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## Response to John Wesley Appeal to American Colonies

Evangelical Advocacy: A Response to Global Poverty

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## ***A CONSTITUTIONAL ANSWER TO WESLEY'S CALM ADDRESS***

Anonymous

### **A CONSTITUTIONAL ANSWER TO WESLEY'S CALM ADDRESS**

Anonymous

- LONDON

1775

Hard on the heels of John Wesley's *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies* (number 13 herein), there appeared this anonymous rebuttal and attack entitled *A Constitutional Answer to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Calm Address to the American Colonies*, which was also published in London in 1775, one of at least fourteen tracts published in the last three months of that year attacking Wesley.

The approach taken is a point-by-point refutation of Wesley's argument in terms of constitutional law and the political theory of British government. In this respect, the argument nicely complements the analysis contained in John Joachim Zubly's *An Humble Inquiry* of 1769 (number 9 herein), which is to say that the American understanding of the British constitution is set forth precisely and concisely. The principles of free government require that taxes not be *taken*; rather they are *given* or *granted* by representatives of the people: no representatives, then no taxes; no elections, then no representatives. This is why the Tory position of Wesley is wrong and the American and parliamentary opposition position is right. The Americans are not and cannot be represented in the House of Commons. And the author comes very close to saying, as Edmund Burke had told the House of Commons a few months earlier, that England had long prized liberty, but slavery the Americans could have anywhere.

While *A Calm Address* was only the first of some eight royalist pamphlets published by Wesley during the course of the American Revolution, none of the others evoked anything like the same reaction. The primary reason for this was Wesley's expressed fear in the 1775 tract that republican agitators and supporters of America in England intended to seize the opportunity of overturning the monarchy and setting up a republic while British troops were engaged across the Atlantic. This attack on the patriotism and loyalty of pro-American Englishmen was regarded as scandalous and libelous, and the most immoderate invective was heaped upon Wesley's head. Thus, *A Constitutional Answer's* author derisively writes: "I cannot think that you believe your own assertion."

The writer does not fail to twist the knife of plagiarism in Wesley's ribs for his "retailing [Dr. Samuel] Johnson's book without acknowledgement," a matter discussed in the note on Wesley. We know that Dr. Johnson was not annoyed by this use of his text. In a letter dated February 6, 1776, Johnson wrote Wesley that the borrowings from *Taxation No Tyranny* Johnson much valued as "your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours, may justly confirm me in my own opinion." The ministry certainly agreed with that view, for it had purchased the whole first edition of the Wesley publication and had it delivered to the door of every church in London.

An air of contempt pervades the piece reprinted here, which concludes by deploring the spectacle of a Christian minister deserving of esteem having now transformed himself into a "court sycophant" who cannot distinguish between the free government provided by the English constitution and the arbitrary government of France and Spain. The author proclaims himself a partisan of the "original universal rights of man."

Who was the author of this powerful rebuttal of the *Calm Address*? If a guess is to be ventured—and I stress that it is only a guess—a reasonable candidate may be John Almon (1737–1805), the "J. Almon" of the title page. Almon overtly had a hand in publishing the piece, and he or one of his close associates may well have written it. He himself was a bookseller, journalist, and confidant of John Wilkes and Edmund Burke. Almon had been convicted in 1770 for selling a copy of the *London Museum* containing a reprint of the *Junius Letter*. He had long been associated with opposition politics and was bookseller to "The Coterie," an opposition club. Beginning in 1774 Almon published *The Parliamentary Record*, the first monthly record of parliamentary proceedings. The political and constitutional perspective of the author of *A Constitutional Answer* and the subtle command of the technical subject matter of the law suggest the possibility of Almon's authorship.

*Sir,*

A pamphlet, to which you have affixed your name, has been lately distributed with uncommon diligence. You call it *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*. This title is a deception; you know that the colonies are determined: your design is, to deceive undetermined Englishmen, into approbation of the measures of administration.

