II

THE AMERICAN CRISIS
II

THE AMERICAN CRISIS

1750s

Jonathan Mayhew. *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-resistance to the Higher Powers: With Some Reflections on the Resistance Made to King Charles I.*… Boston, 1750. On the verso of the half-title, an early, unidentified hand has rendered into English the Latin epigraph on the title page.

Mayhew (1720–1766), a Congregational minister in Boston, was known for being something of a religious radical. An outspoken critic of Calvinism, his form of liberal Christianity emphasized a rational practice of religion, arguing that human reason was sufficient to understanding the intrinsic truths of Biblical Christianity. Mayhew was also involved in the political scene. He was a proponent of the right to disobey unjust laws and, when presented with a tyrannical authority, Mayhew argued that citizens should resist oppression.

A spirit of domination is always to be guarded against both in church and state, even in times of the greatest security…. Civil tyranny is usually small in its beginning, like “the drop of a bucket,” till at length, like a mighty torrent, or the raging waves of the sea, it bears down all before it, and deluges whole countries and empires. Thus it is as to ecclesiastical tyranny also,—the most cruel, intolerable and impious, of any. From small beginnings, “it exalts itself above all that is called GOD, and that is worshipped[.]” People have no security against being unmercifully priest-ridden, but by keeping all imperious BISHOPS, and other CLERGYMEN who love to “lord it over God’s heritage,” from getting their foot into the stirrup at all. Let them be once fairly mounted, and their “beasts, the laity,” may prance and flounce about to no purpose: And they will, at length, be so jaded and hack’d by these reverend jockies, that they will not even have spirits enough to complain, that their backs are galled; or, like Balaam’s ass, to “rebuke the madness of the prophet.”…

Tyranny brings ignorance and brutality along with it. It degrades men from their just rank, into the class of brutes. It damps their spirits. It suppresses arts. It extinguishes every spark of noble ardor and generosity in the breasts of those who are enslaved by it…. There can be nothing great and good, where its influence reaches. For which reason it becomes every friend to truth and human kind; every lover of God and the christian religion, to bear a part in opposing this hateful monster. And it was a desire to contribute a mite towards carrying on a war against the common enemy, that produced the following discourse (Preface, pp. [2]–[4]; footnotes omitted).
Peril existed on the frontiers of the northern colonies. Not only was there the threat of invasion by the French, there was the problem of Indians collaborating with them. Some leaders, such as Benjamin Franklin and, from New York, Archibald Kennedy (1685–1763), thought that multi-faceted danger needed a unified response. Franklin proposed the Albany Plan, a vehicle for united, especially military, action. Kennedy urged closer ties with the Indians, such as building forts near their villages, thus pre-empting French advantages. Twenty years later, unified action among the colonies became an everyday reality.

And I here shall beg Leave to conclude with another Fable.

A BOAR stood whetting his Tusk against an old Tree; the Fox, who happened to come by at the same Time, asked him why he made those Preparations of whetting his Teeth, since there was no Enemy near that he could perceiwe? That may be, Master Reynard, says the Boar; but we should scour up our Arms while we have Leisure, you know; for in Time of Danger we shall have something else to do. A wise General has not his Men to discipline, or his Ammunition to provide, when the Trumpet sounds TO ARMS; but sets apart his Times of Exercise for one, and his Magazines for t’other, in the calm Season of Peace (p. 24).

Taxation Controversy

It was one matter to comply with legislation restricting the character and scale of one’s economic endeavors, but it was quite a different matter to bear extraction of wealth from one’s endeavors in the form of taxes. The former situation was part and parcel of what it meant to be a colonial merchant, while the latter represented an innovation to the merchant, profoundly difficult of toleration. The line dividing the two situations came into sharp focus with the Sugar Act of 1764, also called the “American Revenue Act.”


Otis (1725–1783) was one of the most influential pre-revolution American thinkers. Even before Patrick Henry’s assertion that taxation without representation was tyranny, The Rights of British Colonies argued that taxation without representation amounted to a disenfranchisement of an American’s civil rights.
The sum of my argument is, That civil government is of God: That the administrators of it were originally the whole people: That they might have devolved it on whom they pleased: That this devolution is fiduciary, for the good of the whole; That by the British constitution, this devolution is on the King, lords and commons, the supreme sacred and uncontrollable legislative power, not only in the realm, but thro’ the dominions: That by the abdication, the original compact was broken to pieces; That by the revolution, it was renewed, and more firmly established, and the rights and liberties of the subject in all parts of the dominions, more fully explained and confirmed: That in consequence of this establishment, and the acts of succession and union, his Majesty George III. is rightful king and sovereign, and with his parliament, the supreme legislative of Great Britain; France and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging: That this constitution is the most free one; and by far the best, now existing on earth: That by this constitution, every man in the dominions is a free man: That no part of his Majesty’s dominions can be taxed without their consent: That every part has a right to be represented in the supreme or some subordinate legislature: That the refusal of this, would seem to be a contradiction in practice to the theory of the constitution; That the colonies are subordinate dominions, and are now in such a state, as to make it best for the good of the whole, that they should not only be continued in the enjoyment of subordinate legislation, but, be also represented in some proportion to their number and estates, in the grand legislature of the nation: That this would firmly unite all parts of the British empire, in the greatest peace and prosperity; and render it invulnerable and perpetual (pp. 64–65).

Controversy over the Stamp Act

Affecting all the colonies, the Stamp duties placed a tax on all paper to which printing was applied. John Adams declared: “But it seems very manifest from the Stamp Act itself that a design is formed to strip us, in a great measure, of the means of knowledge, by loading the press, the colleges, and even an almanac and a newspaper, with restraints and duties; and to introduce the inequalities and dependencies of the feudal system by taking from the poorer sort of people all their little subsistence, and conferring it on a set of stamp officers, distributors and their deputies” (“Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law” published in The True Sentiments of America, London, 1768, page 142).


The official published text of the act.
Ames’s Almanack Revived and Improved: Or, An Astronomical Diary, for the Year of Our Lord Christ 1766. Boston, [1765].

The imprint states: “Price Before the Stamp Act takes Place, Half-a Dollar per Dozen, and 6 Coppers single. After the Act takes Place, more than double that Price.”

Favoring the Stamp Act

[Soame Jenyns]. The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies, by the Legislature of Great Britain, Briefly Consider’d. London, 1765.

Jenyns (1704–1787) was a Cambridgeshire squire who had a career in Parliament lasting thirty-eight years. He was also a noted wit and published satirist of his day. He served on the parliamentary committee, Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations from 1755 to 1780. Although he had Whig leanings, he generally came down on the side of conservative landholders like himself.


Whately (1726–1772), secretary to the Treasury under George Grenville, was vital in the final production of both the 1764 Revenue Act and the 1765 Stamp Act. His most important publication, The Regulations Lately Made Concerning the Colonies, attempted to defend both controversial policies. After Grenville’s dismissal as prime minister, Whately joined the Grenvillite opposition and actively opposed the repeal of the Stamp Act.

Is their vast Property subject to Taxes without their Consent? Are they all arbitrarily bound by Laws to which they have not agreed? The Colonies are in exactly the same Situation: All British Subjects are really in the same; none are actually, all are virtually represented in Parliament; for every Member of Parliament sits in the House, not as Representative of his own Constituents, but as one of that august Assembly by which all the Commons of Great Britain are represented. Their Rights and their Interests, however his own Borough may be affected by general Dispositions, ought to be
Ames's ALMANACK
revived and improved:
Or, An Astronomical DIARY;
For the Year of our Lord CHRIST
1766.
Being the second Year after Bissextile or Leap-Year.
Calculated for the Meridian of Boston in New-
ENGLAND, Lat. 42 Deg, 25 Min. North.
CONTAINING.
Eclipses: Eclipses, Alphetics; Spring-Tides; Weather;
Eclipses and Faults of the Church; Counts in Massachusetts Bay,
New-Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode-Island; Sun and
Moon's Rising and Setting; Time of High-Water; Roads,
with the Bell Stages or Horses to put up at.
Thoughtson several Subjects. A poetical Essay on Happiness.

A ll, is the Gift of INDUSTRY: whatever
A 3. truly embellishes, and renders Life
Delightful. Pensive Winter cheer'd him,
She & the social Fire, and happy hours
The exalted Tempest rudely rave along
His harden'd Fingers deck the gaudy Spring;
Without him Summer wore an acid Waste
Nor to the autumnal Months could she transmit
Her full, matur, immortal store... THOMPSON'S SEAS

By a late Student at HARVARD COLLEGE.

