

### Letter from Senator Bucklow.

We commend to the attention of our readers the following excellent letter, written by the Hon. Charles R. Bucklow, in reply to an invitation to attend a Democratic meeting in Lycoming county:

Gentlemen of Lycoming.—You are to be commended for assembling yourselves as men opposed to the Administration at Harrisburg and Washington, and I am glad to contribute to your proceeding the expression of some few earnest words:

An issue between Power and Liberty is distinctly presented us by the policy of our rulers, and if we stand indifferent to it, or acquiesce in its decision according to the pleasure of those who aspire to be our masters, what shame will be ours! what loss and injury! what degradation and disgrace!

By liberty I do not mean license, but that regular freedom established by our ancestors' which we have enjoyed hitherto, without question, and the example of which we have held forth proudly before other nations as the proof of their systems and the glory of our own.

By power I do not mean legitimate authority, but authority usurped and lawless, pursuing its own ends over a broken Constitution and through the baleful flames of a civil war.

Between these—between power and liberty—can you hesitate in your choice? Will you hold up a balance and weigh, doubtfully, the arguments which sustain liberty against those which oppose it?

Necessity—Safety—are these the magical words by which despotism is to be changed in character and made fit for our adoption? Shall the plea of tyrants be accepted as our standard of public rule? Shall we concede force, and justice, and wisdom, to one of the most impudent, false and injurious doctrines ever introduced into the discussion of public affairs?

But there is a necessity (quite different from that asserted on behalf of power) which we must now admit as most evident and urgent—a necessity that we rid ourselves of those who plead necessity as the justification of their misdeeds. Those who cannot govern lawfully and justly are not to govern, but to give place to others. For it is monstrous to say that the incapable and vicious shall lord it over their fellows. The rulers who say they cannot govern by law and according to right stand self-condemned. Judged out of their own mouths they are unfit to rule and should be voted out of power.

Gentlemen, the greatest son of New England spent most of his life, and won his great fame in this Commonwealth. We are proud that he became a Pennsylvanian and took rank in our history, with the founder of this State—with the illustrious man who established it, "in deeds of peace." Let us try the logic of tyranny by the judgment of that great man.

Let us invite the apologist of arbitrary power and advocate of "strong government," who fills our ears with impugned discourse upon public safety, and national life, and necessity, to go with us to our great commercial metropolis and there stand with us beside the modest slab which marks the resting place of Benjamin and Deborah Franklin. "Oh! how mean, and pitiful, and low, still utterly false and detestable will there sound all these apologies for wrong—all these pretexts for stealing away or taking from the people, the rights and liberties achieved for them by the great men of former times!" Well, hear the voice of Franklin, sounding in our ears those memorable words of wisdom and warning which should be written up or hung up in great letters wherever the people meet for consultation in times of public danger: "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty or safety."

Gentlemen: Your political opponents think that patriotism should be called loyalty, and make to consist in unconditional unquestioning devotion to an administration of the government. I believe you will agree with me that this great virtue requires no new name, borrowed from the literature of monarchy; that it is shown in devotion to the Constitutions and laws of the United States and of the several States; and that the true patriot regards public officials with a respect precisely proportioned to their observance of laws, justice and right, and to their skill, wisdom and honesty in the performance of their public duties.

Judge your public men fairly but freely. Let no man put a padlock upon your lips, nor impose upon you any of the false and pernicious sophisms of arbitrary power.

An important election approaches in this Commonwealth, and another important one succeeds it next year. At these, you are required to judge those who have ruled or misruled you since 1860, and to determine, as far as your votes will go, the policy of the future. You need no labored exhortation from me to inspire you with zeal, courage, determination and fidelity in the discharge of your electoral duties. Behold! the evils which afflict the nation and the dangers which threaten it? These exhort you, beyond, art of mine, to right action, and justify that opinion which we hold in common, that upon Democratic success in the election just mentioned, depend the existence of free, liberal and just government in this country; a restoration of Union founded in consent; the avoidance of future wars, and the preservation and growth of that material prosperity which results from good government when vouchsafed to an united, industrious and virtuous people.

I am, your fellow-citizen,

and obedient servant,

C. R. BUCKALEW,

\* Works of Franklin, by Sparks, v. III,

pp. 428, 430.

This was the declaration of the Pro-

vincial Assembly of Pennsylvania, November 11, 1755, in answer to Governor Morris, upon the question of exempting Proprietary property from taxation. Despite the fact of Indian depredations in the border settlements, and the danger of extended hostilities, the Assembly refused an appropriation of money for military purposes, unless the same should be raised or repaid in a just manner, by placing the burden equally upon the property and resources of the colony. Equality of taxation as an essential principle of liberty was then sternly vindicated by the men of Pennsylvania, and military necessity was plead to them in vain as a reason for surrendering or waiving their rights as freemen and bending their backs to a burden of injustice. Dr. Franklin was a member of the Assembly and prepared most of the documents on its behalf in the dispute.—See *Life of Spark's Works*, v. I, pp. 170—so 196.

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