You present your book to the world, as your own; but the greatest part of it is taken, *verbatim*, from *Taxation No Tyranny*, written by the pensioned Dr. Johnson, a declared enemy of civil and religious liberty! This is another deception, equally mean and obvious.

Your first section contains Johnson's definition of an English colony. It gives the idea of

a number of persons, who, by the king's permission, emigrated in search of supposed advantages, which, if obtained, were to be secured to them by charters.

But the colonists were a number of persons, who fled from tyranny at home, to conquer and cultivate new countries at their own expence. From the parent state, for above a century, they

received little or no assistance: their monopolized commerce was, at last, thought worth protection; their increased property is, now, thought worth taxation.

You say,

Considering English colonies are a kind of corporations subsisting by charters, nothing can be more plain than that the supreme power in England has a right to tax them.

Do you mean, by the supreme power, the collective body of king, lords, and commons? If you do, you must be ignorant, that the Commons *only* have the power of taxing the people; that money is not *taken*, but *given*; that the concurrence of the lords, in money bills, is only to tax themselves; and that the concurrence of the king, in such bills, is only to give them the force of law.

You say,

That the English government has made laws for the colonies, which laws they have received and obeyed; therefore, the English government has a right to tax them: the reception of any law draws after it, by a chain which cannot be broken, the necessity of admitting taxation.

This is false: the acts of legislation, and taxation, are distinct operations; the first is exercised by the three estates of king, lords, and commons, the last by the commons only. If the reception of a law is an acknowledgment of sovereignty, it is not an acknowledgment that such sovereignty may be maintained in an unconstitutional manner. Penal and œconomical laws are received and obeyed in England; the reception of them may be deemed an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of government; but does not prove, that government has a right to abrogate Magna Charta, abolish trial by jury, or vest in the king an arbitrary power of levying money on the subject: such acts, though sanctified by consent of the three estates, would be violations of the constitution, and, consequently, void in themselves, and "*to be holden for nought.*" 42 Ed. III. Lord Coke, Lord Somers, &c.

You next attempt to prove, that the colonies are as much represented in the English Parliament, as the majority of the people of England: "All public business," you say,

must be done by delegation; the delegates are chosen by a select number; and those who are not electors, who are by far the greater part, stand by idle and helpless spectators.

That most publick business must be done by delegation, is true; but the choice of delegates, or representatives in England, was originally in the people at large; the vesting it, afterwards, in a select number, was a variation made by consent of the people for the sake of convenience. The non-electors, and electors of England, are so blended together, that the former must often influence the conduct of the latter; and having, thereby, a share in the power of election, cannot be said, "to stand by idle and helpless spectators."

"The case of electors," you say, "is little better; when they are near equally divided, almost half of them must be governed, not only with, but against their consent."

This is a fallacy. The minority of electors cannot be said to be governed without their consent: they, in common with others, have previously consented, that it should be law to issue the dispute by the voice of the majority; they have, therefore, consented to be governed by him, on whom the choice of that majority shall fall.

You endeavour, by general positions boldly asserted, to represent government and slavery as inseparable. "How has any man," you say,

consented to those laws, which were made before he was born? Our consent to these, nay and to the laws now made in England, is purely passive. In every place, as all men are born the subjects of some state or other, so they are born, passively as it were, consenting to the laws of that state. Any other than this kind of consent, the condition of civil life does not allow.