BOSTON: Printed and sold by
R. & S. Draper, in Newbury-
Street, South End;
EYES & GILL, in Queen Street;
GREEN & RUSSELL, Queen Street;
T. & J. Fleet, at the Heart and
Crown in Cornhill;
S. Hall in Rhode Island.

Printed for and sold also by
the following Booksellers:
T. LEVERETT, in Cornhill.
Wharton & Bowes, near
the Town-House;
J. Parkinson, in Union-street;
B. Emerson, at Newbury-Port.

Note
imprint.
the great Objects of his Attention, and the only Rules for his Conduct; and to sacrifice these to a partial Advantage in favour of the Place where he was chosen, would be a Departure from his Duty (p. 109).

[Josiah Tucker]. *A Letter from a Merchant in London to His Nephew in North America, Relative to the Present Posture of Affairs in the Colonies*; ... London, 1766.

Tucker (1713–1799), an economist and political writer, was a proponent of American separation not for political or sympathetic reasons, but rather from a rational acceptance of theories of self-interest. As early as 1766 he advocated for colonial separation, concerned that radical American politics would soon find their way to Britain.

Your third Grievance is the Sovereignty of Great Britain. For you want to be independent: You wish to be an Empire by itself, and to be no longer the Province of another. This Spirit is uppermost; and this Principle is visible in all your Speeches, and all your Writings, even when you take some Pains to disguise it. “What! an Island! “A Spot such as this to command the great “and mighty Continent of North America! “Preposterous! A Continent, whose Inhabitants double every five and twenty Years! “Who therefore, within a Century and an “Half will be upwards of an hundred and “twenty Millions of Souls!—Forbid it Patriotism, forbid it Politics, that such a “great and mighty Empire as this, should be “held in subjection by the paertly King-

“dom of Great Britain!—Rather let the “Seat of Empire be transferred: And let it “be fixt, where it ought to be, viz. in Great “America!”

Now, my good Friend, I will not stay to dispute with you the Calculations, on which your Orators, Philosophers, and Politicians have, for some Years past, grounded these extravagant Conceits; (tho’ I think the Calculations themselves both false, and absurd;) but I will only say, that while we have the Power, we may command your Obedience, if we please:—And that it will Time enough for you to propose the making us a Province to America, when you shall find yourselves able to execute the Project (pp. 42–43).

**Attacking the Stamp Act**

[Stephen Hopkins]. *The Rights of Colonies Examined*. Providence, 1765. (See images overleaf.)

Hopkins (1707–1785), governor of Rhode Island, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, entered the revolutionary scene when he helped found the *Providence Gazette* in 1762. He soon published two important pamphlets,
Liberty is the greatest blessing that men enjoy, and slavery the heaviest curse that human nature is capable of.—This being so, makes it a matter of the utmost importance to men, which of the two shall be their portion. Absolute Liberty is, perhaps, incompatible with any kind of government.—The safety resulting from society, and the advantage of just and equal laws, hath caused men to forego some part of their natural liberty, and submit to government. This appears to be the most rational account of it's beginning; although, it must be confessed, mankind have by no means been agreed about it: Some have found it's origin in the divine appointment: Others have thought it took it's rise from power: Enthusiasts have dreamed that dominion was founded in grace (p. [3]).


It will however by no means from thence follow, that 'tis always expedient, and in all circumstances equitable for the supreme and sovereign legislative to tax the colonies, much less that 'tis reasonable this right should be practised upon without allowing the colonies an actual representation. An equal representation of the whole state is, at least in theory, of the essence of a perfect parliament, or supreme legislative (p. 5).


Dulany (1722–1797) was considered one of the best lawyers in North America during his time. His persuasive *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies* was praised by both sides for its call to moderation. Rather than appealing to natural law or revolutionary sympathies, Dulany showed the unconstitutionality of the Stamp Act according to British law. Disproving the notion of “implied” representation that Parliament claimed America possessed, Dulany nevertheless encouraged his fellow Americans to respect the Stamp Act until British politicians repealed it. This moderation led to the pamphlet’s universal popularity, and when the Stamp Act was eventually repealed, the opposition leader used large passages from *Considerations* to prove his case.
The Rights of Colonies examined 1764
And the Case of Great Britain and America 1769
Note ownership signature of Baptist clergymen, Isaac Backus (1724–1806), proponent of the separation of church and state.
This Observation being considered, it will undeniably appear, that, in framing the late *Stamp Act*, the Commons acted in the Character of Representative of the Colonies. They assumed it as the Principle of that Measure, and the *Propriety* of it must therefore stand, or fall, as the Principle is true, or false: For the Preamble sets forth, That the Commons of *Great Britain* had resolved to *Give and Grant* the several Rates and Duties imposed by the Act; but what Right had the Commons of *Great Britain* to be thus munificent at the Expence [sic] of the Commons of *America*?——To give Property, not belonging to the Giver, and without the Consent of the Owner, is such evident and flagrant Injustice, in ordinary Cases, that few are hardy enough to avow it; and therefore, when it really happens, the Fact is disguised and varnished over by the most plausible Pretences the Ingenuity of the Giver can suggest.——But it is alledged [sic] that there is a *Virtual*, or implied Representation of the Colonies springing out of the Constitution of the *British* Government: And it must be confessed on all Hands, that, as the Representation is not actual, it is virtual, or it doth not exist at all; for no third kind of Representation can be imagined. The Colonies claim the Privilege, which is common to all *British Subjects*, of being taxed only with their own Consent given by their Representatives, and all the Advocates for the *Stamp Act* admit this Claim. Whether, therefore, upon the whole Matter, the Impostion of the *Stamp Duties* is a proper Exercise of Constitutional Authority, or not, depends upon the single Question, Whether the Commons of *Great Britain* are virtually the Representatives of the Commons of *America*, or not (pp. 5–6).


A Maryland native, Dickinson (1732–1818) came to Philadelphia after his schooling to practice law. His family’s extensive land holdings and his dual residencies in Delaware and Pennsylvania allowed him to serve in the legislatures of both colonies. A strong opponent of arbitrary parliamentary decrees, Dickinson helped to draft the Declaration of Grievance, a response to the Sugar and Stamp Acts and later published several pamphlets exhorting his fellow citizens that disobedience of these acts was not rebellion, but rather an attempt to retain a person’s natural rights. He continued to be critical of tax policies throughout his career, and stressed that although the colonies were preparing for war, they should continue to push for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

However, under all these restraints, and some others that have been imposed on us, we have not till lately been unhappy. Our spirits were not depressed. We apprehended no design formed against our liberty. We for a long time enjoyed peace, and were quite free from any heavy debt, either internal or external. We had a paper currency which served as a medium of domestic commerce, and permitted us to employ all the gold and silver we could acquire, in trade abroad. We had a multitude of markets for our provisions, lumber and iron. These allowed liberties, with some others we assumed, enabled us to collect considerable sums of money for the joint benefit of ourselves and our mother-country.

But the modern regulations are in every
circumstance afflicting. The remittances we have been able to make to Great-Britain, with all the license hitherto granted or taken, and all the money brought among us in the course of the late war, have not been sufficient to pay her what we owe; but there still remains due, according to a late calculation made by the English merchants, the sum of four millions sterling (pp. 12–13).

Considerations upon the Rights of the Colonists to the Privileges of British Subjects, Introduc'd by a Brief Review of the Rise and Progress of English Liberty, and Concluded with Some Remarks upon Our Present Alarming Situation. New York, 1766.

The anonymous author argued for the expansion of rights owing to the movement of English freemen to the New World:

They were not banish’d to America as a Punishment for any Crimes which they had committed, and by which they might possibly have forfeited the Privileges of Society. Far from it! — They left England as free Adventurers....

No Man will deny that the provincial Americans have an inherent, unalienable Right to all the Privileges of British Subjects....

By one single Stroke of political Legerdemain, They [the ministers] have unhing’d the whole Constitution.... At once to depreciate [sic] these Jewels of English Freedom, and reduce Us to a State of abject Dependence, the privy Council have erected themselves into a Court of final Appeal....

[Every particular Branch in a mixt Form of Government is continually labouring to extend it’s [sic] own Power and Influence....

We cannot be surpris’d that the Ministers of the Crown have endeavour’d to increase, in the Wilds of America, the Force of that Prerogative which is so strictly limited at Home....

As Freemen, Subjects of the same Prince, They consider Themselves upon an equal Footing with the Freemen of Great-Britain. To suppose any Subordination would be destroying the very Spirit of the English Government....

