

Thus having stated the principal causes of our last Revolution, it is as clear as the sun in meridian that *George* the Third has injured the *Americans* at least as grievously as *James* the Second injured the People of *England*; but that *James* did not oppress these in so criminal a manner as *George* has oppressed the *Americans*. Having also stated the law on the case, I am naturally led to point out to you some of the great benefits resulting from that Revolution.

In one word, then, you have a form of Government in every respect preferable to the mode under the *British* authority. And this will most clearly appear by contrasting the two forms of Government.

Under the *British* authority, Governours were sent over to us who were utterly unacquainted with our local interests, the genius of the people, and our laws. Generally, they were but too much disposed to obey the mandates of an arbitrary Ministry; and if the Governour behaved ill, we could not by any peaceable means procure redress. But, under our present happy Constitution, our Executive Magistrate arises according to the spirit and letter of Holy Writ: "Their Governours shall proceed from the midst of them." Thus, the people have an opportunity of choosing a man intimately acquainted with their true interests, their genius, and their laws; a man perfectly disposed to defend them against arbitrary Ministers, and to promote the happiness of that people from among whom he was elevated, and by whom, without the least difficulty, he may be removed and blended in the common mass.

Again, under the *British* authority it was in effect declared, that we had no property; nay, that we could not possess any; and that we had not any of the rights of humanity. For men who knew us not; men who gained in proportion as we lost, arrogated to themselves a right to bind us in all cases whatsoever. But our Constitution is calculated to free us from foreign bondage; to secure to us our property; to maintain to us the rights of humanity; and to defend us and our posterity against *British* authority, aiming to reduce us to the most abject slavery.

Again, the *British* authority declared that we should not erect slitting-mills; and to this unjust law we implicitly and respectfully submitted, so long as with safety to our lives we could yield obedience to such authority. But a resolution of Congress now grants a premium to encourage the construction of such mills. The *British* authority discouraged our attempting to manufacture for our own consumption; but the new Constitution, by authorizing the disbursement of large sums of money, by way of loan or premium, encourages the making of iron, bar-steel, nail-rods, gun-locks, gun-barrels, sulphur, nitre, gunpowder, lead, woollens, cottons, linens, paper, and salt.

Upon the whole, it has been the policy of the *British* authority to oblige us to supply our wants at their market, (which is the dearest in the known world,) and to cramp and confine our trade so as to be subservient to their commerce, our real interest being ever out of the question. On the other hand, the new Constitution is wisely adapted to enable us to trade with foreign nations, and thereby to supply our wants at the cheapest markets in the universe; to extend our trade infinitely beyond what it has ever been known; to encourage manufacturers amongst us; and it is peculiarly formed to promote the happiness of the People, from among whom, by virtue and merit, the poorest man may arrive at the highest dignity. Oh, *Carolians*! happy would you be under this new Constitution, if you knew your happy state.

Possessed of a constitution of Government, founded upon so generous, equal, and natural a principle—a Government expressly calculated to make the People rich, powerful, virtuous, and happy—who can wish to change it, to return under a Royal Government, the vital principles of which are the reverse in every particular? It was my duty to lay this happy Constitution before you in its genuine light. It is your duty to understand, to instruct others, and to defend it.

I might here, with propriety, quit this truly important subject; but my anxiety for the publick weal compels me yet to detain your attention, while I make an observation or two upon one particular part of the Constitution.

When all the various attempts to enslave *America* by fraud, under guise of law, by military threats, by famine, massacre, breach of publick faith, and open war—I say,

when these things are considered on the one hand, and, on the other, the Constitution expressing that some mode of Government should be established "until an accommodation of the unhappy differences between *Great Britain* and *America* can be obtained; an event which, though traduced and treated as Rebels, we still ardently desire"—I say, when these two points are contrasted, can we avoid revering the magnanimity of that great council of the State, who, after such injuries, could entertain such a principle? But the virtuous are ever generous. We do not wish revenge. We earnestly wish an accommodation of our unhappy disputes with *Great Britain*; for we prefer peace to war. Nay, there may be even such an accommodation as (excluding every idea of revenue by taxation or duty, or of legislation by act of Parliament) may vest the King of *Great Britain* with such a limited dominion over us as may tend, *bona fide*, to promote our true commercial interests, and to secure our freedom and safety—the only just ends of any dominion.

