,
intending as the Minister declared in the House of Commons, to
have the Canadians as a force always ready to bring down on
the back of the other colonies, (should they oppose the designs of
Parliament) to subdue them. And should they succeed, we have
nothing to assure us, but ~~that~~ the Popish religion may be establishe-
ed in all the colonies. They have taken away our birth-right. Im-
trials by juries; so enlarged the power of the Admiralty and the Of-
ficers thereof, that a man can scarcely call anything his own
that he professes; for they may break open any mans house,

chest &c, on suspicion, without a civil officer to assist: and should they kill any body in this service, they are not to be tried for it here, but sent to England for trial; and if any man should prosecute another in that court, tho' contrary to law, if the judge but writes on the proceedings, that there was probable cause of action, it shall hinder the owner from recovering damages from the prosecutor.

And now it is intimated, that if they succeed in their attempts, they will make us pay for all the expense of the last war, which they say was undertaken on our account, and cost them Seventy Millions Pounds Sterling, (four hundred and ninety million the money); yet it stands recorded in the transactions of Parliament, that America did more than their part, and therefore at the conclusion of the peace, they sent them some of the money back.

In the next place let us consider the means of opposition. It first began in their not receiving the tea. Several provinces sent it back. Boston would have done the same, but their governor would not suffer it to go out of the port. While it was thus kept a number of men, said

to be about thirty, in disguise, went and destroyed it; probably fearing
that as the time was drawing near, that it was (agreeable to the act) to be
seized and sold for the duty, some persons might by the governors in-
fluence, buy it, and so Parliament have the plea that they had
submitted to the abovementioned law. In the next place, they ~~were~~
entered into a resolution, not to trade with Great Britain, and some
other of His Majesties dominions; (at the same time sending the most
humble petitions to the King, that he would be pleased to ~~repeal~~^{real} those
acts, that were the causes of the unhappy disputes. And this they
have continued to do, to this very day.) They also fell upon other
measures, to bring any, that should be disaffected among themselves,
to a compliance. And here (I believe) thro' the means of some men
who were put into public trusts, and did not know very well what
to do with power, some things were done, contrary to the designs of
Congress, and the genius of the cause. [Had the People been uni-
versal, and exerted themselves, they might have prevented this, by cho-
sing such men, as would have best suited the whole, as it depended up-
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on choice]. The next step of opposition was taking up arms, which
never was done, till the stroke was struck at Boston, before-
-mentioned, when it was done purely by way of defence.

The third thing is to consider what the Colonies have laid
themselves open to, by opposing the designs of Parliament. And
here a due consideration, methinks, will remove those undue sus-
picions, and jealousies, ~~which~~^{that} arise in the minds of some. In
the first place, the rage of the ministry is excited against them,
(as was expected). Thro' their means the King seems set against his
Subjects, and the British army and navy have access unto
our coasts. Their trade being stopped, they necessarily encounter
with many inconveniences; their crops, that they used to export,
through which they obtained their wealth, lying upon their
hands. And should Great Britain continue to insist ^{upon} on subjec-
tion, under the necessity of maintaining the expenses of a
war, here let it be observed that the great men are the chief

losers, their estates being along the sea-coasts, their houses in towns, and cities being liable to be burnt, or knocked down by bombs, and cannon; and as they have the most in their hands, the taxes must be heavier upon them. These are a few of the difficulties, that the Colonies have to struggle with, (& those chiefly felt by rich men,) whilst they are earnestly seeking for reconciliation. But if, as it is asserted by some, they are struggling for independency, they may not only expect to have Great Britain to encounter with, but other great and war-like powers of Europe; therefore it cannot be true that they are struggling for such a state.

Lastly let us consider the justness, and righteousness of the cause. The righteousness of it appears in their endeavouring to maintain the principles of the Constitution; in which the peace and happiness of the people is safely concluded. The state of the British empire is a mixed monarchy, which when the King and People make laws. The people do this by their representatives, whom they choose. The representatives can do

gree in no law, but they bind themselves in it. The House of Commons of Great Britain are their representatives, and every thing passed as law there is first agreed to by them. The Houses of Assembly of the provinces of America, are their representatives. Thus the King and representatives are officers of trust, and accountable for what they do, the people giving them authority. The King can do nothing without the representatives, nor the representatives without the King. Neither can the representatives of one part of the Kingdom, represent another part of it. Now the Parliament of Great Britain say they have a right to bind us in all cases whatsoever, tho' they are not our representatives, and they so may lay anything upon us without feeling it themselves. Thus they have broken the principles of the constitution, by taking away the power of our Assemblies, and by establishing Popery, contrary to law, in one of the provinces, which give us reason to suspect, they have a design to impose the same upon the other provinces; at least they claim that,

power.

Thus it is to maintain the happy state of the Constitution, that America has opposed Parliament; and in so doing has & not rejected the King's lawful authority. For what the King does, contrary to the Constitution, is not the power, that is of God, spoken of in Scripture, and therefore ought not to be obeyed. For should the King command one man to kill his innocent neighbor, this would be contrary to justice and humanity. He ought therefore to reject that command; but in every thing lawful and just, he ought to yield willing obedience.