We have already shewn that the Spirit of Liberty is not confin’d to the Shores of Britain. Let Us now endeavour to support that Spirit (pp. 4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 25).

Repeal of the Stamp Act

Manuscript Memorandum Summarizing British Government Correspondence Concerning Colonies in North America ... with Numerous Reports Regarding Responses to the Stamp Act.”] (See image overleaf.)

This is a unique document in the Lapidus Collection evidently compiled for official use in London in connection with ministerial discussions concerning the difficulties regarding the Stamp Act.
Extracts from the Papers relative to America. –

3 Aug. 1765. A Letter from Gov. Ferguson dated in Virginia 14th June, & directed to Lt. Halifax. Informing him, that some Cherokee Indians had been murdered on the frontiers & the matter was reached. Upon which he observes that the State of that Province is very unhappy: That the most solemn treaties with the Indians have been publicly violated; That the Violators of them have been as publicly receded from justice. That Government is set at defiance. not having strength to enforce obedience to the Laws of Community: That the colony is deeply in Debt to Great Britain. That circulating money is grown very scarce, & that this privy Councils increases the general dissatisfaction on the Imposition of Stamp Duties.

27 Aug. 1765. A Letter from Gov. Ferguson to the Board of Trade. dated 5th June, transmitting the Resolutions of the House of Assembly of Virginia, in which he relates the particulars of their passing, & mentions one Person by name as very forward in supporting them.

27 Aug. 1765. A Representation was made by the Board of Trade to the Council upon the said Resolutions – recommending that immediate Instructions be dispatched to the Officers of the Crown in Virginia to exist themselves vigorously in exacting obedience to the Laws.

6 Sept. 1765. This Representation was referred to the Committee of Council for Plantation Affairs. –

14 Sept. 1765. Circular Letters were on the application of the Commissary of Stamps sent from the Treasury to the several Governors, begging them to assist the Stamp Officers to the Bonds of the Chief Distributors to see that the Under-Distributors are properly appointed & to attend to any Bonds or Transporte.

The Rev. Nathaniel Appleton (1693–1784) was ordained pastor of the First Church of Cambridge in 1717, a post he held for the next sixty-six years. In 1771, Harvard presented him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity, an honor not given to anyone since 1692. He was cited for his character, his “promoting the interests of piety and learning in this society,” and his “usefulness to the churches.”


This sermon, *The Snare Broken,* expressing popular satisfaction at the repeal of the Stamp Act, likened Americans to birds who had escaped the trap of their British hunters.

Having been initiated, in youth, in the doctrines of civil liberty, as they were taught by such men as Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero and other renowned persons among the ancients; and such as Sidney and Milton, Locke and Hoadley, among the moderns; I liked them; they seemed rational. Having, earlier still learnt from the holy scriptures, that wise, brave and vertuous men were always friends to liberty; that God gave the Israelites a King in his anger, because they had not sense and virtue enough to like a free common-wealth, and to have himself for their King; that the Son of God came down from heaven, to make us ‘free indeed’; and that ‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty’; this made me conclude, that freedom was a great blessing. Having, also, from my childhood up, by the kind providence of my God, and the tender care of a good parent now at rest with Him, been educated to the love of liberty, tho’ not of licentiousness; which chaste and virtuous passion was still increased in me, as I advanced towards, and into, manhood; I would not, I cannot now, tho’ past middle age, relinquish the fair object of my youthful affections, Liberty; whose charms, instead of decaying with time in my eyes, have daily captivated me more and more. I was, accordingly, penetrated with the most sensible grief, when, about the first of November
last, that day of darkness, a day hardly to be numbered with the other days of the year, she seemed about to take her final departure from America, and to leave that ugly hag Slavery, the deformed child of Satan, in her room. I am now filled with a proportionable degree of joy in God, on occasion of her speedy return, with new smiles on her face, with augmented beauty and splendor (pp. 35–36).

**CHARLES CHAUNCY. A Discourse on “the Good News from a Far Country.”**

Delivered July 24th. A Day of Thanks-giving ... on Occasion of the Repeal of the Stamp-Act. Boston, 1766.

A friend of Jonathan Mayhew, Chauncy (1705–1787) was pastor at Boston’s First Church for over 60 years, whose parishioners included Anne Hutchinson, John Winthrop, and Paul Revere. He actively opposed the Edwardian legacy of the Great Awakening and was known for presenting a more harmonious view of God and salvation than that given by Calvinism. He wrote patriotic essays, the most famous of which, *Letter to a Friend*, argued that as economic liberty was withheld from American colonists, political liberty was bound to meet an equally dismal fate.

Another thing in this “news,” making it “good,” is the hopeful prospect it gives us of being continued in the enjoyment of certain liberties and privileges, valued by us next to life itself. Such are those of being “tried by our equals,” and of “making grants for the support of government of that which is our own, either in person or by representatives we have chosen for the purpose.” Whether the Colonists were invested with a right to these liberties and privileges that ought not be wrested from them, or whether they were not, is the truth of fact, that they really thought they were: All of them as natural heirs to it, by being born subjects to the British Crown; and some of them, by additional charter-grants, the legality of which, instead of being contested, have all along, from the days of our fathers, been assented to, and allowed of, by the supreme authority at home. And they imagined, whether justly, or not, I dispute not, that their right to the free and full enjoyment of these privileges was their righteous due in consequence of what they, and their fore-fathers, had done and suffered in subduing and defending these American lands, not only for their own support, but to add extent, strength and glory to the British Crown. And as it had been early and deeply impressed on their minds, that their charter-privileges were rights that had been dearly paid for by a vast expense of blood, treasure and labor, without which this continent must have still remained in a wilderness-state, and the property of savages only; it could not but strongly put in motion their passion of grief, when they were laid under a Parliamentary restraint as to the exercise of that liberty, they esteemed their greatest glory. It was eminently this that filled their minds with jealousie, and at length a settled fear, lest they should gradually be brought into a state of the most abject slavery. This it was that gave rise to the cry, which became general throughout the Colonies, “we shall be made to serve as bond-servants.—Our lives will be bitter with hard bondage” (pp. 14–15).
The Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, before an August Assembly, Relating to the Repeal of the Stamp-Act, &c. [Philadelphia, 1766]. (See images overleaf.)

Q. What is your name, and place of abode?
A. Franklin, of Philadelphia.

Q. Do the Americans pay any considerable taxes among themselves?
A. Certainly many, and very heavy taxes.

Q. What are the present taxes in Pennsylvania, laid by the laws of the Colony?
A. There are taxes on all estates real and personal, a poll tax, a tax on all offices, professions, trades and businesses, according to their profits; an excise on all wine, rum, and other spirits; and a duty of Ten Pounds per head on all Negroes imported, with some other duties.

Q. For what purposes are those taxes laid?
A. For the support of the civil and military establishments of the country, and to discharge the heavy debt contracted in the last war....

Q. What was the temper of America towards Great-Britain before the year 1763?
A. The best in the world. They submitted willingly to the government of the Crown, and paid, in all their courts, obedience to acts of parliament. Numerous as the people are in the several old provinces, they cost you nothing in forts, citadels, garrisons or armies, to keep them in subjection. They were governed by this country at the expense only of a little pen, ink and paper. They were led by a thread. They had not only a respect, but an affection, for Great-Britain, for its laws, its customs and manners, an even a fondness for its fashions, that greatly increased the commerce. Natives of Britain were always treated with particular regard; to be an Old England-man, was, of itself, a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank among us.

Q. And what is their temper now?
A. O, very much altered.

(pp. 1, 3–4).

Townshend Acts

The repeal of the Stamp Act was followed by the imposition of the Townshend Acts of 1767, which laid duties upon many articles imported by the colonies.


Addressing the Quartering, Restraining, and Townshend Acts, Letters from a Farmer is a series of letters eventually republished in nineteen of twenty-three colonial newspapers then in print. Dickinson argued against what he perceived as threats to liberty through the loss of tax control and the existence of a standing British army.
Mezzotint by Johann Martin Will after portrait (1777) by Charles-Nicolas Cochin II.
The EXAMINATION of Doctor BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, before an August Assembly, relating to the Repeal of the STAMP-ACT, &c.

Q. What is your name, and place of abode?
A. Franklin, of Philadelphia.

Q. Do the Americans pay any considerable taxes among themselves?
A. Certainly many, and very heavy taxes.

Q. What are the present taxes in Pennsylvania, laid by the laws of the Colony?
A. There are taxes on all estates real and personal, a poll tax, a tax on all offices, professions, trades and businesses, according to their profits; an excise on all wine, rum, and other spirits; and a duty of Ten Pounds per head on all Negroes imported, with some other duties.