This is false: The English constitution has better provided for the preservation of liberty. Our consent to the laws by which we are ruled, is so far active, that we may in a manner be said to make them: "*The commons may be said to make law,*" says Johnson himself, in his *False Alarm*; it then suited his purpose to say so. The people at large may, indeed, be said to make law. They desire to have some penal or œconomical law for general benefit; they instruct their delegates; a bill is brought into the House of Commons; the king may refuse the royal assent, but then the House may refuse supplies. Suppose the opinions of the constituents, and the delegates, are opposite; the latter reject the bill: their office is not perpetual, nor irresponsible; at seven years end they may be discarded, and their places filled with more compliant or more faithful successors. *Vice versa*: suppose a law, proposed by any of the three estates of government, is thought oppressive, or otherwise offensive, by the people: the measure is talked of; they petition, they remonstrate; perhaps they succeed; perhaps they do not: in the latter case, the grievance is not eternal; a new parliament may repeal what the old one enacted. If the measure be not a favourite court measure, and the royal assent, as before, be denied; then supplies, as before, may be withholden, till that assent is granted. If the people have less influence over the second estate, the House of Lords; still that house may be supposed to consist of men, guided by reason, and wishing to act in consonance with the rest of their countrymen.

Such are the advantages of our excellent constitution! Blush, if ye can, ye Johnsons and ye Wesleys, who are endeavouring to destroy the idea of them, in the minds of unwary readers; endeavouring to persuade men, that they are inevitably born slaves! If Englishmen are slaves, whose consent to the laws they are ruled by, is merely passive; it is not the fault of their political system, but of their own corruption of morals, and supineness of spirit.

It is the usual art of the court writers of the day, to aim at sinking all ideas of natural equity, and of general popular franchises founded thereon, in the idea of absolute unconditional government, pretending such government indispensable to the subsistence of civil society.

You say,

If the ancestors of the colonists were subjects, they acknowledged a sovereign; if they had a right to English privileges, they were accountable to English laws; and had ceded, to the king and Parliament, the power of disposing, without their consent, of their lives, liberties, and properties.

This is both false and absurd. No Englishman ever ceded, to any king, absolute power over his life or liberty. That precious remain of ancient freedom, *trial by jury*, ever stood and now stands an insuperable bar against the power of sovereign over subject.

No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, nor disseized, nor out-lawed, nor exiled, nor destroyed in any manner; nor will we pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by the lawfull judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. Magna Charta, §. 43.

No Englishman ever ceded, to any king, any power over his property: the right of taxation, as has been shewn, is exclusively vested in the people. No Englishman ever ceded, to the parliament, a power over his life, liberty, and property: he could not cede it to the lords, for the lords, without the commons, cannot make law; he could not cede it to the commons, for ceding it to the commons, would, properly speaking, be ceding it to himself. The force of truth is often too strong, for every effort that can be made to conceal it. You talk of “the people ceding power to the king and Parliament”: if they ceded power, they must have possessed it. *Nemo dat quod non habet*: what a man has not, he cannot give to another; what is given, if abused, may surely be resumed. If the doctrine of resumable power is not admitted, the doctrine of divine hereditary right must be maintained. The first king of every country, must have reigned by divine appointment; and all his successors, be their conduct what it will, must reign by the same title; their subjects must be hereditary slaves, whose lives and properties may be sported with, as men shoot birds, and catch fish, for diversion. Englishmen! beware of these insidious reasoners; these Johnsons and Wesleys, who would persuade you that ye are born slaves!

You admit (as above), that there are original rights of humanity. You tell us, that when the colonists say they are intitled, by nature, to life, liberty and property, they speak true; that when they claim a title to the rights of natural born subjects within the realm of England, they speak true also—but you assert, that “they must resign either one or the other.” This is no consequence.

The rights of nature, and of civil society, are not incompatible; the former are mostly guaranteed by the latter. A man has a natural right to the possessions of his parents, or to those which he has obtained by his own labour; and the laws of society, which prohibit fraud and rapine, instead of destroying that right, contribute to secure it. A man has a natural right to life and liberty: on entering civil society, he does not cede this right, only in certain stipulated circumstances, for the good of that whole whereof he becomes a part; while he is innocent, he is safe and free.

