

## Taxes, Teacups and Tomahawks

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Dear Friend,

It is with great hesitancy that I write unto you this day, and I fear that this letter may prove to be my last. The dreaded tea ships have been in our harbor for now seventeen days. We have exhausted all peaceful means of returning the despised cargo to England, but as a show of our good intentions, we will attempt once more to reason with the Governor this evening. If this final attempt meets with the same treatment as those previous, then we will have no other recourse but to take action. In so doing, let it be known that we bear no animosity toward the Crown nor toward parliament. We act not in rebellion to our King but in sincere adherence to the laws and the rights of Englishmen; assuredly knowing that it is the duty of every citizen to uphold the law and that the Crown itself is made subservient to that noble statute. Thus armed with the knowledge that our course is just, we have pledged to each other our lives and our honor, holding both sacred but neither so dear as to be of greater value than the defense of freedom. This evening, we will take action much sought to be avoided but nonetheless necessary, and it may be that this action will bring upon us the end of our lives upon this earth.

All men are appointed unto death and to the judgment of their Creator, and the likelihood of my demise has moved me to great anxiety. I do not fear for my own sake, for my future estate is secure in Christ, but for the sake of those who will undoubtedly be asked to follow in our footsteps. I fear that there will be a great and irresistible temptation for others to mimic our final course while forgetting the long and arduous tacking which preceded it and without which our course would have been doomed from the start. It is in relief of this anxiety that I write unto you today desiring to impart into your keeping some small token of wisdom which may preserve you from such folly. Your colony may be forced into a situation similar to ours at some point in the not too distant future, and I trust that you will then recall these words of wisdom and heed them appropriately.

When the day of your trial appears, let me first caution you that you proceed not in any endeavor unless it has first been proven by prayer and godly counsel. The heart of the King is truly in the hand of the Lord, and it is of utmost importance that you seek His guidance in any path that you may consider. It was the prayers of the Children of Israel suffering in Egypt that moved God to bring that mighty empire to its knees. It was the prayers of our fathers being persecuted for their faith that brought about the establishment of these colonies where they could worship in peace, and it will be our prayers too as Englishmen which ensure unto us all of the rights guaranteed by our great Nation. The Scriptures assure us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and that if two such men agree in their petition to the Lord their request will surely be granted. How much more certain is it then that we will be granted the favor of the Lord when every citizen of our colony stands together in prayerful agreement.

Secondly, let me caution you to take your stand not on that which is profitable but on that which is right. The acceptance of the tea which our colony has refused would have saved us a great deal of money, for even with the unlawful tax it still costs a great deal less than the tea that we can obtain from any other source. We have not rejected this tax because it is too burdensome for

us. We have rejected it because it represents a violation of our rights as Englishmen. When the time comes for your colony to face similar constraints, I pray that you will likewise display the necessary depth of character to choose the path of principle over that of riches.

Once you have decided to take a stand, I would warn you that you act not rashly without wise counsel. As I mentioned previously, the ships bearing this dreaded tea have lain at anchor in our harbor for the past seventeen days. During that time, they have been accorded the utmost safety. We have even taken the precaution of posting our own guards not for the restraint of those on board the vessels but to keep watch lest one of our fellow citizens should find his patience wearing thin and think to take action before all other courses have been exhausted. We must be ever cautious throughout these colonies that we give not the Crown any justification for its slandering of our character. Our answers to the King and to His ambassadors must be always with grace and well seasoned with salt.

As a final note, let me implore you to always seek the improvement of the education of those within your colony. I am sure that you have noted the amazement of foreign visitors over the amount of knowledge which even the lowliest among us possesses in regard to our rights as Englishmen. It has been often commented that our pleading before the Governor is more reminiscent of the British Senate than of a simple colonial gathering. We have followed the wisdom of the Apostle Paul and have given much attendance to reading seeking to demonstrate our approval by God through the evidence of much study. There is not a man among us who has not read the commentaries of Sir Blackstone, and we have taken great pains to ensure that every citizen of our colony is familiar with both the actions of the King and the relevant statutes of British Law. It is greatly in thanks to these endeavors that we are able to present a united front in opposition to this illegal tax, and I trust that your colony will likewise be capable of such firm unity.

These small notes of wisdom outline the course which we have followed. Tonight we will take actions which some would say have no hope of succeeding, but we are assured that our prayers, the justification of our position, the patience with which we have suffered and the unity of our resolution will guarantee unto us a great and noble victory. Some of us and perhaps even all of us may face our deaths this evening; but if our actions be found fully justified before our God and this world, then our deaths will have dealt such a blow for freedom that tyranny will never be able to fully recover. I trust that you are praying for us as we are for you, and it is my fervent hope that your colony will face their trials in the same manner that we have faced ours.

As always, I remain your humble servant,

Jack Nipps