Q. For what purposes are those taxes laid?
A. For the support of the civil and military establishments of the country, and to discharge the heavy debt contracted in the last war.

Q. How long are those taxes to continue?
A. Those for discharging the debt are to continue till 1773, and longer, if the debt should not be then all discharged. The others must always continue.

Q. Was it not expected that the debt would have been sooner discharged?
A. It was, when the peace was made with France and Spain. But a fresh war breaking out with the Indians, a fresh load of debt was incurred, and the taxes, of course, continued longer by a new law.

Q. Are not all the people very able to pay those taxes?
A. No. The frontier counties, all along the continent, having been frequently ravaged by the enemy, and greatly impoverished, are able to pay very little tax. And therefore, in consideration of their difficulties, our late tax laws do expressly favour those counties, excusing the sufferers; and I suppose the same is done in other governments.

Q. Are you acquainted with the management of the Post-Office in America?
A. Yes. I am Deputy Post-Master General of North-America.

Q. Don't you think the distribution of stamps, by post, to all the inhabitants, very practicable, if there was no opposition?
A. The post only go along the sea coast; they do not, except in a few instances, go back into the country; and if they did, sending for stamps by post would occasion an expense of postage, amounting, in many cases, to much more than that of the stamps themselves.

Q. Are you acquainted with Newfoundland?
A. I never was there.

Q. Do you know whether there are any post roads on that island?
A. I have heard that there are no roads at all, but that the communication between one settlement and another is by sea only.

Q. Can you describe the stamps by post in Canada?
A. Those
I am a Farmer, settled, after a Variety of Fortunes, near the Banks of the River Delaware, in the Province of Pennsylvania. I received a liberal Education, and have been engaged in the busy Scenes of Life; but am now convinced, that a Man may be as happy without Bustle, as with it. My farm is small; my Servants are few, and good; I have a little Money at Interest; I wish for no more....

Being Master of my Time, I spend a good Deal of it in a Library, which I think the most valuable Part of my small Estate; and being acquainted with two or three Gentlemen of Abilities and Learning, who honour me with their Friendship, I have acquired, I believe, a greater Knowledge in History, and the Laws and Constitution of my Country, than is generally attained by Men of my Class, many of them not being so fortunate as I have been in the Opportunities of getting Information.

From my Infancy I was taught to love Humanity and Liberty. Enquiry and Experience have since confirmed my Reverence for the Lessons then given me, by convincing me more fully of their Truth and Excellence. Benevolence towards Mankind, excites Wishes for their Welfare, and such Wishes endear the Means of fulfilling them. These can be found in Liberty only: Therefore her sacred Cause ought to be espoused, by every Man, on every Occasion, to the utmost of his Power....

These being my Sentiments, I am encouraged to offer to you, my Countrymen, my thoughts on some late Transactions, that appear to me to be of the utmost Importance to you. Conscious of my own Defects, I have waited some Time, in Expectation of seeing the Subject treated by Persons much better qualified for the Task; but being therein disappointed, and apprehensive that longer Delays will be injurious, I venture at length to request the Attention of the Public, praying only for one Thing, that is, these lines may be read with the same Zeal for the Happiness of British America, with which they were wrote.

With a good deal of Surprize I have observed, that little Notice has been taken of an Act of Parliament, as injurious in its Principle to the Liberties of these Colonies, as the Stamp Act was: I mean the Act for suspending the Legislation of New-York (First letter, Pennsylvania Gazette, December 3, 1767).

Nor is it to be thought that Great-Britain would designedly enslave any of her free-born sons, and thereby break in upon that constitution so friendly to liberty, and on which her own safety depends (pp. 53–54). Arbitrary and oppressive measures in the state would indeed dispirit the people and weaken the nerves of industry, and in their consequences lead to poverty and ruin; but a mild and equitable administration, will
encourage their hearts and strengthen their hands to execute with vigor those measures which promote the strength and safety of the whole.

To lay a foundation of greater security to ourselves is indeed a laudable motive to such efforts; and may be justified by the principle of self-preservation: But the advantages of such improvements will not be confined to ourselves—the more populous and opulent we grow, the more able we shall be to defend this important part of the British dominions—the more our nation will be a terror to her enemies— and the better able shall we be to make remittance for what we shall necessarily want of her manufactures.

By a proper attention to the general interest, and vigorous pursuits of measures that tend to promote it, things may be put into such a situation as to be of mutual advantage. The growth and prosperity of her colonies must be of real advantage to Great Britain.—The means for exportation being increased in them, will be so to the colonies, by which they may sink their present heavy debts, and more easily defray necessary public charges (pp. 65–66).

**A Son of Liberty [Silas Downer]. A Discourse, Delivered in Providence, in the Colony of Rhode-Island, upon the 25th Day of July, 1768. At the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty, from the Summer House in the Tree. Providence, 1768.**

Downer (1729–1785), a lawyer and revolutionary, according to one authority, was the first to “openly and unequivocally [say] that British Parliament did not have the right to legislate for the colonies.” His Discourse, delivered in Providence, emphasized the natural right of people to govern themselves and radically claimed that the British Parliament had no right to make “any laws whatsoever” in regards to the American colonies.

Let us then in justice to ourselves and our children, break off a trade so pernicious to our interest, and which is likely to swallow up both our estates and liberties.—A trade which hath nourished the people, in idleness and dissipation.—We cannot, we will not, betray the trust reposed in us by our ancestors, by giving up the least of our liberties.—We will be free men, or we will die—we cannot endure the thought of being governed by subjects, and we make no doubt but the Almighty will look down upon our righteous contest with gracious approbation. We cannot bear the reflection that this country should be yielded to them who never had any hand in subduing it. Let our whole conduct shew that we know what is due to ourselves. Let us act prudently, peaceably, firmly, and jointly. Let us break all off trade and commerce with a people who would enslave us, as the only means to prevent our ruin. May we strengthen the hands of the civil government here, and have all our exertions tempered with the principles of peace and order, and may we by precept and example encourage the practice of virtue and morality, without which no people can be happy.

It only remains now, that we dedicate the Tree of Liberty.

**WE do therefore, in the name and behalf of all the true Sons of Liberty in America, Great-Britain, Ireland, Corsica, or wheresoever they are dispersed throughout the world, dedicate and solemnly devote this tree, to be a TREE of LIBERTY.——May all our**
When he gave a book to Princeton in 1764, Thomas Hollis (1720–1774) described himself as “An Englishman, a Lover of Liberty, the principles of the Revolution, & the Protestant Succession in the House of Hanover, Citizen of the world, ...” He was a “strenuous Whig.”

Hollis wrote the title page and selected the contents. Included is the letter written by Samuel Adams to the Earl of Chatham, dated February 2, 1768, a portion of which follows:

The duties levied in America, by virtue of the aforementioned acts, were imposed with the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue; and are to be applied, in the first place, for making a more certain and adequate provision for the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, in such colonies where it shall be found necessary; and the residue is from time to time to be disposed of by Parliament, towards defraying the necessary expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the colonies. It is humbly submitted, whether his Majesty’s commons in Britain have not, by these acts, granted the property of their fellow subjects in America, without their consent in Parliament. Your Lordships will allow, that it is an unalterable rule in equity, that a man shall have the free use and the sole disposal of his property. This original principle, to the lastling honour of our British ancestors, was in early time ingrafted into the British constitution, and is the greatest security, as well as the brightest ornament of a British subject.... The blessings of the British constitution will for ever keep the subjects in this province united to the mother state, as long as the sentiments of liberty are preserved: But what liberty can remain to them, when their property, the fruit of their toil and industry, and the prop of all their future hopes in life, may be taken from them at the discretion of others? (pp. 45–46).

Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) was a polymath, known for being co-discoverer of oxygen, educational innovator, and a controversial theologian. He was
AN ESSAY ON THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT; AND ON THE NATURE OF POLITICAL, CIVIL, AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

LONDON:
Printed for J. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall; T. Cadell (successor to Mr. Millar) in the Strand; and J. Johnson, No. 8, Parker-street Row.

MDCCLXVIII.

PRIESTLEY
opposed to state-sponsored religions and a strong supporter of both the American and French revolutions, a position which led the Englishman to immigrate to Pennsylvania in 1794 and publish letters critical of continental anti-French tendencies.