A man has a natural right to his own property: this, on entering civil society, he does not cede at all: he, indeed, by a kind of tacit compact, agrees to subscribe his share to the expence of public security and public œconomy, as the necessity of times may require; but, as no rational being would lavish his wealth without equivalent, he has reserved to himself the sole determination of the existence or degree of that necessity.\*

If he does not properly regard the publick welfare, it is at his own risque; he is more or less a gainer, as it is more or less consulted. Of this general principle, an English House of Commons, in its primarily intended incorrupt state, is a visible modification; money, there, is *granted*, not *taken*; granting, not taking, is the language of the constitution in all ages.

Such are the simple principles of free government, in contradistinction to tyranny! Principles, alas, too little known, too much obscured by the glare of adventitious pomp and purchased power!

You say, that “the colonists, by emigration, did not forfeit the right of voting for representatives in the English Parliament; but lost it by natural effects.” But the privilege of voting for, or choosing a deputy or proxy, to execute the office of a taxer; can be considered as a personal advantage, only in counterpoise to the personal burden of taxation: now, if the good be lost by natural effects, the evil should not be retained by unnatural political ones. There are things called right reason, equity, and justice, though they may not happen to exist in the ideas of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wesley.

When a man removes to a distance, from the part of civil society with which he was connected, he can no longer enjoy the benefits of its political system; and, therefore, cannot justly be assessed to its maintenance.

If the colonists have hitherto supported the administration of justice, and other branches of internal polity, among themselves; what rational plea can be made, for requiring them to support them among us? Can a person be expected to pay for the same thing, in two places?

You say,

He who had a vote for a knight or burgess, did not forfeit that right by crossing the sea, but made the exercise of it no longer possible; he reduced himself from a voter to one of the innumerable multitude that have no votes.

But if such a man was still liable to be taxed by the English Parliament, he reduced himself to a much worse condition.

Non-electors (as has been hinted) have, in England, much influence in elections: persuasion and information, have their weight; the man of superior opulence or knowledge, without a vote himself, can direct the voices of a number.

But an American can have no possible influence in the choice of an English senator; and an English senator, when he taxes an American, *cannot tax himself also*, because he has no property in America to be taxed: yet self-taxation is the sole pledge of the taxer, for security of the taxed. He, who does not tax himself, taxes others without feeling: he may, therefore, tax without propriety, and without measure; may take, not only a fifth, or a fourth, but the half, or even the whole of property; and make the wealthy subject an impoverished slave. The wisest forms of government, adverting to the imperfection of human nature, have, as much as possible, avoided leaving one man at the mercy of another; they have ever contrived some rational restraint on action, some bond of reciprocal safety.

You allow, that “the colonists inherit all the privileges of Englishmen, all the privileges that their ancestors had.” They then inherit the grand privilege of Englishmen, *free government*; but this privilege they do not enjoy, if they are taxed without being represented. It is an axiom which

cannot be too forcibly impressed on the mind “Government cannot be free, where property is *taken not given.*”

You say,

what the ancestors of the colonists did not bring with them, neither they nor their descendants have acquired. They have not, by abandoning their right in one legislation, acquired a right to constitute another; any more than the multitudes in England, who have no vote, have a right to erect a parliament for themselves.

You before said, “they had lost their right in the English legislature, by natural effects.” There is difference between abandoning, and losing by natural effects; one is a voluntary, one an involuntary matter: you have not proved that they either abandoned this right, or lost it; if they have either abandoned, or lost it, and have no right to constitute another system, they must be slaves, or revert to a state of anarchy. Were the body of electors, in England, to become so corrupt or servile, as constantly to refuse men, who had betrayed the cause of liberty; and were such men to subvert the constitution; would not the non-electors have a right to chuse a number of honest delegates, to restore their abolished freedom, to save their country?

You say,

the colonies have a right to all the privileges granted them by regal charters, to all which the king has given them; but not to all which they have given themselves.

The first part of your assertion is undoubtedly true; but it is couched in terms, that might better become the despot of some barbarous region, whose ignorant natives had imbibed.