But while I declare thus much on the one side, on the other it is my duty also to declare that, in my opinion, our true commercial interests cannot be provided for but by such a material alteration of the *British* acts of Navigation as, according to the resolve of the honourable the Continental Congress, will "secure the commercial advantages of the whole Empire to the Mother Country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members;" and that our liberties and safety cannot be depended upon if the King of *Great Britain* should be allowed to hold our forts and cannon, or to have authority over a single regiment in *America*, or a single ship-of-war in our ports. For if he hold our forts, he may turn them against us, as he did *Boston* against her proprietors. If he acquire our cannon, he will effectually disarm the Colony. If he has a command of troops among us, even if we raise and pay them, shackles are fixed upon us; witness *Ireland* and her National Army. The most express act of Parliament cannot give us security; for acts of Parliament are as easily repealed as made. Royal Proclamations are not to be depended upon; witness the disappointments of the inhabitants of *Quebeck* and *St. Augustine*. Even a change of Ministry will not avail us, because, notwithstanding the rapid succession of Ministers, for which the *British* Court has been famous during the present reign, yet the same ruinous policy ever continued to prevail against *America*. In short, I think it my duty to declare, in the awful seat of justice, and before Almighty God, that, in my opinion, the *Americans* can have no safety but by the Divine favour, their own virtue, and their being so prudent as not to leave it in the power of the *British* rulers to injure them.

Indeed, the ruinous and deadly injuries received on our side, and the jealousies entertained (and which, in the nature of things, must daily increase against us) on the other, demonstrate to a mind in the least given to reflection upon the rise and fall of empires, that true reconciliation never can exist between *Great Britain* and *America*, the latter being in subjection to the former. The Almighty created *America* to be independent of *Britain*. Let us beware of the impiety of being backward to act as instruments in the Almighty hand, now extended to accomplish his purpose, and by the completion of which, alone, *America*, in the nature of human affairs, can be secure against the craft and insidious designs of her enemies, who think her prosperity and power already by far too great. In a word, our piety and political safety are so blended, that to refuse our labours in this Divine work, is to refuse to be a great, a free, a pious, and a happy People.

And now, having left the important alternative, (political happiness or wretchedness,) under God, in a great degree in your own hands, I pray the Supreme Arbiter of the affairs of men so to direct your judgment as that you may act agreeable to what seems to be His will, revealed in His miraculous works in behalf of *America*, bleeding at the altar of Liberty!

#### THE PRESENTMENTS OF THE JURY.

*At a Court of General Sessions of the Peace, Oyer and Terminer, Assize and General Jail Delivery, begun to be holden in and for the District of CHARLESTOWN, at CHARLESTOWN, in the Colony aforesaid, on TUESDAY, the*

*23d day of APRIL, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six;*

*The Presentments of the Grand Jury for the said District :*

I. Fully sensible and thoroughly convinced that to live in a society without laws, or a proper execution of them, to restrain the licentious nature of mankind, is the greatest misery that can befall a People, and must render any body of men, in such a situation, but little superior to a herd of brutes; and being no less sensible that it was the scheme of a corrupt, nefarious Administration in *Great Britain*, to reduce the good people of this Colony to that wretched situation, from a want of officers to execute the laws, (those whom they had appointed having refused to act in their respective stations,) that, through the evil effects of anarchy and confusion, the people might become an easy prey to the cruel designs of their insidious enemies: While we lament the necessity which has obliged the people to resume into their hands those powers of Government which were originally derived from themselves for the protection of those rights which *God* alone has given them, as essential to their happiness, we cannot but express our most unfeigned joy in the happy constitution of Government now established in this Colony, which promises every blessing to its inhabitants, which a people, endued with virtue and a just regard to the rights of mankind, could desire. With gratitude to the Divine Ruler of human events, and with the most pleasing expectations of happiness from a Constitution so wise in its nature, and virtuous in its ends, (being founded on the strictest principles of justice and humanity, and consistent with every privilege incident to the dignity of a rational being,) we cannot but declare we think every opposition to its operations, or disregard to its authority, the foulest criminality a mortal can be guilty of; highly offensive in the eyes of *God*, and of all just men, and deserving the most exemplary punishment.

We cannot but deplore the unhappy situation of any few amongst the people of this Colony, who, through an ignorance of their true interests and just rights, and from a want of proper information of the real truth, may be misled, by the artifice and cunning of their false and designing enemies, from a real sense of those benefits which our present Constitution has so amply provided for; benefits which are not confined or limited to any ranks or degrees of men in particular, but generally, equally, and indiscriminately, extending to all, from the richest to the poorest, and which time and a little patient experience must soon evince.

Every good citizen must be happy in the consideration of the choice of those officers, appointed in the administration of our present Government, as well in the impartial mode of an appointment arising from the people themselves, and the limited duration of their power, as in their personal characters as men, justly beloved and revered by their country, and whose merits and virtues entitle them to every pre-eminence.