Let the system of toleration be completely carried into execution: and let every member of the community enjoy every right of a citizen, whether he chuse to conform to the established religion or not. Let every man, who has sufficient abilities, be deemed qualified to serve his country in any civil capacity. Because a man cannot be a bishop, must he therefore be nothing in the state, and his country derive no benefit from his talents? Besides, let it be considered, that those who depart the farthest from established opinions will have more at stake in a country where they enjoy these singular privileges; and, consequently, will be more attached to it (pp. 116–17).


One year after this Boston edition, Adams’s *View* was published in London. The London publishers secularized the tone of Adams’s text by stripping away the front and back matter in which he frames New England history in the context of salvation-history, the larger story of God’s working through history to protect his people.

Unhappily, … for Great-Britain and the Colonies too, we see another parliamentary act put in execution, for the design of raising a revenue, and of fixing the jurisdiction of Parliament, in such a manner as to leave the Colonies without the power of disposing of their own property. This act is generally reckoned quite unconstitutional, and, in many respects very unfriendly to our liberties.—It cannot be concealed, that great uneasiness generally, almost universally, subsists in the Colonies, and there needs no great penetration to foresee, that the continued enforcement [sic] of this act will have very disagreeable consequences (pp. 48–49).

Merchants of Boston. *Observations on Several Acts of Parliament, … and Also, on the Conduct of the Officers of the Customs since These Acts Were Passed…. [Boston], 1769.*

It is not readily known who among the merchants of Boston composed as well as paid for the publication of this pamphlet. Among this cohort were a number favorable to the cause of the colonies, James Bowdoin and John Hancock being the most prominent.

Upon the whole, the trade of America is really the trade of Great-Britain herself: The profits thereof center there. It is one grand source from whence money so plentifully
flows into the hands of the several manufacturers, and from thence into the coffers of landholders throughout the whole kingdom. It is in short the strongest chain of connection between Britain and the Colonies, and the principal means whereby those sources of wealth and power have been and are so useful and advantageous to her. The embarrassments, difficulties and insupportable burdens under which this trade has laboured, have already made us prudent, frugal and industrious, and such a spirit in the Colonists must soon, very soon, enable them to subsist without the manufactures of Great-Britain, the trade of which, as well as its naval power, has been greatly promoted and strengthened by the luxury of the colonies; consequently any measures that have a tendency to injure, obstruct and diminish the American trade and navigation, must have the same effect upon that of Great-Britain, and in all probability prove her Ruin (p. 24).

After the Boston Massacre

On March 5, 1770, after rising tensions, occupying British soldiers killed five colonial citizens in a confrontation now know as the Boston Massacre.


This oration was delivered one month after the Boston Massacre:

Oh! then how should we hope and plead with God in holy faith and confidence, that there may be no impositions upon us but what are constitutional. And that for the time to come, there may be no occasion for any military troops among us, to enforce any laws upon us; which have been the unhappy occasion of many affrays and disturbances among us, till of late it came even to shedding of blood; which blood lately ran down the streets of our capital, and which is now crying to God from the ground, and waiting for a strict and impartial inquisition.* … We must appeal to God with the Psalmist for the justice and equity of our cause.

* The evening after the 5th of March, when three Persons were shot dead upon the spot; and several more wounded, two of whom died quickly of their wounds. (pp. 35–36).

“‘There are few men of consequence among us,’” John Adams remarked in 1816, “‘who did not commence their career by an oration on the fifth of March.’” (Letter to Dr. J. Morse, 5 January, 1816. Works of John Adams, Vol. x, pp. 203, 204.)

James Lovell. An Oration Delivered April 2d, 1771…. To Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770. Boston, 1771.
Lovell (1737–1814) was raised in a household with Loyalist tendencies, yet he differed with his father, who eventually left Boston with the British evacuation. On the first anniversary of the Boston Massacre, the Boston town committee asked Lovell to give a speech. He was known as a skilled orator. His speech was published and began a series of Massacre orations appearing annually as separate publications for the next fifteen years.

Make The Bloody Fifth Of March The Era
Of The Resurrection Of Your Birthrights.
—James Lovell speaking at Old South
Church, Boston, April 2, 1771

Who are a free people? Not those who do not suffer actual oppression; but those who have a constitutional check upon the power to oppress.... We are SLAVES 'till we obtain such redress thro' the justice of our King as our happy constitution leads us to expect. In that condition, let us behave with the propriety and dignity of FREEMEN; and thus exhibit to the world a new character of a people which no history describes (pp. 11 and 17).

The present army therefore, tho' called the peace establishment, is kept up by one act, and governed by another; both of which expire annually. This circumstance is valued as a sufficient check upon the army. A less body of troops than is now maintained has, on a time, destroyed a King and fought under a parliament with great success and glory; but upon a motion to disband them, they turned their masters out of doors, and fixed up others in their stead (pp. 8–9).

The declarative vote of the British Parliament is the death-warrant of our birthrights, and wants only a Czarish King to put it into execution. Here then a door of salvation is open. Great Britain may raise her fleets and armies, but is only our own King that can direct their fire down upon our heads. He is gracious, but not omniscient. He is ready to hear our appeals in their proper course; and knowing himself, tho' the most powerful prince on earth, yet, a subject under the divine constitution of law, that law he will ask and receive from the twelve Judges of England. These will prove that the claim of the British Parliament over us is not only illegal in itself, but a down-right usurpation of his prerogative as KING of America (pp. 15–16).

— John Hancock. An Oration; Delivered March 5, 1774, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the of the Town of Boston: To Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March 1770. Boston, 1774.
Hancock (1737–1793) was a leading Boston merchant and an outspoken champion of independence. This speech, given on the fourth anniversary of the Boston Massacre, was part of a long series of commemorations lasting into the nineteenth century. The Boston Tea Party had taken place a mere three months prior to Hancock’s oration.

The troops of George the Third have cross’d the wide atlantick, not to engage an enemy, but to assist a band of Traitors in trampling on the rights and liberties of his most loyal subjects in America,—those rights and liberties which as a father he ought ever to regard, and as a King he is bound in honor to defend from violations, even at the risque of his own life (p. 7).
Pro-colonies 1774

[John Cartwright]. *American Independence the Interest and Glory of Great Britain; Or, Arguments to Prove, That Not Only in Taxation, but in Trade, Manufactures, and Government, the Colonies Are Entitled to an Entire Independence....* London, 1774.

This was the first of eighty books published by John Cartwright (1740–1824), a naval officer whose service was curtailed for reasons of health, and who once served in Newfoundland. He advocated that Americans had the right to choose their own rulers as well as to tax themselves.

Britons of all parties, and of almost all denominations, seem far too unanimous in wishing to tyrannize over their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic. Happy, most happy, should the writer esteem himself, could he entertain any flattering hopes, that his plain and humble pen might inspire his countrymen with more generous sentiments! But are not his countrymen the brave sons of freedom? lovers of justice, and by nature generous? He will then—he must entertain these pleasing hopes. To know, that he had thus influenced a single individual, would afford him reflections, that would more than counter-balance the ordinary evils of life. If, however, he had no other satisfaction on this occasion, it would yet be sufficient, that his American kindred should say, “There was one Englishman and advocate for our freedom;” but I trust there are, in the private and independent walks of life, many of the same sentiment; and that their numbers will daily increase, as a free discussion of the parliamentary pretensions of the sovereignty of America, shall more and more discover their total want of foundation; and, I am very far from despairing, that this truth shall, ere long, be acknowledged, even by the minister and the legislature (Preface, pp. [i]–ii).

I hope that the late bill will prove only a temporary violence, and that these moments, which are generally thought to be a fullen [sic] calm, foreboding some dreadful political convulsion, may be pregnant with more salutary measures and plans of peace. The remembrance of it will, in a moment, be done away, when Great Britain shall once have done justice to the Americans, by an open declaration of their independence, and by offering them her friendship. Our mutual jealousies will be buried in oblivion, and, as the Dean foretels, the Americans will then consider us as “their protectors, mediators, benefactors” (p. 57; footnotes omitted).

An Old Member of Parliament [Arthur Lee]. *An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, in the Present Disputes with America.* London, 1774.

Lee (1740–1792) was born in Virginia and studied medicine at Edinburgh. He read and practiced law in London between 1766 and 1776. He published his
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
THE INTEREST AND GLORY
OF GREAT BRITAIN;
OR,
ARGUMENTS to prove, that not only in TAXATION,
but in TRADE, MANUFACTURES, and GOVERN-
MENT, the Colonies are entitled to an entire Indepen-
dency on the BRITISH LEGISLATURE; and that it can
only be by a formal DECLARATION of these Rights,
and forming thereupon a FRIENDLY LEAGUE with them,
that the true and lasting WELFARE of both Countries
can be promoted.