“The enormous faith of many made for one,” than the advocate of a government that calls itself *free*. What right has any king to any thing (saving his own private property) which is not given him by the people? If the king is the fountain of honours and riches, whence is that fountain supplied? Whence does he derive the prerogative of conferring honours, the ability of bestowing riches but from the people?

If the colonists are the *naked sons of nature*, they have a right to independence, and the enaction of their own laws; if they are subjects of the free English state, they have a right to the grand privilege of other Englishmen, a privilege which no king could confer—legislation, and taxation by representation only. The assertion, that “they are virtually represented,” has been proved an absurdity; a sophism, which even you could scarcely repeat, with a serious countenance.

Your comparison of “a colonial legislature to the vestry of an English parish,” proves nothing to the great point in question, the legality of taxation without representation. The parish assesses itself, in its parochial capacity, for local private uses; in its national capacity, by its representatives, for general publick ones.

The colonies have no representatives; therefore, cannot be liable to parliamentary taxation.

You say, “the charter of Pennsylvania has a clause admitting, in express terms, taxation by Parliament.” Why did you not then produce this clause, that your readers might have judged of its meaning and import for themselves? You do not even tell us the nature of the taxation; whether it was internal or external; whether levied by themselves, or by others. You add, “the first settlers in Massachusetts were promised an exemption from taxes for seven years.” But promised by whom? If the charter contains such a promise, it must be made by the king who granted the charter; but the king could not legally promise an exemption from that which he had not legally a right to impose. I have not time nor opportunity to examine fully the truth of your assertions: but though I give you credit for them so far, as to admit that there are some such clauses as you mention; yet your disingenuous conduct, in retailing Johnson’s book without acknowledgment, makes me justly doubt the truth of your representations. Those clauses could relate, not to taxation, but to requisition only: the right of taxation did not subsist with the king; it did not subsist with the Parliament; it subsisted solely and exclusively with the representatives of the Massachusetts people; and all the exemption promised that people could amount to no more than this, that the king would not require any subsidies from them for seven years. To serve your own purpose, you say, indeed, afterwards, that “the seven years exemption granted to the Massachusetts settlers, was from paying taxes to the king.” Then it may be justly inferred, that they were subsidies demanded by the king in way of requisition, not taxes imposed by Parliament: had the case been otherwise, it would have been produced, before now, as a precedent for external taxation. What opinion the provincials had of external taxation above a hundred years ago, appears from an article in the agreement made by the Virginians with the commonwealth of England, before they would permit a governor sent by that commonwealth to land in their province: “Virginia shall be free from all taxes, customs, and impositions whatsoever; and none shall be imposed upon them, without consent of the general assembly.”\*

“All countries,” you say, “which are subject to laws, are liable to taxes.” Perhaps so; but, perhaps, they are only liable to taxes, raised in a constitutional manner; perhaps it has not been usual, for the government of one country to tax the inhabitants of another, many thousand miles distant. If such taxation were founded on reason, might not the German princes think of taxing the Germans settled in Pennsylvania and New-York? If the tie of birth, between sovereign and subject, is indissoluble by distance and time, they have a pretence for doing it.

You say,

if there is no clause in the charters of the colonies exempting them from taxes, the English Parliament has the same right to tax them as to tax any other English subject.

Your argument here has been answered; I only quote it to demur once more to your mode of expression: the Parliament, collectively considered, has no right to tax any Englishman; it is the Commons, and the Commons only, who possess the peculiar incommunicable power of granting taxes for the people. This is not quibbling about mere insignificant expressions: Taking and giving (I repeat it) are terms affixed to ideas, which constitute the important difference between tyranny and freedom.

I have now gone through the sum total of your arguments, which are every one, without exception, borrowed from Johnson: the remainder of your book is assertion, and declamation; it merits little notice.