Filled with these sentiments, arising from mature deliberation and the most impartial inquiry, we must further declare that blessings such as these we have before enumerated, are too inestimable to be lost, and that nothing in nature can repay the least violation of them; and although an accommodation with the power which attempts to destroy them may be highly worthy of attention, and, upon principles truly honourable, of obtaining, yet we think it a sacred duty, incumbent upon every citizen, to maintain and defend, with his life and fortune, what is given and intrusted to him by the hand of Providence, not for his own good only, but for the lasting happiness of posterity; a trust which no law can ever annul, which is the grand principle of existence, and the source of every social virtue.

II. We present, as a grievance intolerable to the spirit of a people born and nurtured in the arms of freedom, and (though ever submissive to the just mandates of legal authority) holding every oppression as detestable,—the unjust, cruel, and diabolical acts of the *British* Parliament, not only declaring the good people of the United Colonies of *North-America* Rebels, for defending those invaluable rights which no human power can lawfully divest them of, but making all murders, rapines, thefts, robberies, and other inhuman oppressions, done before the passing of those acts without authority, and which were, after the passing the said acts, to be done by the *British* forces in these Colonies,

legal and warrantable, to the eternal disgrace and indelible infamy of a kingdom once renowned for her justice, honour, and humanity, but now meanly descending to that wanton profligacy which even Savages abhor.

III. We present, as a very great grievance, the indulgence allowed to all those who are inimical to the liberties of *America*, and the operations of the United Colonies, amongst us, in suffering them to reside here, and be admitted to intercourses dangerous to the peace and welfare of this Colony.

IV. We present, that the publick oaths, directed by an act of the General Assembly (passed since the forming of our present Constitution) to be administered to those exercising publick offices, trusts, and professions, are not administered to such of the Clergy as are included in the same.

V. We present, that the times at which the several Parochial Committees meet, or are appointed for their meeting, are not made publick; and we do recommend that they do publish the same in the publick papers, that all persons who are desirous of obtaining leave to sue for debts, may know when to apply.

VI. We present, as a great grievance, more particularly at this time, the want of due attention to the roads and ferries in this Colony; many of the roads not being sufficiently wide and worked upon, agreeable to law, and the ferries, in general, not having boats sufficient to forward passengers upon any emergent occasion.

VII. We present, as a grievance, the too frequent forestalling out of the wagons, coming from the back parts of the country, the many necessities of life, by which the good inhabitants of this town are obliged to pay most exorbitant prices for the same; and, with submission, would recommend a place to be appointed for the sale of bacon, flour, butter, and other such necessities, brought to town in carriages, to be regulated by the market act.

VIII. We present the want of a proper person, by law, to oblige the sellers of blades and hay to weigh the same at a publick scale.

JONATHAN SCOTT, Foreman, [L. s.]	
GEORGE COOKE, [L. s.]	JOHN SMYTH, [L. s.]
THOMAS JONES, [L. s.]	JOSEPH JENKINS, [L. s.]
JOHN LIGHTWOOD, [L. s.]	JOSEPH COX, [L. s.]
PETER LEGER, [L. s.]	DANIEL LESSESNE, [L. s.]
PHILIP MEYER, [L. s.]	LEWIS DUTARQUE, [L. s.]
ISAAC MAZYCK, [L. s.]	JOHN SINGLETARY, [L. s.]
JOHN OWEN, [L. s.]	

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO DELEGATES FOR CHARLOTTE COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

At a meeting of the Committee of *Charlotte* County, *April 23, 1776*, present the Chairman and fifteen Members:

*Resolved*, That in this truly alarming and important crisis of our publick affairs, it is expedient that the Delegates lately chosen for this County should know the sentiments of their constituents, and be instructed what part it is desired and expected they will act in the ensuing Convention.

*To PAUL CARRINGTON, and THOMAS READ, Esq's :*

*GENTLEMEN:* When we consider the despotick plan adopted by the King, Ministry, and Parliament of *Great Britain*, insidiously pursued for these twelve years past, to enslave *America*; when we consider that they have turned a deaf ear to the repeated petitions and remonstrances of this and our sister Colonies, and that they have been equally inattentive to the rights of freemen and the *British* Constitution; and when we consider that they have for some time been endeavouring to enforce their arbitrary mandates by fire and sword, and likewise encouraging, by every means in their power, our savage neighbours, and our more savage domesticks, to spill the blood of our wives and children; and to crown the whole, they have added insult to their injustice and cruelty, by repeatedly pretending to hold out the olive-branch of peace in such a way as teacheth us that they are determined to persist in their hellish designs, and that nothing is intended for us but the most abject slavery; of this we can no longer doubt, since we have been made acquainted with a late letter from the Secretary of State to Governor *Eden*, and the late act of Parliament for seizing and confiscating all our ships and property that may fall into their hands:

"Therefore, despairing of any redress of our grievances