In a Series of Letters to the Legislature.
To which are added copious Notes; containing Reflec-
tions on the BOSTON and QUEBEC ACTS; and a full
Justification of the People of Boston, for destroying
the British-taxed Tea; submitted to the Judgment,
not of those who have none but borrowed Party-opi-
nions, but of the Candid and Honest.

It is not to be hoped, in the corrupt State of human Nature,
that any Nation will be subject to another, any longer than
it finds its own Account in it, and cannot help itself.

No Creatures suck the Teats of their Dams longer than
they can draw Milk from thence, or can provide themselves
with better Food; nor will any Country continue their Sub-
jection to another, only because their great Grand-mothers
were acquainted. This is the Courte of human Affairs, and
all wise States will always have it before their Eyes.
Trenchard on Plantations and Colonies, in Cato's
Letters, No. 106. Anno 1722.

LONDON:
Printed for the Authors by H. S. Woodfall.
Sold by J. Wilkes, No. 71, St. Paul's Church-yard,
M.DCC.LXXIV.
first pamphlet, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Colonies of America*, in 1764, attacking slavery and British imperial policy. He continued publishing both in America and Britain, appearing under at least ten pseudonyms, such as this one “An Old Member of Parliament.” He returned to the United States in 1780.

After all these injuries and insults, we are surprized that the Americans should be discontented! We think it extraordinary that they should destroy the tea sent on purpose to compel the payment of the duty so imposed! It is an injury to private property: but who offered the first injury to private property? Who was it that claimed and exercised a right to dispose of all the property in America at their pleasure? The British, not the American house of commons. A set of men assembled at Westminster, who have just as much right to dispose of property in America as the Divan at Constantinople has in England. This was the first interruption of that harmony which subsisted between the two countries; a harmony under which the commerce and manufactures of this country so eminently prospered. The Americans were not the aggressors: they received the news of the intended stamp-act with astonishment; it was some time before they could be believe it possible that a parliament which they regarded with respect could be guilty of such an outrage against their rights; that a house of commons, who existed only by the election of the people of England, who would not suffer any other branch of the legislature to touch the property of the people, because they only are deputed by them, should seriously resolve that it might be just and expedient for them to give and grant the property of the people of America (pp. 54–55).


Wilson (1742–1798) was a leading Whig in early American politics. He emigrated from Scotland in 1765 and the next year began a legal apprenticeship under John Dickinson. When he published this pamphlet, he had established a successful practice in Carlisle. His *Considerations on the Nature and Extent of Legislative Authority* emphasized the idea of “power from the people,” arguing that since colonists were not represented in British politics, Parliament had no legitimate control over them. Thirteen years later, Wilson was instrumental in shaping the Constitution and promoting its adoption.

The following sheets were written during the late Non-Importation Agreement: But that agreement being dissolved before they were ready for the press, it was then judged unreasonable to publish them. Many will, perhaps, be surprised to see the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament over the Colonies denied in every instance. Those the writer informs, that, when he began this piece, he would probably have been surprised at such an opinion himself; for, that it was the result, and not the occasion, of his disquisitions. He entered upon them with a view and expectation of being able to trace some constitutional Line between those cases, in which we ought, and those in which we ought not, to acknowledge the power of Parliament
over us. In the prosecution of his enquiries, he became fully convinced, that such a Line does not exist; and that there can be no medium between acknowledging and denying that power in all cases. Which of these two alternatives is most consistent with Law, with the principles of Liberty, and with the happiness of the Colonies, let the public determine. To them the writer submits his sentiments, with that respectful deference to their judgment, which, in all questions affecting them, every individual should pay. August 17, 1774 (Advertisement, pp. [iii]–iv).

No question can be more important to Great-Britain, and to the Colonies, than this—Does the legislative authority of the British Parliament extend over them?...

My sentiments concerning this matter are not so singular. They coincide with the declarations and remonstrances of the Colonies against the statutes imposing taxes on them. It was their unanimous opinion, that the Parliament have no right to exact obedience to those statutes; and, consequently, that the colonies are under no obligation to obey them.... [T]he Commons of Great-Britain have no dominion over their equals and fellow subjects in America (pp. [1], 28).


Quincy (1744–1775) and Adams were the legal defense team for the soldiers in the trial following the Boston Massacre.

If any should now say—we are a commercial people—commercial plans can only save us. If any think that the ideas of the merchant are at this day to give spring to our nerves and vigour to our actions; if any say, that empire in this age of the world, is only founded in commerce:—let him show me the people emancipated from oppression by commercial principles and measures: let him point me that unexplored land, where trade and slavery flourish together. Till then, I must hold a different creed; and believe—that tho’ commercial views may not be altogether unprofitable; that tho’ commercial plans may do much, they never can do all. With regard then, to how much the merchant, the artificer, the citizen and the husbandman may do, let us no longer differ. But let every one apply his strength and abilities to that mighty burden, which unless removed, must crush us all. Americans have one common interest to unite them; that interest must cement them. Natural allies, they have published to the world professions of reciprocal esteem and confidence, aid and assistance; they have pledged their faith of mutual friendship and alliance. Not only common danger, bondage, and disgrace; but national truth and honour conspire to make the colonists resolve to—stand or fall together (pp. 24–25).


A prolific writer of both history and political theory, Burke (1729/30–1797) was born in Dublin and studied law at the Middle Temple in London. Having
never acquired a true taste for the law, he entered Parliament in 1766 at the age of thirty-six—at that time, considered quite late for someone with political ambitions. He quickly became embroiled in the Stamp Act crisis, speaking in favor of the ministry’s plans to repeal the Stamp Act, but asserting its sovereignty through the Declaratory Act of 1766. As the American Revolution began to foment, Burke supported the grievances of the colonies, arguing that rather than adhere strictly to the sovereignty laws and practices of the time, Britain should attempt to maintain an advantageous relationship with the colonies. He is credited with helping to end the conflict through his continuous, persuasive speeches in Parliament.

Let us, Sir, embrace some system or other before we end this session. Do you mean to tax America, and draw a productive revenue from thence? If you do, speak out: name, fix, ascertain this revenue; settle its quantity; define its objects; provide for its collection; and then fight when you have something to fight for. If you murder—rob! If you kill, take possession! and do not appear in the character of madmen, as well as assassins, violent, vindictive, bloody, and tyrannical, without an object. But may better counsels guide you!

Again, and again, revert to your own principles—seek peace and ensure it—leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself. I am not here going into the distinctions of rights, not attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they antiently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They, and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions, in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burthen them by taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools; for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if, intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government, by urging subtle deductions, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the boar will surely turn upon the hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? they will cast your sovereignty in your face. No body will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up, and tell me, what one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry, by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose, without the least share in granting them? When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in America will feel that this slavery—that it is legal slavery, will be no compensation, either to his feelings or his understanding (pp. 52–53).
Extract, from the Journal of the Proceedings, of the Honorable American Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, September Fifth 1774. Being That Part of Their Address to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, ... [Philadelphia, 1776].

On October 24, 1774, Congress issued its “Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec” inviting representatives to Philadelphia in exercise of their rights as Englishmen. (The defeat of France in 1763 placed Quebec under English rule.) The text was translated into French as well as widely reprinted in English. In 1776, Philadelphia printer Robert Bell edited the text and used it to remind Americans of their rights. With the running head “THE AMERICAN CONGRESS ON THE RIGHTS OF ENGLISHMEN,” he issued both a separate, six-page publication and included it as part of James Chalmer’s commentary on Paine’s Common Sense.
“These are the invaluable rights, that form a considerable part of our mild system of government; that, sending its equitable energy through all ranks and classes of men, defends the poor from the rich, the weak from the powerful, the industrious from the rapacious, the peaceable from the violent, the tenants from the lords, and all from their superiors.”

“These are the rights, without which a people cannot be free and happy, and under the protecting and encouraging influence of which, these colonies have hitherto so amazingly flourished and increased. These are the rights, a profligate ministry are now striving, by force of arms, to ravish from us, and which we are, with one mind, resolved never to resign but with our lives.”

“These are the rights, YOU are entitled to, and ought at this moment in perfection to exercise” (p. [6]).