Thus, tho' America oppose those things that are wrong, which his Majesty has consented to, yet as they believe him blinded by his Ministers, they do not eject him as their King, but desire that he should reign over them. This appears by their petitions sent to him, their publick professions of loyalty, and by the constant prayers put up for him, in every religious assembly, and the direction of the Continental Congress so to do; (this some audacious

villains assert that Ministers dare not in the lower parts to pray
for the King, as I was told in your neighborhood.) As I intimated
in the beginning of my letter, I feel the greatest difficulty,
from the incredulity of so many of the people. But Sirs, for
what end should the people ⁱⁿ the lower parts of the Province,
deceive you? You are their Brethren, and you may depend
upon it, that every wellwisher to the cause of America, and friend
of the Congress, desires your welfare. But what farther evidence
would you have, more than may be had? The Acts of Parlia-
ment spoke of may be seen. The debates upon ~~the~~ ^{them} in the
Houses of Parliament, handled by men of the greatest abilities,
in the nation (and which serve for the greatest proof) have been
and are printed in the public Gazzettes. Men of the best authority,
who have been to England, and returned, assert them to be so.
The newspapers brought from thence (which may be seen) prove the
same. The very enemies of the cause, who have come from England,
do not pretend to deny them. The troops sent into America, all

prove the same; not to mention on the other hand that the members of the Continental and Provincial Congresses, and with them the Committees of the several districts, throughout the country, act spending their time and labor, without fee or reward. The Gentlemen in the Towns, and Cities, take their turns in keeping guard, a hardship the Country does not feel. —

The second general proposition was to point out a few of the consequences, that necessarily will flow (according to the most probable appearances) from your opposing (especially in violent measures), the proceedings and designs of America, who is seeking to preserve her liberty. Indeed, God may make use of you, as a scourge to the nation, for sin; and so you may succeed in your attempts, altho' their cause be good. But before you engage in this you ought to consider, whether your sins do not call forth the same divine displeasure, and whether you had a commission to act as the ministers of the Divine vengeance, or not.

First then, if you succeed in your endeavors, which no

doubt is the thing you would desire,) what would you gain by it? It is not likely this could be done, without the shedding of much blood, and that of your friends, and neighbors! A most awful consideration. But will this be to answer any valuable purposes? Certainly no. It will be to bind yourselves under the unlimited sway of arbitrary power, in the hands of those men, who, to make use of you, for the accomplishment of their purposes, will smile upon you, and promise you fair things; but once they have got their ends, will make you and ~~their~~ posterity feel the heavy hand of their oppression. Perhaps (as has been intimated by some) you have the promise of obtaining the rebels' (as they are called) lands and estates. But will you act the parts of assassins, and robbers, for these! Surely not. Is there not a day coming, when a righteous judge will make inquisition for these things? But after you have got these, must not the present designs of Parliament, (I mean the corrupt part of it,) be answered by the taxes, that will

be laid upon them. Above all, consider that by joining in
with the designs of the Ministers, you conspire against the
liberty of Conscience, and would extinguish that precious
jewel out of the Constitution.

But what prospect have you of success? It is true
you have a number of men amongst you, and I doubt
not, many of them valiant men, who are associating with you,
who, far want of better information, do what they do. But
what are they, to the rest of the twenty thousand of South Car-
olina, and the united power of the other twelve Confederate
Provinces, who are ready to give their aid. Consider how, if
once they get to the height of exasperation, not only your own
blood may be shed, but also your innocent Wives, and Chil-
dren may share in the unhappy fate. The Indians al-
ready vow revenge for the loss of the powder, which, you may
cassured, (whatever you ^{may} suspect) was sent only to keep them
in friendship, instead of bringing them upon you. Who

could have acted so inhuman or harsh?

If you have been privately injured, or your concours not so tenderly attended-to, as you could desire; remember that taking up of arms is not the most likely way to get redress. Rather fall upon cool measures. Rather join in with ~~the~~ ~~whole~~ the great body of America; and as friend with friend, endeavor to promote the good of the Whole. Should you appoint some sensible and honest men, that you could confide in, to inquire into the truth of those things I have asserted, you may be assured you will find them true.

Thus Sir I have endeavoured to discharge my conscience, in what appeared to me to be my duty, in laying these things before you. What I have said has been impartial. My undertaking has been private and voluntary, not for reward, as you may suppose.

When I was lately among you, I would have come to your camp, and there would have conversed with you about

these things, only that I understood you were making some
prisoners. If these lines may be a means to convince ~~your~~^{any} ~~country~~
and to stop the effusion of human blood, I shall have gained
my end. Which that it may be, is my sincere and hearty prayer
to Almighty God.

A Loyal Subject.

High Hills of Santee
November 1775

First draught of an address written by R.C.F.
to the inhabitants of South Carolina, who
resided between Broad & Saluda Rivers, at
the time they were embodying on the 1st of July 1775
in opposition to the authority of the
American Congress.— It was a private and
voluntary undertaking; but General
Richardson having seen it, directly after he
had set out on his expedition, had several
copies taken and sent before his army among
the disaffected public.