An argument, which operates more in favour of the colonists, than any that Johnson has advanced operates against them, is this: That the English government, under the wisest administrations, and in the most necessitous circumstances, never, till lately, attempted to tax them. If government had that right of taxation, why did they not exert it? Perhaps, we are wiser than our fathers; wiser than those great statesmen, who planned and perfected the glorious revolution, *and gave the crown to the Brunswick family*. Our fathers made England the dread of Europe; Heaven grant their sons may not make it the contempt of its meanest enemy! If we are wiser than our fathers, I wish we were honester: our fathers did not plunder the East; we have plundered the East; let us not attempt to plunder the West also! Let not Englishman be a word of disgrace among all nations, a word synonymous with robber!

It has been said, “The longer the colonists have been spared paying taxes, the better able they are, and the greater reason they have to pay.” Till the justice of taxing them at all, is clearly demonstrated, this argument is futile; it is the morality of those, who deem it less criminal to plunder him who has not been plundered before, than to plunder again him who has suffered previous depredation. It were to be wished, that we were less interested; at least, that we did not suffer our interest to outrun our virtue. “If America is taxed,” it is said, “England will be eased of taxes.” Ease from taxes, is an alluring object to an Englishman—but, during a thirteen years profound peace, what ease from taxes have Englishmen experienced? What we have not had in the past, can we have reason to expect in the future? We have not been eased in peace, but we are to be eased in war; eased by the taxes of a conquered country, which, in the act of conquering, we have laid desolate! Can we be the dupes of such self-contradictory pretences? Supposing it possible we could obtain, by conquest, a small accession to our property; could we enjoy it with the reflection, that it was obtained by the miseries of our own species? Could we revel in luxuries, bought with the price of blood, the blood of our countrymen? It is said, “We have protected the colonists, and that they ought to pay for our protection.” Have they not paid for it by the benefits of their commerce? Have not two of our own Parliaments acknowledged, that they paid more than their quota of the expence of last war? A war, not commenced, as has been pretended, out of disinterested regard for them; but to secure the profits of their trade; a trade, which, had they become subjects to France, must have been lost to England—to secure the balance of European power—to prevent the aggrandizement of our natural enemies.

In page [416], you have stated the case, perhaps you think, fairly. Give me leave to draw a parallel—parallels have, probably, been often of use to you, at the foundry. We feel best for another, when we put ourselves in his place; the transposition is, *argumentum ad hominem*.

Suppose popery established in England. Popery, you know, is intolerant—burn, or conform, are its alternatives. You, and your disciples, profess to approve of neither. A certain number of you embark for the coast of New Zealand—you find part of the country uninhabited; your fire arms give you advantage over the savages of the rest. You form a settlement; you cultivate the ground; establish manufactures, and grow rich: you might export some of your commodities to Batavia, on very advantageous terms. Capt. Cook, in the course of his voyage, happens to touch on this

same coast of New Zealand: the English government, and, indeed, every Englishman (who had heard that there was such a place) take it, therefore, into their heads to think it their own: they send a ship, to inform you that they think so; and to tell you, that you must not traffick with Batavia, but only with them; and that they will accept the profits of the trade, as a ground rent, an acknow[ledge]ment of their sovereignty. The Dutch grow jealous of your rising state; they send a fleet, and army, to attack and dispossess you. War is maintained with various success: you apply to England for assistance; England assists you: you not only continue your exclusive commerce with her, but contribute to the expence she has sustained by assisting you. After all, when you expect no such matter, comes a peremptory mandate from England,

We have protected you; we will be paid for our protection—we will have half the fruits of your labour, half the income of your lands, and manufactures, for ever.

Lay your hand upon your heart, Mr. Wesley, and say, would you then defend the measures of government, as lenient and equitable? Or would you hesitate (if able) to act the modern American?

You assert, that

There are men in England, determined enemies to monarchy, who wish to change the government into a republick.

I cannot think that you believe your own assertion. It is well known, that the republican form does not suit the genius of the nation; still less would it suit the character of the age. Commonwealths are not prolifick in honours and emoluments, nor propitious to grandeur and profusion—commonwealths must be founded by men of severe virtue, and strict self-denial. A much more probable supposition is, that some of the opponents of administration wish only to fill the seats of those whom they oppose; but the number, even of these, it is to be hoped is but small.