The first bishop of the Church of England in America, Seabury (1729–1796) was known to be an ardent Loyalist. At his ordination, he had sworn allegiance to the crown, and he had trouble understanding how a church could exist independently of state support. To these ends, he published a series of partly anonymous pamphlets in defense of the British crown, the first of which was Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress. Seabury begins:

Permit me to address you upon a subject, which, next to your eternal welfare in a future world, demands your most serious and dispassionate consideration. The American Colonies are unhappily involved in a scene of confusion and discord. The bands of civil society are broken; the authority of government weakened, and in some instances taken away: Individuals are deprived of their liberty; their property is frequently invaded by violence, and not a single Magistrate has had courage or virtue enough to interpose. From this distressed situation it was hoped, that the wisdom and prudence of the Congress lately assembled at Philadelphia, would have delivered us. The eyes of all men were turned to them. We ardently expected that some prudent scheme of accommodating our unhappy disputes with the Mother-Country, would have been adopted and pursued. But alas! they are broken up without ever attempting it: they have taken no one step that tended to peace: they have gone on from bad to worse, and have either ignorantly misunderstood, carelessly neglected, or basely betrayed the interests of all the Colonies (p. [3]).


Born in the British West Indies, Hamilton (1757–1804) attended King’s College (now Columbia University) in New York. A brilliant lawyer and orator, he became known for his impassioned rhetoric, he gave a day-long speech at the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention encouraging, among other things, a strong central government and a president elected for life. An ardent nation-
alist, he is credited with writing the majority of the Federalist Papers. Besides his legal work, Hamilton was also interested in economics, and is today perhaps best remembered as the leading force behind the chartering of the Bank of the United States and the development of the modern Treasury system.

Hamilton was a seventeen-year-old undergraduate when he wrote this reply to Seabury’s Tory pamphlet.

Friends and Countrymen, It was hardly to be expected that any man could be so presumptuous, as openly to controvert the equity, wisdom, and authority of the measures, adopted by the congress: an assembly truly respectable on every account!—Whether we consider the characters of the men, who composed it; the number, and dignity of their constituents, or the important ends for which they were appointed. But, however improbable such a degree of presumption might have seemed, we find there are some, in whom it exists. Attempts are daily making to diminish the influence of their decisions, and prevent the salutary effects, intended by them.—The impotence of such insidious efforts is evident from the general indignation they are treated with; so that no material ill-consequences can be dreaded from them. But lest they should have a tendency to mislead, and prejudice the minds of a few; it cannot be deemed altogether useless to bestow some notice upon them (p. [1]).

Seabury answered Hamilton, whose reply was the final public parry.

After 1774


Burgh (1714–1775) was famous for his education policies, on which his early works focused. He eventually became disillusioned with the aristocracy of his youth and wrote Political Disquisitions, a three-volume work that emphasized the need for free speech along with encouraging a primitive form of universal suffrage. In Philadelphia in 1775, Robert Bell reprinted Burgh. Bell’s reprints of Enlightenment figures, such as Blackstone, put their work into the hands of the revolutionary generation at prices undercutting London publishers.

In a country which pretends to be free, and where, consequently, the people ought to have weight in the government, it is peculiarly necessary that the people be possessed of just notions of the interest of their country, and be qualified to distinguish between those who are faithful to them, and those who betray them.
It must, I think, fill every generous mind with indignation, to see our good-natured countrymen abused over and over, from generation to generation, by the same stale dog-tricks repeatedly played upon them, by a succession of pretended patriots, who, by these means, have screwed out their predecessors, and wormed themselves into their places. To teach the people a set of solid political principles, the knowledge of which may make them proof against such gross abuse, is one great object of this publication (General preface, pp. xi–xii).

A product of the Second Continental Congress, the Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America, also known as the “Declaration of Arms,” was meant to explain to Britain and the rest of the world the exact reasons why the colonists were rising up against their colonial overlords. It is a continuation of the “Declaration of Rights and Grievances,” first published in the Pennsylvania Gazette for November 9, 1774. The “Declaration of Arms” was written by Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson. It is notable that the text does not express a wish to break with Britain, a sentiment soon to change.

If it was possible for men, who exercise their reason, to believe, that the Divine Author of our existence intended a part of the human race to hold an absolute property in, and an unbounded power over others, marked out by his infinite goodness and wisdom, as the objects of a legal domination never rightfully resistible, however severe and oppressive, the inhabitants of these Colonies might at least require from the Parliament of Great-Britain, some evidence, that this dreadful authority over them has been granted to that body (p. [3]).

We are reduced to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force—The latter is our choice.—We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery.—Honor, justice, and humanity forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage upon them.

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable.—We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in warlike operations, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves.—With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world declare, that, exerting the utmost energy of those powers, which our beneficent Creator hath graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firm-
ness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties, being with one mind resolved, to dye Free-men rather than to live Slaves (pp. 11–12).

[Edmund Burke]. The Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq; on Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775. London, 1775.

In the second of his two “American” speeches, Burke continued to urge cooperation between Britain and the colonies. He advocated the abandonment of current and future taxation legislation and a return to the mild “whig” government of previous administrations.

In this Character of the Americans, a love of Freedom is the predominating feature, which marks and distinguishes the whole: and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your Colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of Liberty is stronger in the English Colonies probably than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

First, the people of the Colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored her freedom. The Colonists emigrated from you, when this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to Liberty, but to Liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract Liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point, which by way of eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of Taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates; or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of Taxes the ablest pens, and most eloquent tongues have been exercised; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English constitution, to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove, that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments, and blind usages, to reside in a certain body called an House of Commons. They went much further; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people; whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that, in all monarchies, the people must in effect themselves mediately or immediately possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The Colonies draw from you as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific
point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered in twenty other particulars, without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is not easy indeed to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is, that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination, that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles (pp. 15–17).

1776—Annus mirabilis


Price (1723–1791), a dissenting minister, published works across a wide range of fields, including theology, demography, actuarial works, and political theory. He emphasized the right to self-government, especially the validity of different forms of self-government. Although he did not actively perpetuate the idea of social contract, many of his arguments are implicit in the theory. A political and philosophical radical, Price attempted to argue for an objective view of moral judgment, which led to a friendly pamphlet war with Joseph Priestley.

Writing in defense of the American patriots, Price distinguished between four types of liberty: physical, moral, religious, and civil. Emphasizing the importance of civil liberty, which he defines as the right to govern oneself, Price argues that in order to enjoy one's natural rights, a person must participate in the government of his own community, which must not be dependent on the will of another.

After all that has been written on the dispute with America, no reader can expect to be informed, in this publication, of much that he has not before known. Perhaps, however, he may find in it some new matter; and if he should, it will be chiefly in the Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, and the Policy of the War with America; and in the Appendix (Advertisement, p. [iii]).

Our Colonies in North America appear to be now determined to do and suffer every thing, under the persuasion, that Great Britain is attempting to rob them of that Liberty to which every member of society, and all civil communities, have a natural and unalienable right. The question, therefore, whether this is a reasonable persuasion, is highly interesting, and deserves the most careful attention of every Englishman who values Liberty, and wishes to avoid staining himself with the guilt of invading it. But it is impossible to judge properly of this question without correct ideas of Liberty in gen-
eral; and of the nature, limits, and principles of Civil Liberty *in particular* (p. [1]).

The Liberty of *America* might have preserved our Liberty; and, under the direction of a patriot king or wise minister, proved the means of restoring to us our almost lost constitution. Perhaps, in time, we might also have been brought to see the necessity of carefully watching and restricting our paper-credit: And thus we might have regained safety; and, in union with our Colonies, have been more than a match for every enemy, and risen to a situation of honour and dignity never before known amongst mankind.——But I am forgetting myself.——Our Colonies are likely to be lost for ever. Their love is turned into hatred; and their respect for our government into resentment and abhorrence (p. 70).

---


Following on Cartwright’s appeal for American independence was advocacy of parliamentary reform, as laid out on the fold-out of this pamphlet:
Common Sense; Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, ... Philadelphia, 1776. “A New Edition.” (See frontispiece.)

“Its effects were sudden and extensive upon the American mind. It was read by public men, repeated in clubs, spouted in Schools, and in one instance, delivered from the pulpit instead of a sermon by a clergyman in Connecticut.” So wrote physician Benjamin Rush, Princeton class of 1760, about Thomas Paine’s Common Sense. Paine (1737–1809) argued for the value of a republican society and a government without a monarch. Its circulation reached at least 120,000 copies at the time of the Revolution, and more than any other popular document, it fanned the revolutionary imagination.

