

IV THE DIE IS CAST

[not] returning to a proper Sense of their Conduct, may prove deservedly fatal to yourselves.

I shall say no more at present on this disagreeable Subject, but only to repeat an Observation I made to a former Assembly on a similar Occasion. "Every Breach of the Constitution, whether it proceeds from the Crown or the People, is, in its Effects, equally destructive to the Rights of both. It is the Duty, therefore, of those who are intrusted with Government, to be equally careful in guarding against Encroachments from the one as the other. But *It is* (says one of the wisest of Men) *a most infallible Symptom of the dangerous State of Liberty, when the chief Men of a free Country shew a greater Regard to Popularity than to their own Judgment.*"²

WM. FRANKLIN

1. The implementation of the Continental Association.
2. Franklin is quoting from his November 30, 1765, address to the assembly in which he criticized the legislators for their conduct during the Stamp Act crisis.

3 The Testimony of the People Called Quakers

[*Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 22, 1775.]

The burgeoning protest movement and the action of the Continental Congress placed New Jersey Quakers, especially numerous in the western and southern portions of the province, in a delicate situation. Religious scruples forbade participation by members of the Society of Friends in the extralegal activities of the popular front, but community pressures (social ostracism and threats of violence) induced an increasing number of Quakers to give at least tacit—and sometimes overt—support to the common cause. To alleviate the tensions between Friends and radicals, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, comprised of Quaker leaders from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, issued *The Testimony of the People Called Quakers* outlining the neutrality-based-on-conscience position of Friends. Willing to render unto Caesar, they would fight neither for nor against the state.

The Testimony of the People called Quakers

Given forth by a Meeting of the Representatives of said People, in Pennsylvania

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

and New-Jersey, held at Philadelphia, the twenty-fourth Day of the first Month, 1775.

Having considered with real sorrow, the unhappy contest between the legislature of Great-Britain and the people of these colonies, and the animosities consequent thereon; we have by repeated public advices and private admonitions, used our endeavours to dissuade the members of our religious society from joining with the public resolutions promoted and entered into by some of the people, which as we apprehended, so we now find have increased contention, and produced great discord and confusion.

The Divine Principle of grace and truth which we profess leads all who attend to its dictates to demean themselves as peaceable subjects, and to discountenance and avoid every measure tending to excite disaffection to the King, as supreme Magistrate, or to the legal authority of his government; to which purpose many of the late political writings and addresses to the people appearing to be calculated, we are led by a sense of duty to declare our entire disapprobation of them—their spirit and temper being not only contrary to the nature and precepts of the gospel, but destructive of the peace and harmony of civil society, disqualify men in these times of difficulty, for the wise and judicious consideration and promoting of such measures as would be most effectual for reconciling differences, or obtaining the redress of grievances.

From our past experience of the clemency of the king and his royal ancestors, we have grounds to hope and believe, that decent and respectful addresses from those who are vested with legal authority, representing the prevailing dissatisfactions, and the cause of them, would avail towards obtaining relief, ascertaining and establishing the just rights of the people and restoring the public tranquility; and we deeply lament that contrary modes of proceeding have been pursued, which have involved the colonies in confusion, appear likely to produce violence and bloodshed, and threaten the subversion of the constitutional government, and of that liberty of conscience, for the enjoyment of which our ancestors were induced to encounter the manifold dangers and difficulties of crossing the seas, and of settling in the wilderness.

We are, therefore, incited by a sincere concern for the peace and welfare of our country, publicly to declare against every usurpation of power and authority, in opposition to the laws and government, and against all combinations, insurrections, conspiracies, and illegal assemblies: and as we are restrained from them by the conscientious discharge of our duty to Almighty God, “by whom Kings reign, and princes decree justice,” we hope thro’ his assistance and favour to be enabled to maintain our testimony against any requisitions which may be made of us, inconsistent with our religious principles, and the fidelity we owe to the King and his government, as by law established; earnestly desiring the restoration of that harmony and concord which have hitherto united the people of these provinces, and been attended by the divine blessing on their labours.

Signed in, and on behalf of the said meeting,

JAMES PEMBERTON, Clerk at this time.