I know of no Englishman, who hates either the kingly office, or the prince by whom it is now exercised. I believe there are some millions of honest Englishmen, who perceive, with inexpressible grief and terror, our excellent constitution, planned by the best and wisest of our ancestors, and maintained with their blood, gradually deviating from its primitive purity: they see the regal estate, like Aaron's serpent, swallowing up the democratical; they see the influence of the crown over the Commons becoming so unlimited, that the dictates of the human will are not more implicitly obeyed by the members of the human body, than the former is by the latter; they see part of the elective body become so corrupt, that the intent of one principal security of English liberty, the circumstance of a senator vacating his seat on acceptance of a place, is now entirely frustrated; they see this corruption is an evil, which nothing can prevent the effects of, but such an absolute incapacitation of placemen, that they cannot be re-chosen—but those who perceive these, and many other flagrant perversions of our glorious constitution, far from wishing to subvert that constitution, wish only to restore it to its pristine integrity.

There are also, I believe, many thousand of honest Englishmen, who wish well to their country and its liberties, but are ignorant what its constitution is, and, consequently, cannot know when it

is violated: these are the men, who cannot fear danger, till they feel evil; these are the men, whom the Johnsons and the Wesleys seek to deceive out of their birthright, and persuade them they are slaves.

You boast of our present liberty, civil and religious: “Every man,” you say, “sits under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree.” It is not my business, nor desire, to point out every minute step, by which I think liberty is losing ground. Nobody denies, that we do enjoy a reasonable share of liberty, at present—but is no regard due to the future? There is, surely, some difference in the tenure, by which we hold a possession: the lessee in perpetuum, is, surely, in a better situation, than the tenant at will.

Some have said, arbitrary government, well administered, is the best mode of government; but how many chances are there against its good administration?

We have now a good prince upon the throne; but who can ensure the character of his successors? Should the crown obtain plenary possession of the Parliament, leaving it only a form without a spirit; where will be the difference between the inhabitants of France and Spain, and our posterity? where will be the difference between those who are ruled by the command of one man, issued immediately from his own mouth; and those, who are ruled by the command of one man, issued mediately *through the mouths of many*?

I shall now, sir, take my leave of you and your performance. I have no attachment to, or connection of any kind with the colonists; I have no concern in the matter. I may say, as you say, and perhaps with more sincerity, “I shall get nothing by either party.”—But, I am a friend, on principle, to the *original universal rights of man*.

As I have formerly seen you, with pleasure, in the character of a Christian minister, doing some good in the moral world; so it is, with regret, I now see you in the character of a court sycophant, doing much more mischief in the political world, injuring, perhaps irreparably injuring your country.

### postscript

You ask, “Did the people give William the Conqueror the power?”

An able writer and eminent statesman (Lord Somers) positively asserts, that the people did give William the power:

William the first (who is unjustly stiled the Conqueror, having subdued none but Harold and those who abetted him) did obtain the crown, by a free choice and submission of the peers, and body of the people: and, before his coronation, he was made to swear, that he would govern the people justly, and keep and observe to them their old laws.

This is a striking instance of the high sense the people of England once had of their own importance.

You assert, “that the people never gave the supreme power to any, but Massaniello of Naples.” If you mean the supreme executive power, the English history repeatedly contradicts your assertion. Give me leave to ask you—Who gave that power to Charles II. at the Restoration? to William III. at the Revolution? and, afterwards, to the house of Hanover?

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[\*] *Iniquum est, ingenuis hominibus non esse liberam rerum suarum alienationem.* Co. Lit. 223.  
“It is iniquitous, that freemen should not have the free disposal of their own effects.”

[\*] See *An Appeal to the Justice and the Interests of the People of Great Britain.* p. 29.