To the revolutionaries, a loyal pamphleteer; to the loyalists, a rabble-rouser—Paine was in life, as in prose, ever balancing dichotomies. He apprenticed at twelve to his stay-making father, ran away at sixteen to crew on a glorified pirate ship, the privateer William Death. During subsequent years, Paine returned to stay-making, again abandoned it, took up the excise, was debarred from it, returned again to stay-making, and again returned to the excise. Finally, in 1774, Paine emigrated to America with a letter of introduction from Franklin, began work as an editor, and it was in the next year that he wrote this, his most famous pamphlet.

The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances hath, 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.

P.S. The Publication of this new Edition hath been delayed, with a View of taking notice (had it been necessary) of any Attempt to refute the Doctrine of Independence: As no Answer hath yet appeared, it is now presumed that none will, the Time needful for getting such a Performance ready for the Public being considerably past.

Who the Author of this Production is, is wholly unnecessary to the Public, as the Object of Attention is the Doctrine itself, not the Man. Yet it may not be unnecessary to say, That he is unconnected with any Party, and under no sort of Influence public or private, but the influence of reason and principle.

Philadelphia, February 14, 1776
(Introduction).

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 [sic]. 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
COMMON SENSE.
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 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 peaceful 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 [sic], 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 [sic] 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 (pp. 36–37).
THE AMERICAN CRISIS,

NUMBER I.

BY THE AUTHOR OF COMMON SENSE.

These are the times that try men's souls; the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: 'Tis dearest, only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to set a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as Freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared, that she has a right (not only to tax) but "to bind us in all cases whatsoever," and if being bound in that manner is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious, for to unlimited a power can belong only to God.

Whether the Independence of the Continent was declared too soon, or delay did too long, I will not now enter into an argument; my own simple opinion is, that had it been eight months earlier, it would have been much better. We did not make a proper use of last winter, neither could we, while we were in a dependant state. However, the fault, if it were one,
These are the times that try men’s souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly:—It is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods: it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared, that she has a right (not only to tax) but "to bind us in all cases whatsoever," and if being bound in that manner is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious, for so unlimited a power can belong only to God (p. [1]).

If Britain cannot conquer us, it proves, that she is neither able to govern nor protect us, and our particular situation now is such that any connexion with her would be unwisely exchanging a half-defeated enemy for two powerful ones. Europe, by every appearance and information, is now on the eve, nay, on the morning twilight of a war, and any alliance with George the Third brings France and Spain upon our backs; a separation from him attach [sic] them to our side; therefore the only road to Peace, Honour and Commerce, is Independence (p. 54).

Beyond 1776


Parsons (1750–1813) was instrumental in forming the Massachusetts constitution, the oldest functioning constitution in the world. A staunch federalist, he was a member of the Essex Junto, a group of lawyers and merchants who opposed the original Massachusetts constitution amid fears that it took a too-liberal approach to both civil and property rights. This document, also known as the “Essex Result,” came after a proposed constitution was soundly defeated in a popular vote. It showed that the people wanted more control over the writing of their constitution, and after following Parson’s recommendations, the Massachusetts constitutional convention managed to produce the first such document in history.

The freemen inhabiting the territory of the Massachusetts Bay are now forming a political society for themselves. Perhaps their situation is more favorable in some respects, for erecting a free government, than any other people were ever favored
with. That attachment to old forms, which usually embarrasses, has not place amongst them. They have the history and experience of all States before them. Mankind have been toiling through ages for their information; and the philosophers and learned men of antiquity have trimmed their midnight lamps, to transmit to them instruction: We live also in an age, when the principles of political liberty, and the foundation of governments, have been freely canvassed, and fairly settled. Yet some difficulties we have to encounter. Not content with removing our attachment to the old government, perhaps we have contracted a prejudice against some part of it without foundation. The idea of liberty has been held up in so dazzling colours, that some of us may not be willing to submit to that subordination necessary in the freest States. Perhaps we may say further, that we do not consider ourselves united as brothers, with an united interest, but have fancied a clashing of interests amongst the various classes of men, and have acquired a thirst of power, and a wish of domination, over some of the community. We are contending for freedom—Let us all be equally free—it is possible, and it is just. Our interests when candidly considered are one. Let us have a constitution founded, not upon party or prejudice—not one for to-day or to morrow—but for posterity. Let Esto perpetua be it’s motto. If it is founded in good policy; it will be founded in justice and honesty. Let all ambitious and interested views be discarded, and let regard be had only to the good of the whole, in which the situation and rights of posterity must be considered: and let equal justice be done to all the members of the community; and we thereby imitate our common father, who at our births, dispersed his favors, not only with a liberal, but with an equal hand (pp. 11–12).

*A Constitution, or Frame of Government, Agreed upon by the Delegates of the People of the State of Massachusetts-Bay, in Convention, ... at Cambridge on the First of September, 1779, ... to the Second of March, 1780, ... Boston, 1780.*

Drafted by John Adams (1735–1826), this remains the world’s oldest functioning written constitution. It consists of four parts: a preamble, a declaration of rights, a description of the framework of government, and articles of amendment.

The end of the institution, maintenance, and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body-politic; to protect it; and to furnish the individuals who compose it, with the power of enjoying, in safety and tranquility, their natural rights, and the blessings of life: And whenever these great objects are not obtained, the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness.

The body-politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals: It is a social compact, by which the whole people covenants with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good. It is the duty of the people, therefore, in framing a Constitution of Government, to provide for an equitable mode of making laws, as well as for an impartial interpretation, and a faithful execution of them; that every man may, at all times, find his security in them.

We, therefore, the people of Massachusetts, acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the goodness of the great Legislator of the
Universe, in affording us, in the course of His providence, an opportunity, deliberately and peaceably, without fraud, violence or surprize, of entering into an original, explicit, and solemn compact with each other; and of forming a new Constitution of Civil Government, for ourselves and posterity; and devoutly imploring His direction in so interesting a design, DO agree upon, ordain and establish, the following Declaration of Rights, and Frame of Government, as the CONSTITUTION of the COMMONWEALTH of Massachus-etuTS (Preamble, pp. [5]–6).


The Lapidus copy is inscribed by Pownall, “From the Editor to Mr. Whar[ton].” Charles Henry Wharton (1748–1833) was a Maryland-born Roman Catholic priest who converted to the Church of England, returned to Maryland in 1783, and became a leading Episcopal clergyman.

North-America is become a new primary planet in the system of the world, which while it takes its own course, in its own orbit, must have effect on the orbit of every other planet, and shift the common center of gravity of the whole system of the European world.

North-America is de facto an independent power which has taken its equal station with other powers, and must be so de fure. The politicians of the Governments of Europe may reason or negociate upon this idea, as a matter sub lite.... The independence of America is fixed as fate; she is mistress of her own fortune;—knows that she is so, and will actuate that power which she feels she hath, so as to establish her own system, and to change the system of Europe (pp. 4–5).


Richard Price (1723–1791) was a dissenting minister who officiated congregations in several locales in England, as well as a writer of several works on morals, politics, and economics. Several thousand copies of this work were sold within a few days. A cheap edition was soon issued; the pamphlet was extolled by one set of politicians, and abused by another. Among its critics were Dr. Markham, Archbishop of York, John Wesley, and Edmund Burke, and its author rapidly became one of the best-known men in England. In recognition of his services in the cause of liberty, Dr. Price was presented with the freedom of the city of London.

With heart-felt satisfaction, I see the revolution in favour of universal liberty which has taken place in America;—a revolution which opens a new prospect in human affa-
themselves will be the greatest gainers, if wise enough to improve properly the check that has been given to the despotism of their ministers, and to catch the flame of virtuous liberty which has saved their American brethren.

The late war, in its *commencement and progress*, did great good by disseminating just sentiments of the rights of mankind, and the nature of legitimate government; by exciting a spirit of resistance to tyranny, which has emancipated one *European* country, and is likely to emancipate others; and by occasioning the establishment in *America* of forms of government more equitable and more liberal than any that the world has yet known. But, in its *termination*, the war has done still greater good by preserving the new governments from that destruction in which they must have been involved, had Britain conquered; by providing, in a sequestered continent possessed of many singular advantages, a place of refuge for oppressed men in every region of the world; and by laying the foundation there of an empire which may be the seat of liberty, science and virtue, and from whence there is reason to hope these sacred blessings will spread, till they become universal and the time arrives when kings and priests shall have no more power to oppress, and that ignominious slavery which has hitherto debased the world is exterminated (pp. 2–3).